

## **EMDM 2023-2024**

### **General Rules**

#### **1. Scope**

The EMDM, Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine, is addressed to all health professionals involved in the health disaster management and humanitarian crisis response at local, national and international level.

The EMDM is an interuniversity and international course. This fact is translated in

- the composition of an International Faculty of qualified professionals in disaster medicine and humanitarian health coming from European and extra-European countries, affiliated with academic and worldwide renowned institutions.
- the multinational composition of the EMDM classes. Since inception, students from over 75 countries, spread over the 5 continents, have attended the course;
- the bilateral agreements between the Organizing Universities, CRIMEDIM of the Università del Piemonte Orientale (Novara, Italy) and ReGEDiM of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Brussels, Belgium), and the Associate Universities and Institutions such as the Center for Disaster Medical Sciences at the University of California Irvine (Irvine, US) Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (Geneva, Switzerland), Katastrofmedicinskt Centrum (Linköping, Sweden), Hacettepe University (Ankara, Turkey), School of Nursing & Human Sciences at Dublin City University (Dublin, Ireland).
- the support of international organizations and societies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (WADEM) and the European Society for Emergency Medicine (EuSEM);
- the high-level academic profile of the Strategic Management Board and the Executive Committee, which are responsible for the elaboration, review and evaluation of the EMDM study programme;
- the international network of EMDM Alumni.

#### **2. Denomination of the EMDM**

The EMDM, Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine, is a level-two master programme jointly organized by the Università del Piemonte Orientale (UPO) and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The implementation of the EMDM is delegated to CRIMEDIM for the UPO and ReGEDiM for the VUB.

#### **3. Teaching regulations**

##### **3.1 Breakdown of the academic year**

The Academic year starts on **November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023** and ends on the day before the start of the following academic year. The Strategic Management Board may decide to deviate from the fixed date by declaring an earlier or later start or end to the academic year.

An academic year is divided into two semesters:

The first semester (Week 1 - 24) consists of:

- 1) an online course (self-directed study under Faculty guidance) based on didactic activities integrated in an e-learning curriculum providing the students the “core” knowledge needed to participate optimally in the activities of the two-week training period;
- 2) the presentation of the initial Master’s thesis proposal to a panel composed of (at least) one representative of each organizing university (UPO and VUB), other Faculty members, experts in research methodology and thesis supervisors.

The second semester (Week 25 - 52) consists of:

- 1) the continuation of the online course, providing the students additional knowledge, particularly in those fields they judge important for their current or future career. The needed information for acquiring this knowledge can be found in thematic libraries present on the e-learning platform or through guidance by the Faculty;
- 2) a two-week face-to-face training period during which the students meet the Faculty and fellow students to interact in debates, practical exercises and simulations, meant for applying the integrated knowledge and for solving problems in disaster situations with which students will be faced after being graduated;
- 3) the writing of a Master’s thesis on a topic approved by the Thesis Coordinator, and under the supervision of a thesis supervisor;
- 4) a final online examination provided on the EMDM e-learning platform, consisting of an electronic simulation exercise and a multiple-choice questionnaire on the content of the programme units.

### **3.2. Aims and objectives of the programme**

The overall objectives of the programme are to provide students with:

- 1) a clear picture of the state of the art of the health disaster science in order to train health workers to a high professional level, suitable to work at local, national and international level as disaster managers, clinical providers, public health practitioners, humanitarian fieldworkers or researchers for governmental, non-governmental or international organizations;
- 2) a broader spectrum of knowledge and skills in disaster medicine and disaster medical management as well as deeper insight into specific areas of application, taking into account the different disaster medical systems, the international environment in which humanitarian health workers operate, and the interactions with different stakeholders including non-governmental and international organizations.

- 3) an advanced understanding of innovative tools currently available in the field of disaster and humanitarian health both for training, health management analysis and field operation purposes, and the practical skills to apply these tools during real events;
- 4) a solid foundation of research methodologies and practices applied to disaster medicine and health disaster management currently used by leading academic institutions and international organizations in the field of disaster and humanitarian health;
- 5) an inspirational environment to highly contribute to the global development of disaster medicine as an academic discipline through promoting active collaboration between the universities and institutions involved in the study programme, the students and the Alumni.

### **3.3. Learning outcomes**

The general learning outcomes are:

- 1) the ability to contribute to the body of knowledge of disaster medicine and health disaster management;
- 2) the ability to conduct independent research, and to report and communicate the results;
- 3) the skills of creative and flexible problem-solver and decision maker under crisis situations and with limited situational awareness;
- 4) the ability to work in team and in an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary environment at national and international level;
- 5) the skills to master lifelong learning;
- 6) the skills to use information technology.

The discipline-specific learning outcomes, which are directly related to technical scientific skills and operational abilities, are:

- 1) the knowledge of the characteristics of disasters and disaster medicine, and the ability to assess the risk and the impact of disasters;
- 2) the ability to design, implement and assess health programmes for different types of disasters during all the phases of the disaster management cycle;
- 3) the ability to develop, manage and evaluate psychosocial support of victims, their families and relatives, other members of the community, and emergency personnel;
- 4) the ability to manage the medical and public health needs in complex humanitarian emergencies, including the coordination with all the organizations and agencies involved;
- 5) the ability to develop, evaluate and revise legal, ethical and moral aspects of health disaster management;
- 6) the ability to develop, deliver and evaluate disaster medicine training programmes;
- 7) the ability to plan and organize research studies at national and international level.

### **3.4. Didactic concept**

The didactic concept is based on:

- the application of a systematic, competency-based approach;

- a multidisciplinary approach;
- a collaborative approach;
- evidence-based practices;
- the application of a number of educational methods according to the subject to be taught, such as experiential learning through gaming and simulation, and train the trainer.

The educational materials are reinforced by synchronous discussion forums which are moderated and facilitated by students and Faculty and complemented by exercises which apply course concepts and principles to disaster situations similar to those that the students will encounter in their work after completion of the programme.

The online discussions, the debates during the two-week training period and the international and multicultural character of students and Faculty promote lateral thinking.

One of the most important tenets of the EMDM programme is the recognition and use of the experience of the students. They contribute to the learning process by giving feedback to one other, sharing their knowledge, voicing their opinions and feelings. These interactions help them to build competence and confidence in their abilities, as well as a greater commitment to the learning experience. This approach engenders intense involvement and allows participants to establish their credibility and earn the respect of their peers.

### **3.5. Didactic structure**

The EMDM consists of:

1. a one-year online course (self-directed study under faculty guidance) composed of 10 units. This will allow the student:
  - to learn the core content of the programme and to decide what to study in a greater detail at different levels;
  - to interact with the Faculty and tutors for a better understanding of difficult points;
  - to collaborate with other students to learn how to deal with teamwork;
2. a two-week face-to-face training period (the EMDM residential session), which aim is to drive the students to deepen and apply the knowledge acquired by distance learning and to equip them with the specific technical and nontechnical skills necessary to efficiently address and coordinate the medical preparedness and response during disasters and humanitarian emergencies;
3. the writing of a Master's thesis on a topic proposed to the Thesis Coordinator and approved by the Strategic Management Board approved by the Thesis Coordinator and under the supervision of a thesis supervisor;
4. a final online examination provided on the EMDM e-learning platform, consisting of an electronic simulation exercise and a multiple-choice questionnaire on the content of the programme.

### 3.6. Study programme and curriculum

The EMDM is composed of 10 course units. Each course unit is coordinated by Faculty members of whom at least one is from the Organizing Universities.

All the study credits are translated into ECTS, the European Credit Transfer System adopted by the EMDM, according to the following distribution:

Course Unit	Study Time in hours				ECTS
	Lectures	Practical Training	Self-directed Study	Total	
CU1. The EMDM learning environment	3	12	60	75	3
CU2. Introduction to Disaster Medicine	4	16	55	75	3
CU3. Research in Disaster Medicine	14	14	47	75	3
CU4. Module A General Health Disaster Medical Management	10	40	100	150	6
CU4. Module B The "Riceland game"	20	55	100	175	7
CU5. Specific Health Disaster Medical Management	30	/	95	125	5
CU6. Disaster Mental Health	8	12	55	75	3
CU7. Education and Training in Health Disaster Management	8	40	27	75	3
CU8. Complex Humanitarian Emergencies	12	26	62	100	4
CU9. Legal and Ethical Aspects	6	10	59	75	3
CU10. Master's Thesis			500	500	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>60</b>

*Annex 1* provides a detailed overview of the curriculum.

### 3.7. Teaching and learning tools

#### 3.7.1. Housing facilities

If needed, the Organizing Universities will provide the appropriate facilities to organise the EMDM. Currently, no housing facilities are needed for the organization of the EMDM programme due to the e-learning format.

#### 3.7.2. E-learning platform

The e-learning platform based on the Moodle software for creating a virtual learning environment:

- 1) delivers the educational materials (lectures and tests/exercises) for the students according to a standardized model:
  - aim and learning objectives/outcomes;
  - pre-test (optional);
  - core content (key concepts and knowledge). It will be assessed in a post-test and in the final examination;
  - reading materials divided in “must read” and “nice to read”;
  - self-assessment test(s) and/or exercise(s);
  - multiple choice questions for the post-test of the course unit and final examination. The questions should cover the core content;
- 2) provides activity modules such as forums to build collaborative communities of learning around subject matter. Each programme unit has its own forum for interactive discussion (student-student and student-faculty) and team exercises. Other forums are the Course Director communications forum, the thesis forum, the technical forum and the general forum;
- 3) provides a videoconference area for broadcasting lectures;
- 4) provides a chat area;
- 5) provides the final examination;
- 6) provides the tools for tracking the activities of the students;
- 7) provides links to the websites of the involved universities and institutions;
- 8) provides general information about the EMDM (e.g. learning objectives, Faculty, application requirements and procedures).

### **3.7.3. Two-week face-to-face training period**

For the EMDM edition 2023-2024, the residential session will be organized in the month of May 2024. If unforeseen circumstances will prevent the face-to-face training, the Strategic Management Board will take the appropriate measures to organize the residential session with an alternative teaching method and will inform the students and faculty in due time.

The Strategic Management Board is responsible for deciding on the location of the two-week training period, which will be organized in premises with appropriate accommodation, conference rooms and IT facilities.

The Organizing Universities reserve the right to record classes for educational purposes. When students participate in these classes, they automatically give permission to appear in these recordings for distribution within the electronic learning platform. The teacher will inform the students that the class will be recorded at the beginning of such classes.

### **3.7.4. Electronic libraries**

The students will have access to the electronic libraries of the Organizing Universities.

Currently, they also have a free access to the electronic version of the textbook “Koenig and Schultz’s Disaster Medicine: Comprehensive Principles and Practices”.

### **3.8. Staff**

The Faculty is nominated by both Organizing Universities based on a proposal of the Strategic Management Board. They can be members of the both Organizing Universities, members of the Associate Universities and Institutions, or qualified professionals in disaster medicine, disaster management and humanitarian assistance. The same is valid for thesis supervisors.

The list of the Faculty and thesis supervisors together with the composition of the Strategic Management Board of the academic year 2023-2024 is provided in a separate file (Annex 2). The above-mentioned list can be changed during the academic year following decisions of the Strategic Management Board.

### **3.9. Language of instruction**

The language of instruction is English as well as the exam and the Master’s thesis.

### **3.10. Number of enrolled students**

Due to the format of the programme the maximum number of participants is of 35. A maximum of 10 places can be reserved to students of the previous EMDM editions who did not complete the course due to duly justified impossibility to participate to the residential session. The minimum number for organizing an EMDM edition is 15 full paying students.

### **3.11. Entry requirements**

The course is addressed to all health professionals involved in the health disaster management and humanitarian crisis response at local, national and international level.

#### **3.11.1. Academic requirements**

The minimum admission requirement is a **degree in medicine** (at least 300 ECTS), or a Bachelor’s+ Master’s Degree in a health-related subject (equivalent to at least 300 ECTS) from any University across the world. Applications from students holding a Master’s Degree in different subjects and from candidates who do not meet the minimum admission requirements (auditing students) will be evaluated case-by-case by the Strategic Management Board. The auditing student cannot be graded but receives a certificate of attendance after taking classes.

Research experience in the fields of medicine, public health or humanitarian assistance is recommended. **Practical experience in disaster management and humanitarian assistance** (in governmental or non-governmental organizations) is positively valued.

#### **3.11.2. Requirements in relation to language proficiency**

Candidates from non-English-speaking countries should provide proof of sufficient knowledge of English as the language of instruction by meeting one of the following criteria:

- have a diploma of primary, secondary or higher education where English was the language of instruction;
- have successfully completed at least one school year of secondary education where English was the language of instruction;
- have successfully completed programme units in higher education with a minimum total of 15 ECTS where English was the language of instruction;
- have successfully completed ASO secondary education in Belgium;
- have successfully completed one of the following language tests:
  - a. TOEFL: minimum level 213 computer-based, 80 internet-based;
  - b. IELTS: minimum level academic module 6.5;
  - c. Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE), grade B;
  - d. Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), grade C;
  - e. TOEIC: minimum level: 860.

Exceptions to language requirements may be granted by the Course Director following an oral assessment through an interview.

### **3.11.3. Administrative requirements**

The application procedure is entirely online and can be accessed through the EMDM website ([www.dismedmaster.com](http://www.dismedmaster.com)).

For the academic year 2023-2024, the application procedure opens on **July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 and close on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, 4 p.m. CEST.**

The following documents must be submitted:

1. A curriculum Vitae
2. A copy of the University Diploma (MSc, MA or MBBCh/MBBS)
3. A certified translation into English, if the original diploma is in a different language
4. A motivation letter written by the student, including his/her research experience and research-oriented expectations
5. A reference letter from a local mentor or advisor
6. a copy of a valid passport or ID card;
7. **for non-Italian students**, an official declaration of conformity of their academic title. The following three documents are accepted:
  - Diploma supplement released by the University (for EU students)
  - Declaration of Value (Dichiarazione di Valore) released by the Italian Consulate of the country where the student graduated
  - Declaration of Comparability issued by CIMEA through a completely online procedure;

### **3.12. Enrolment arrangements**



### 3.12.1. Evaluation of the application documents

The application documents will be evaluated by an Ad Hoc Commission composed of the Course Director and representatives of the Administrative Offices of one of the Organizing Universities.

### 3.12.2. Selection of the students

The Strategic Management Board will select the students to be enrolled in the EMDM programme on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The list of enrolled students will be published on the EMDM website and the websites of the Organizing Universities before October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The criteria used in the selection process are the academic background, previous experience in disaster management, research experience, motivation and language competences.

### 3.12.3. Enrolment procedure

**By November 8<sup>th</sup> 2023**, the selected student must submit the following documents:

1. The request of enrolment, addressed to the Rector of the University (provided by the Administrative Secretariat);
2. a proof of payment of the due fee or an official document giving proof of a scholarship;
3. A passport picture in JPEG format;
4. For Italian students: a formal declaration not being a student of another University programme.

#### 3.12.3.1 Payment

- **For Italian students paying individually: PagoPA**

Payment of enrolment fees shall be made according to the Italian regulations for the public universities:

1. Access to the webpage <http://www.studenti.uniupo.it>;
  2. Click on "Area Riservata", and then on "Registrazione Web". Provide all the information requested until your ID is generated, then choose a personal password;
  3. Access the "Area Riservata" with your ID and password and click on "Segreteria" from the area "Pagina immatricolazione"
  4. Insert the information required until the enrolment request is generated;
  5. Access the section "Controlla Pagamenti" or "Pagamenti non pervenuti" and then click on "Fattura" and follow the instructions
- **for Italian students financially supported by a public institution**, the fee should be deposited through the:

Banca Popolare di Sondrio – Filiale di Vercelli "Conto di Tesoreria n. 158384"

- **for all other students, the payment shall be made by bank transfer as follows:**

Banca Popolare di Sondrio – Filiale di Vercelli

Account entitled to Università del Piemonte Orientale – Master di Medicina dei Disastri

IBAN: IT91Y0569610000000010000X96

BIC/SWIFT: POSOIT22

**In both cases, the purpose of the payment must indicate:**

« AMMCE – Master in Medicina dei Disastri 2024 (EMDM) – **First and Family name** of the student the payment is made for »

Each student will receive a personal document declaring his/her enrolment in the EMDM.

#### **3.12.4. Enrolment fee**

**The enrolment fee for the XXII edition of the EMDM is of 8032 €, which can be split into two instalments of 4532 € and 3500 € upon request to the EMDM secretariat.**

**The enrolment fee for the auditing students is 6000 €.**

The fee includes:

- the full EMDM academic programme, the educational materials and the access to the EMDM e-learning platform for the entire duration of the course.
- accommodation in a four-star hotel in full board service, social programme and medical insurance for the two-week residential session;

The fee does not include:

- the travel expenses to attend the two-week residential session
- all the expenses not specified above.

The enrolment fee should be paid at the enrolment procedure and not later than November 8th, 2023. Non-payment will be sanctioned with a suspension of enrolment.

In case of enrolment fee splitting, the first instalment (4532 €) is due not later than November 8th, 2023. Non-payment will be sanctioned with a suspension of enrolment. The second instalment (3500 €) is due by March 1st, 2024. Non-payment will result in the impossibility to attend the residential session and to complete the study programme.

In the case the student, **for any reason**, will not complete the study programme, the fee will not be reimbursed. However, in the event of circumstances beyond their control students may ask to be enrolled in the following academic year, provided that the necessary proof can be produced. Any incidence of force majeure and a request to be re-enrolled in the next academic year as a result thereof, must be reported by the student in writing by e-mail to the Course Director and approved by the Strategic Management Board.

The tuition fee for the students enrolled in the previous editions who ask to be re-enrolled in 2023-2024 is a fixed amount of 500 € plus a variable amount representing the balance between the current fee and the fee paid at the time of the admission. The above-mentioned students will have the same right and obligations of all the students enrolled in the current edition, including the participation to the residential session.

The students who decides during the academic year not to complete the Master's thesis in due time can ask to be granted a maximum of 12 additional months of supervision upon payment of a fixed administrative fee of 500 €.

### **3.12.5. Scholarships**

Currently, no scholarships are available. In case of availability, notice concerning the scholarships will be published on the EMDM website before the end of the application process.

### **3.12.6. Nullification of enrolment**

Enrolment which was undertaken on the basis of incorrect or false, though essential information, will be declared invalid by the Strategic Management Board.

### **3.13. Flexibility**

All teaching activities must be open to every student who fulfils the entry requirements and every enrolled student must be given equal opportunities. This may call for invoking reasonable flexibility (in compliance with the criteria of feasibility, acceptability and justifiability), whereby derogations are granted to individual students, in specific circumstances.

Following a specific request of the student, the Strategic Management Board can extend the submission deadline of the Master's thesis. A maximum deviation of 12 months is considered as a reasonably flexible deviation in specific cases that will be proposed by the Thesis Coordinator and approved by the Strategic Management Board.

Students who have not completed the thesis after the maximum extension of 12 months need to enroll in the selection procedure of a next course.

### **3.14. Learning and teaching evaluation**

#### **3.14.1. Continuous quality improvement**

The Executive Committee is in charge of the continuous quality improvement (CQI) of the EMDM.

The CQI activities consist of:

- 1) the internal quality assurance process including
  - the definition of the criteria for the quality improvement process in compliance with the education regulations of the Organizing Universities;

- the evaluation of the curriculum vitae and didactic qualifications of the Faculty and thesis supervisors;
  - the liaison on regular basis with the programme unit coordinators to gather feedback on the quality of educational materials and the Faculty in their respective programme units;
  - the submission to the Course Director and the Strategic Management Board of recommendations for remedial action and corrective adjustment about the quality improvement process and the content, format, learning methods, and evaluation procedures of the EMDM programme.
- 2) the evaluation process of the study programme including:
- the analysis of students' evaluation of the profile of the Faculty and thesis supervisors, the content and learning methods of the e-learning platform, the two-week training period and the organizational aspects of the EMDM programme;
  - the revision of tools for Faculty and thesis supervisors evaluation;
  - the submission of reports and recommendations to the Course Director and the Strategic Management Board about the activities of the Faculty and thesis supervisors.
- 3) the assessment process and tools to evaluate the students including:
- the review of the quality of the student assessment rubrics and tools;
  - the monitoring of the correct application of the assessment tools by the Faculty and thesis assessors.

### 3.14.2. Learning evaluation

The students' evaluation will be defined using specific rubrics applied to the different parts of the course:

	e-learning	Two-week training session	Final exam	Master's thesis
Objectives	Engagement	Competencies	Content knowledge	Research skills
Assessment tool	MOODLE report	Task assessment rubric	Online exercise and multiple-choice questionnaire	Thesis scoring system
Final grading points	30/110	30/110	10/110	40/110

The learning assessment of the students includes preliminary, continuous and end-of-term assessments.

#### 3.14.2.1. Preliminary assessment

The main purpose of preliminary assessment is to maximize learners' ability to succeed the learning programme providing them and the Faculty with tips based on students' needs and weaknesses.

Knowing participants' educational background and experience helps teachers to optimize the content and learning methodology of the programme.

### **3.14.2.2. Continuous assessment**

#### **3.14.2.2.1. E-learning**

The MOODLE report tool (student tracking system) is used to measure and evaluate student engagement in the e-learning environment. It evaluates the pattern of the interaction between the students and various learning objects of the e-learning courseware. The two main fields of the report are *views* and *posts*. The former refers to the data about access to an object such as a student who accesses the system to view a lecture on the e-learning platform. The latter includes access to forums, exercises and tests provided on the e-learning platform. The view-post ratio is used to examine the level of interactivity.

The student's activities on the e-learning platform are also assessed by Strategic Management Board.

#### **3.14.2.2.2. Two-week training session**

The Course Director and Faculty assess students' competencies acquisition against the EMDM learning outcomes. The competencies for disaster training are identified according to the current literature and taking in consideration the wide range of targeting students.

#### **3.14.2.3.1. Final examination**

An online examination composed of an electronic simulation exercise of a disaster presenting medico-organizational and medical care problems and a multiple-choice questionnaire composed of questions on the core content of the e-learning programme is proposed as final examination. It is delivered at the end of the programme.

#### **3.14.2.3.2. Master's thesis**

The thesis supervisor(s) and thesis assessors evaluate a Master's thesis using the Thesis Scoring System in order to mark the theses in a uniform way.

The reports drawn up by the thesis supervisors and assessors shall be made available to the Thesis Coordinator who shall make a summary report to the attention of the members of the Strategic Management Board that in its capacity as Examination Board is responsible for the final assessment. The thesis will be evaluated based on the originality and/or the relevance of the subject, the quality of the data collection and analysis, the writing, and the impact on current disaster medicine theories and practices.

The Thesis Scoring System is provided in Annex 3.

#### **3.14.2.4. Final grading**

The final grading (110/110) will be based on the following marks:

1. Participation in the e-learning programme = 30/110
2. Contribution to the residential course = 30/110
3. Evaluation of the thesis = 40/110
4. Final examination = 10/110

The Master's Degree will be delivered for a final score  $\geq 65/110$ .

### **3.14.3. Teaching evaluation**

The aim of the teaching evaluation is to optimize the teaching process and to detect, and possibly remedy, any problems in the teaching process; in the second place, the teaching evaluation serves as a general satisfaction survey on the quality of the education provided.

The teaching evaluation is a standard survey for each programme unit, each faculty within that programme unit, concerning satisfaction with the following aspects: the content of lectures and the teaching abilities of the lecturer, the quality of the programme material, the organization and the content of working lectures, practical work & exercises, the examination method, the experience of the time spent in study and the interaction between the Faculty and the student. In addition to this programme unit-specific survey, a questionnaire is supplied at the end of the final exam to gauge general satisfaction levels with regard to the programme as a whole and programme facilities.

The education evaluation is semester based, i.e. it is conducted twice a year immediately following the two-week training session and the final exam.

The education evaluation is done electronically through the e-learning platform not accessible to third parties. Students gain access with an individual login and password.

Necessary steps are taken to safeguard the anonymity of the students taking part in the survey.

In order to obtain representative data, participation is mandatory for all students.

All survey results are analyzed by the Executive Committee that will submit a report and recommendations to the Course Director and the Strategic Management Board about the activities of the Faculty.

Students' individual evaluation results as per programme unit are reported on the EMDM website to the lecturers involved, who may consult these results using their personal password.

The overall results include bar charts representing the average level of satisfaction for each programme unit which is being assessed, taking into account all the evaluation aspects as well as

participation figures, perceived study time load and the results from the additional questionnaires dealing with the programme as a whole and programme facilities.

The individual results per programme unit or a part thereof include at least an average value and a signaling value, both expressed in categories (Very Poor – Poor – Average – Good – Very Good) and can be joined by accompanying written comments from students. The signaling value is within the lowest 34th percentile on the (very poor to very good) scale. If the signaling value is poor or very poor, and more than one student reports at least one educational aspect as poor or very poor (lecture, study material, or exam), it is seen as a problem signal, which needs further monitoring by the Executive Committee.

## **4. Examination regulations**

### **4.1. Organization of the final exam**

#### **4.1.1. Taking exam**

Students shall only be permitted to take exams if they are properly enrolled for the academic year concerned and if they have paid the tuition fee.

#### **4.1.2. Exam format**

The final exam is proposed as an on-line examination composed of an electronic simulation exercise of a disaster presenting medico-organizational and medical care problems and a multiple choice questionnaire composed of questions on the core content of the e-learning programme.

#### **4.1.3. Number of exam opportunities**

Students are entitled to two opportunities for the final exam, in so far as they have not obtained any credit certificate after the first exam opportunity.

#### **4.1.4. Scheduling of exam and resetting exam**

The exam will take place at the end of the academic year. The exact date of the exam and resetting exam will be fixed by the Strategic Management Board and announced at the EMDM website.

#### **4.1.5. Exam procedures**

##### **4.1.5.1 Proctoring process**

The exam will be entirely online. Students who are unable to give the exam in the premises of the Organizing Universities are expected to make their own proctoring arrangements. The proctor procedures and application form will be published on the e-learning platform.

##### **4.1.5.2. Force majeure**

Students shall observe strictly the timetable and location set for an examination. In the event of circumstances beyond their control students may ask for an exam to be rescheduled, provided that the necessary proof can be produced. Any incidence of force majeure and a request to re-schedule the exam as a result thereof, must be reported by the student in writing by e-mail to the Course Director at the latest on the day of the exam.

Original documentation to substantiate force majeure shall be submitted to the Course Director within three calendar days of the exam date.

The Course Director shall decide whether a re-scheduled exam is organizationally possible and in the event of a positive decision shall set a new exam schedule.

#### **4.1.6. Results**

Students shall be given feedback on their exam results. Every student shall receive personally at his/her personal e-mail address his/her individual exam score.

#### **4.1.7. Failure to report or termination of participation**

If a student fails to report for the exam or ceases participation, he/she shall inform the Course Director in writing by e-mail and without delay, who shall subsequently inform the Strategic Management Board.

### **4.2 Master's thesis regulations**

#### **4.2.1 Introduction**

As other branches of medicine, disaster medicine needs a scientific basis. Evidence-based data on effective and efficient methods to improve the health aspects of disaster management are only minimally available. The EMDM research theses should contribute to fill this gap.

One of the overall objectives of the EMDM study programme is to provide students with a solid foundation of research methodologies and practices applied to disaster medicine and health disaster management, currently used by leading academic institutions and international organisations in the field of disaster and humanitarian health.

The master thesis constitutes proof of the student's capacity for analytical and synthetic work and independent problem-solving skills at an academic level. It also reflects student's capacity for critical reflection.

The EMDM Master's Thesis forms an important and compulsory part of the EMDM study programme, as it takes up  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the credits and a weight factor of 40/110 for the degree.

The EMDM Master's thesis is written individually and independently by the student. It is written in English language.



The scientific study to be performed by the students should be based on experimental, qualitative or mixed methods, or on a structured scoping or systematic review. The development of a tool for further research or simulation studies are also accepted. The thesis should not simply be a compilation of literature data, a description of a case report or existing preparedness or response systems.

The quality and novelty of the EMDM Master's Thesis is expected to achieve a level that has the potential to result in a scientific publication in a peer-reviewed journal or in a presentation at national/international congresses. A publication and/or presentation is however not the aim of the thesis.

The Course Unit about Research in Disaster Medicine will support the student in the design and development of the thesis.

#### **4.2.2 Stages in the development process of the EMDM master thesis**

The design and development of a master thesis consist of a number of scientific and administrative stages:

- the selection of a thesis subject that should have a clear and direct relationship with disaster medicine or health management in disaster situations or humanitarian crises;
- the selection of a thesis supervisor;
- the drafting of an initial thesis proposal;
- the submission of the initial thesis proposal together with a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the student and the supervisor(s) in the thesis unit;
- the approval of the MOU by the thesis coordinator;
- the online presentation of the initial thesis proposal to a thesis panel;
- the drafting of a final thesis proposal;
- the submission of the final thesis proposal in the thesis unit;
- the approval of the thesis proposal by the Strategic Management Board (SMB);
- Organizing and carrying out the research study;
- the drafting of the master thesis;
- the approval of the thesis by the thesis supervisor;
- the submission of the master thesis in the thesis unit with a copy sent to the thesis coordinator;
- the assessment of the master thesis by the thesis supervisor and the thesis assessor(s) appointed by the thesis coordinator; and

- the approval of the assessment of the master thesis by the SMB.

All these stages are an integral part of the EMDM study and learning programme.

The SMB determines the dates on which the initial thesis proposal, the final thesis proposal and the master thesis should be submitted. It also determines the dates on which the thesis panels will be organized.

The student strictly adheres to the set submission deadlines.

#### **4.2.3 EMDM Thesis Coordinator**

The EMDM Strategic Management Board will appoint each academic year the Thesis Coordinator. The Research Group on Emergency and Disaster Medicine (ReGEDiM) of the VUB will act as Thesis Coordinator for the academic year 2023-2024.

The Thesis Coordinator is responsible for the operational implementation of all the activities related to the master thesis process.

The Thesis Coordinator is the Point of Contact (POC) for the EMDM Strategic Management Board with respect to the thesis assessment.

#### **4.2.4 Thesis Supervisor**

A Thesis Supervisor has to meet one of the following criteria:

- EMDM Faculty appointed by the Strategic Management Board
- affiliated to CRIMEDIM or REGIDIM and appointed as thesis supervisor by the Strategic Management Board
- an EMDM Alumnus who successfully graduated and is proposed by the Thesis Coordinator and appointed by the Strategic Management Board after having obtained experience as co-supervisor;
- any other expert in the domain of disaster medicine or disaster health management, after approval of the Thesis Coordinator and the Strategic Management Board.

Thesis supervisors are each year appointed by the Strategic Management Board. The list of the thesis supervisors will be made available at the thesis unit of the EMDM e-learning platform.

A local co-supervisor can be selected by the students. A local supervisor has to apply to the same regulations as the thesis supervisor.

The supervisors oversee the conduct of the thesis on a regular basis, offer guidance and advise on matters connected to the master study, and offers encouragement during a difficult period.

The student must contact a thesis supervisor by him/her self in due time, preferably in the first months of the academic year. The deadline will be announced at the thesis unit of the EMDM e-learning platform.

Students should develop clear expectations with the supervisor(s) concerning availability, meeting/contact times and undertake actions to keep the supervisor(s) informed of progress made.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) that spells out the expectations of supervisors and students will define the terms of these relationships. The MOU will be uploaded in the thesis unit and endorsed by the Thesis Coordinator.

Any difficulties in the fulfilment of the obligations should be reported by e-mail to the Thesis Coordinator. The Course Director and the Thesis Coordinator shall subsequently come to a decision which may lead to a change of supervisor or annulment of a supervisor's duties toward a student and they shall report this event to the EMDM Strategic Management Board.

#### **4.2.5 Thesis proposal**

The thesis proposal procedures and submission date will be notified at the thesis unit of the EMDM e-learning platform.

Not adhering to the set submission deadlines and not presenting the thesis proposal to a thesis panel can have administrative consequences such as the non-participation in the residential session.

#### **4.2.6 Thesis submission**

The Master's thesis shall only be submitted to the Thesis Coordinator after approval of the thesis supervisor(s).

The Master's thesis shall be uploaded electronically in PDF format at the thesis unit of the EMDM e-learning platform, with a copy to the Thesis Coordinator.

The details of the thesis editing requirements and the submission date will be provided at the thesis unit of the EMDM e-learning platform.

In case of force majeure (unanticipated, beyond control or responsibility, events in private or professional life), the student may ask to reschedule the submission of the master thesis, on condition that he/she provides the necessary evidence. The student must inform the Course Director by e-mail of any case of force majeure, as well as any request to reschedule the thesis submission. The decision shall be communicated to the student within 2 weeks after receipt of the request to reschedule the thesis submission

The student who decides during the academic year to not complete the master thesis in due time (before the set deadline) can ask to be granted a maximum of 12 additional months of supervision upon payment of the fixed administrative fee of 500 € for re-enrollment in the next academic year.

The request for extension of the submission deadline must be sent by e-mail to the Course Director and the Thesis Coordinator.

#### **4.2.7 Thesis assessment**

The Thesis Coordinator shall organize the assessment process.

The assessors are in principle members of the academic staff of the EMDM. The thesis Coordinator may appoint an assessor from among experts external to the EMDM.

The thesis supervisors and assessors appointed by the Thesis Coordinator evaluate and mark the thesis using the thesis assessment form which is available at the thesis unit of the EMDM e-learning platform. Unsatisfactory assessments should be justified.

The assessment reports drawn up by the thesis supervisor(s) and assessor(s) shall be sent by e-mail to the Thesis Coordinator who shall make a summary report to the attention of the EMDM Strategic Management Board. In its capacity as Examination Board, the Strategic Management Board is responsible for the final assessment. The Course Director informs the student about the outcome of the assessment.

The Course Director will inform the student about the outcome of the assessment. However, no qualitative assessment is communicated to the student.

#### **4.2.8 Ethical approval**

Research with human participants must comply with international, national and local regulations and with relevant codes established by the medical profession, such as the Declaration of Helsinki. The approval for the involvement of human subjects in research by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee (EC) must be obtained, if applicable. The letter of approval must be included as an appendix to the thesis.

#### **4.2.9 Research misconduct**

Scientific misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Fabrication is “making up data or results”. Falsification is “manipulating research materials, equipment or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record”. Plagiarism is “the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit”.

All master theses will be screened by plagiarism software.

Anyone who is aware of a potential act of misconduct shall immediately report in writing this act to the Thesis Coordinator. Any act of misconduct will be examined in accordance of the regulations of the University responsible for the administrative co-ordination of the Joint Study Programme.

#### **4.2.10 Property**

The EMDM Master's thesis is a compulsory part for the requirement of the degree of Master of Science in Disaster Medicine.

The student has the ownership of the Master's thesis. By submitting the master thesis, the student grants to the Organizing Universities and the thesis supervisors permission to use the master thesis in whole or in part for educational purposes.

The digital version of the master thesis for which the student has obtained a credit, is kept in the thesis unit of the EMDM e-learning platform.

#### **4.2.11 Publication – Conference presentation**

The publication and/or conference presentation of the master's thesis is a joint decision of the student and the thesis supervisor(s).

According to the MOU, the name(s) of the supervisor(s) are to be included as co-author(s) in an agreed order of authorship.

It should be mentioned verbatim in each publication or presentation that: "This manuscript is the result of a study conducted in the framework of the Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (EMDM - European Master in Disaster Medicine), jointly organised by CRIMEDIM - Center for Research and Training in Disaster Medicine, Humanitarian Aid and Global Health of the Università del Piemonte Orientale (UPO) and REGEDIM - Research Group on Emergency and Disaster Medicine of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)".

The SMB can decide that a master thesis cannot be published in exceptional circumstances, such as in case of scientific misconduct.

The student is advised to inform the Thesis Coordinator when a thesis has resulted in a publication and is encouraged to upload the publication in the portfolio of the student in the thesis unit.

#### **4.3. Examination Board**

The Strategic Management Board takes the role of examination board.

The Chairman of the Strategic Management Board is appointed chairman of the examination board.

The Thesis Coordinator may participate in the meetings of the examination board with an advisory vote.

The examination board can take decisions without convening its members physically but instead by organizing the meeting by all means of communication that provide for a collegial exchange between members

The Course Director shall record in the meeting minutes the proceedings of the examination board. The minutes will be signed by the Chairman of the examination board and the Course Director.

A decision regarding a given student is reached by consensus vote.

The members of the examination board and all those present at the meeting are bound to guarantee the confidentiality of the discussions.

#### **4.4. Master Degree**

The Master Degree is named “Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine”.

The Master Degree will be jointly issued by the Organizing Universities, in compliance with the relevant legal provisions.

The Master Degree will be awarded to the student if he has successfully completed the entire programme and has fulfilled all the administrative requirements, including the full payment of the enrolment fee.

##### **4.4.1. Achievement levels**

The following achievement levels shall be applied:

- a student has passed with merit if the average final result is less than 68%;
- a student has passed with “cum laude” if the average final result is 68% or higher;
- a student has passed with “magna cum laude” if the average final result is 77% or higher;
- a student has passed with “summa cum laude” if the average final result is 85% or higher.

##### **4.4.2. Diploma**

The Organizing Universities will issue a joint diploma with the seals or logos and the signatures of the Rectors of both Universities, indicating the official name of the Master Degree.

## **5. Transitional and concluding provisions**

These General Rules will be revised yearly and adapted, if appropriate, by the Strategic Management Board. What is not expressly included in the present general rules will fall under the regulations of the University responsible for the administrative co-ordination of the Joint Study Programme.

The General Rules are an integral part of the “Convention for the Organization of an Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (European Master in Disaster Medicine) by the Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel”.

These regulations, as approved by the EMDM Strategic Management Board meeting of June 11<sup>th</sup> 2023, shall come into force as from the EMDM XXII edition (academic year 2023-2024).