



**CONVENTION FOR THE ORGANISATION 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"**

The Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale "A. Avogadro", CF 94021400026, having its registered office at Vercelli, Italy, Via Duomo 6, represented by the Rector, Prof. Giancarlo Avanzi, hereinafter referred to as "UPO"

**AND**

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel, BE 449012406, having its registered office at 1050 Brussels, Pleinlaan 2 (Belgium), represented by the Rector, Prof Caroline Pauwels, hereinafter referred to as "VUB"

**GRANTED THAT**

- In 2002 UPO and VUB have signed a formal agreement for the organisation of a European Certificate in Disaster Medicine together with the University of San Marino and the European Centre for Disaster Medicine (CEMEC) based in the Republic of San Marino;
- Based on the Italian Legislation, in particular on the DM 270/2004 that allows Italian Universities to award academic degrees in association with other Universities, either national or international, and to establish postgraduate courses permitting the awarding of master degrees;

- According to the rules on education of the UPO and based on the "Delibera del Senato Accademico del 15.9.2008", the UPO has established a postgraduate advanced master course (master after master) denominated the European Master in Disaster Medicine (EMDM), starting from the academic year 2002/2003;
- Based on the Flemish Codex Higher Education ("*Codex Hoger Onderwijs*") dated 11 October 2013, ratified by the Decree dated 20 December 2013, in particular Art. II.172, § 3 that allows Flemish universities with one or more international universities to award a joint diploma and the degree of Master to a student, who successfully completed an educational programme organized by the universities concerned. The joint educational programme shall be organized in the framework of a joint venture agreement between the universities concerned;
- Based on the Decision of the Flemish Government of 16 January 2009 (VR 2009 1601 DOC.0035) to recognize the "Master of Science in Disaster Medicine" as a new educational program of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel;
- Based on the assessment report of the "Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie" (NVAO) published by the "Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad (VLUHR) in May 2013, UPO and VUB signed a new convention on May 24, 2014;
- Based on the recommendations of the VUB Quality Review Report of January 2019 and the proposals of the Strategic Management Board, UPO and VUB decided to amend the 2014 Convention as follows.

**IT IS STIPULATED THAT**

**Art. 1 - Premise**

The previous premises are fully and formally considered as part of this convention.

**Art. 2 - Definitions**

**European Master in Disaster Medicine (EMDM):** the Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (MScDM) organized by UPO and VUB.

**Organizing Universities:** the Organizing Universities are the founding universities: Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale "A. Avogadro" and Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

**CRIMEDIM:** Center for Research and Training in Disaster Medicine, Humanitarian Crises and Global Health (Centro Interdipartimentale di Ricerca e Formazione in Medicina dei Disastri, Crisi Umanitarie a Salute Globale, UPO).

**ReGEDiM:** Research Group on Emergency and Disaster Medicine (Onderzoeksgroep Urgentie- en Rampengeneeskunde, VUB).

**Associate University/Institution:** any university/institution that supports the further development of the EMDM programme on an operational level. A memorandum of understanding will be signed between the delegating authority of the university/institution and the Strategic Management Board of the

EMDM, to be approved by the University authorities of the Organizing Universities.

**Supporting Body:** any institution, organization, society or company that is offering any kind of support to the EMDM.

**Faculty:** all individuals, appointed by the Strategic Management Board of the EMDM, who contribute to the study programme of the EMDM. On the recommendation of the Strategic Management Board, faculty members can be appointed as an honorary Visiting Professor or Lecturer at UPO and VUB.

**Course Unit Coordinator:** a faculty member appointed by the Strategic Management Board of the EMDM in charge of the coordination and the content of a course unit. In any single course unit, one of the Organizing Universities should be represented.

**EMDM Alumni Association (EMDM-Alumni):** a non-profit Association which has as purpose to serve the medical community by supporting the development of disaster medicine and disaster management in order to reduce the effect of disasters on the health of affected populations and to promote and assist through its Members the interests of the EMDM and its Alumni.

#### **Enrolment and registration**

Enrolment and registration are two different procedures: enrolment is the normal procedure for students to attend courses and registration is an administrative procedure for students

already enrolled in one of the Organizing Universities in order to have access to some services provided by the other Organizing University.

### **Art. 3 - Aims**

The aims of this agreement are:

- a) The establishment of a formal collaboration between UPO and VUB for the organization of a joint Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine providing education and training of physicians and university graduates in the health management of disasters and humanitarian emergencies.
- b) The establishment of the general rules to govern the EMDM.
- c) ~~The~~ implementation of further collaboration between CRIMEDIM and ReGEDiM.

### **Art. 4 - Organization of the EMDM**

#### **4.1 Denomination and Site of the EMDM**

The course is named "EUROPEAN MASTER IN DISASTER MEDICINE" (EMDM) and is considered an Advanced Master of Science in Disaster Medicine.

The implementation of the EMDM programme is delegated to the Centro di Ricerca Interdipartimentale in Medicina d'Emergenza e dei Disastri (CRIMEDIM) for the UPO and the Onderzoeksgroep Urgentie- en Rampengeneeskunde (ReGEDiM) for the VUB.

The sites of the course are those of the above mentioned research centres. Parts of the course can be organized in a different site upon decision of the Strategic Management Board.

## **4.2 Managing Bodies**

The Strategic Management Board and the Executive Committee are the formal bodies of the EMDM responsible for the implementation of the EMDM programme on the basis of the mandate defined in the present convention.

The Strategic Management Board is the highest authority and is responsible for the strategy and policy of the EMDM, as agreed by UPO and VUB.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the organisational management of the EMDM programme as laid down in the General Rules (Appendix 1).

### **4.2.1 Strategic Management Board**

The Strategic Management Board consists of four members nominated by UPO and VUB. Each Organizing University may propose two members coming from CRIMEDIM and ReGEDiM.

The Strategic Management Board is composed of:

- a Chair,
- a Course Director, and
- two Executive Officers.

From amongst its membership, the Strategic Management Board shall elect a Chair and a Course Director; the Chair and the Course Director shall belong to different Organizing Universities. Both of them shall serve for a period of two years but may be re-appointed for further terms.

The Organizing University which delivers the Course Director will provide the Administrative Secretary.

The Strategic Management Board is responsible for:

- defining the Terms of Reference and the appointment of the members of the Executive Committee;
- the endorsement of proposals made by the Executive Committee with respect to the scientific content, format and educational methodology of the EMDM programme, the supervision and evaluation procedures of the Faculty and students, and continuous quality assurance;
- the yearly submission of the General Rules to the competent organs of the respective Universities;
- the appointment of the Faculty members who shall be formally nominated by the Organizing Universities. They can be members of the Organizing Universities, Associated Universities or Institutions, or qualified professionals in disaster medicine and/or disaster management. The Strategic Management Board shall ensure that as many competent staff as possible from both Organizing Universities will be included in the Faculty;
- the selection of the coordinators of the different course units;
- the selection of the students among applicants to the EMDM. The criteria used during the selection process are: academic ability and background, experience, motivation, and language competence;
- proposing the names of those candidates qualified to graduate to the competent organs of the respective Universities, in its capacity as Examination Board;
- drafting the budget to be presented to the Administrative Authorities of the Organizing Universities;
- the regular control of the budget, in order to avoid a negative balance, since the EMDM must be self-supporting;
- fixing the starting date of the EMDM study programme;

- deciding on the location and content of the residential session or other course activities;
- setting the enrolment fee of the EMDM programme (tuition fee and costs for the organisation of the residential session) for subsequent endorsement by the Organizing Universities.

The Strategic Management Board shall hold regular meetings, with a minimum of four meetings per year, including the use of electronic means. Any decisions will be taken via unanimous resolutions.

#### **4.2.1.1 Chair**

The Chair of the Strategic Management Board is in charge of:

- chairing the Strategic Management Board;
- acting as principal spokesman of the EMDM;
- drawing up together with the EMDM Course Director all documents which require an official signature;
- giving notice of all meetings of the Strategic Management Board.

#### **4.2.1.2 Course Director**

The EMDM Course Director is elected by the Strategic Management Board among the representatives of the Organizing Universities in the Strategic Management Board and is endorsed by the University responsible for the administrative co-ordination of the Joint Study Programme.

The EMDM Course Director is in charge of

- executing the decisions made by the Strategic Management Board;
- the operational implementation of the EMDM programme;



- drawing up together with the Chair of the Strategic Management Board, all documents of the EMDM which require an official signature;
- managing the funds of the EMDM within the budget approved by the Strategic Management Board;
- reporting the financial assets of the EMDM at the Strategic Management Board meetings;
- performing such other duties as delegated by the Strategic Management Board.

#### **4.2.1.3 Executive Officers**

The Executive Officers are co-chairing the Executive Committee and are responsible for the operational implementation of the EMDM study programme under the responsibility of the Course Director and based on the decisions taken by the Strategic Management Board.

#### **4.2.1.4 Administrative Secretary**

The Organizing University which delivers the Course Director shall provide the Administrative Secretary. He/She shall be responsible for:

- the administration of the EMDM Programme (enrolment, registration, application, selection, and graduation procedures);
- the administrative and logistical implementation of the residential session in collaboration with the Course Director and the Executive Officers;
- the drafting of the minutes of the Strategic Management Board and Executive Committee meetings;

- the maintenance of the EMDM records;
- the annual budget and accounts to be proposed to the Course Director;
- the external communication in collaboration with the Strategic Management Board and the E-learning and Design Coordinator, and
- the maintenance of the Alumni data-base in collaboration with the Tutor and Alumni Coordinator.

#### **4.2.2 Executive Committee**

The Strategic Management Board shall define the composition and the terms of Reference of the Executive Committee.

The main responsibilities of the Executive Committee include:

- the drafting of the EMDM programme (description of the course units) to be included in the General Rules after approval of the Strategic Management Board;
- the operational implementation of the EMDM programme under the responsibility of the Course Director, including the student tutoring and administration;
- the internal quality assurance and the evaluation process of the study programme;
- the design and maintenance of the EMDM website and e-learning platform;
- the educational and technological innovation of the EMDM programme;
- the overseeing of the EMDM user experience; and
- the Alumni administration.

The composition of the Executive Committee shall be yearly listed in an appendix of the General Rules.

#### **4.3 General Educational Goals and Format**

The Master is intended to provide participants with a clear picture of current concepts and developments in the health management of disasters and humanitarian emergencies in order to train health workers into high-level professionals, qualified to work as academics and/or staff members or field workers of governmental, non-governmental or international organizations.

The EMDM educational format consists of:

- self-directed study under faculty guidance based on didactic activities integrated in an e-learning curriculum, provided on the Internet ([www.dismedmaster.com](http://www.dismedmaster.com));
- a residential session during which the students meet the faculty and peers to interact in debates, practical exercises and simulation exercises, meant for solving problems in disaster situations and assessing the student's ability to apply an integrated knowledge base;
- the writing of a dissertation or a research paper on a topic approved by the Thesis Coordinator and according to the thesis regulations included in the General Rules.

The EMDM General Rules for the next editions are described in Appendix 1, which constitutes an integral part of this convention.

The Organizing Universities, by mutual agreement, can modify the EMDM General Rules without modifying the present convention.

#### **4.4. Number of Participants and Duration of the EMDM**

The number of participants and the duration of the EMDM are described in the EMDM General Rules. The Organizing Universities, by mutual agreement, can modify the maximum number of participants, without modifying the present convention.

#### **4.5. Application and Enrolment of Candidates**

The application and enrolment is carried out according to the General Rules.

The applications of candidates must be submitted to the Students' Office where the requirements for admission will be evaluated and transmitted to the Strategic Management Board. The Organizing University of the Course Director will send the list of enrolled students to the other Organizing University for registration.

The Organizing University of the Course Director will collect the students' enrolment fees on behalf of the Organizing Universities.

The Organizing University of the Course Director will issue a certificate of joint enrolment, whenever asked for by the students participating in the study programme.

The distribution of the total collected fees will follow the rules established by the Strategic Management Board and approved by the Organizing Universities.

The Organizing University of the Course Director, as responsible for the course administrative co-ordination, assures the liability insurance against any accident for the students hosted

for the activities of the present agreement, and the civil responsibility for third party damages. The cost of students' insurance will be included in the costs of the EMDM.

#### **4.6. Certification**

The Degree of Master of Science in Disaster Medicine (MScDM) shall be awarded to the candidate when he/she has fulfilled all the requirements of the degree, including

- the participation to the e-learning programme;
- an active contribution to the residential session;
- the successful evaluation of a thesis;
- the final examination provided on the Internet.

The Diploma will be jointly issued by the Organizing Universities, in compliance with the relevant legal provisions. The Organizing Universities will issue a joint degree, in the form of a unique document with the seals or logos of both the Universities, and the signature of both Rectors.

#### **Art. 5 - Collaboration with other universities or organizations**

Upon recommendation by the Strategic Management Board, the Organizing Universities can make agreements with universities, institutions and organizations in order to further develop and consolidate the EMDM at organisational, operational and supporting levels.

## **Art. 6 - Commitments**

The Organizing Universities will appoint their representatives in the Strategic Management Board.

## **Art. 7 Finances**

The resources of the EMDM are obtained from

- the students' enrolment fees and scholarships;
- grants or subsidies from public and governmental institutions, and private organizations;
- donations.

The enrolment fee for participation to the EMDM is composed of the tuition fee and the coverage for the costs for the organization of the residential session. The Organizing University of the Course Director will open a specific account for the collection of the enrolment fees. Both amounts will be submitted yearly by the Strategic Management Board for approval to the appropriate university organs. Overhead costs can only be charged on the tuition fee.

A provisional budget approved by the Strategic Management Board will be provided to the Organizing Universities before the beginning of each academic year in respect of the established deadlines.

The balance, approved by the Strategic Management Board, and a full report on the course must be provided to the Organizing Universities, within three months after the end of each academic year.

The EMDM, as an advanced master course, must be self-supporting. Under no circumstances, Organizing Universities can be obliged to supply financial contributions. However, in case of a negative balance, the UPO (through CRIMEDIM) and the VUB (through ReGEDiM) will provisionally contribute to cover the deficit.

#### **Art. 8 - Duration**

The convention is valid for an indefinite period. It ends automatically in case of non-reaccreditation of the EMDM by the respective Ministries of Education.

It can be ended by each of the partners, announcing the withdrawal as a partner, through a registered letter mailed at least 12 months before the start of the next academic year.

In case of ending of this convention, the Organizing Universities will make arrangements to observe current engagements with regard to the students.

#### **Art. 9 - Entry into force and Amendments**

The present Convention shall enter into force on the day following the date of its adoption by both Organizing Universities and shall replace the Convention as operative since May 2014.

At any time judged appropriate, the Organizing Universities can make amendments to the Convention. The Strategic

Management Board can make recommendations for amendments to the Rectors of the Organizing Universities.

**Art. 10 - Controversies**

Any controversy related to the agreement interpretation or execution, which cannot be resolved amicably, is resolved through a conventional arbitrate, by a collegium composed of one member designated by each of the parties, and an additional one designated by mutual agreement among the parties.

This agreement will be governed and construed in accordance with the Belgian and the Italian laws, or in case of differences, by the laws of the defending Organizing University.

**Art. 11 - Protection of personal data**

The Parties commit themselves to respect the European Regulation EU 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (GDPR) as well as the national applicable laws.

The Parties may share personal data of individuals involved in the collaboration such as: name, business telephone, address, and email ("Business Contact Information"). Each Party may store and otherwise process such Business Contact Information. The Parties agree that Business Contact Information will only be processed for administrative purposes to the limited extent as required for the performance of this agreement.



If the processing of other than Business Contact Information is necessary for the performance of this agreement, the Parties commit themselves to agree and enter into a data processing agreement, which shall amend this agreement, as is reasonably required to reflect each Party's rights and obligations in this respect. In case of any conflict between the data processing agreement and this agreement, the provisions of the data processing agreement shall prevail in relation to the matters covered by the data processing agreement. For all other matters the provision of this Agreement shall prevail.

The agreement is drawn up in two original copies in the English language, both having the same legal validity.


Read, confirmed and undersigned on day/month/year

Vercelli/Brussels

Il Magnifico Rettore dell'Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale "Amedeo Avogadro"

Prof. Giancarlo Avanzi

Rector van de Vrije Universiteit Brussel



Prof. Caroline Pauwels

**Appendix 1. General Rules.**