

College of Remote and Offshore Medicine Foundation



International Quality Assurance Document
December, 2018

Introduction

The College of Remote and Offshore Medicine Foundation (referred to herein as CoROM) was established in 2016 with the express aim of providing high fidelity training to a specialist cohort of pre-hospital clinicians. In the last calendar year CoROM has provided training and education to over two hundred students in a range of specialist subjects.

The college is committed to the principles of quality assurance in the provision of education. Continuous improvement is realised through an integrated, systematic approach focusing on the establishment, evaluation and improvement of quality assurance policies and procedures. The scope of these measures is detailed in this Handbook with specific detail to the range of qualitative and quantitative data collected and analysed, and the appropriate structures for monitoring, reviewing, planning and implementing enhancement measures.

The aims of CoROM's quality assurance policies are

- To establish a framework of standards for the provision of education
- To safeguard the academic experience of learners
- To promote excellence in curriculum development

SECTION ONE

QUALITY ASSURANCE OVERVIEW

COMPANY MISSION STATEMENT

“To provide high quality, leading edge programmes, delivered by subject matter specialists, and to produce competent, autonomous allied health professionals for the remote and austere medical environments”

APPLICATION OF MISSION STATEMENT

CoROM promotes excellence in learning by providing a high-quality comprehensive range of learning opportunities to equip learners with accredited and transferable skills.

Central to our educational ethos is our desire to assist learners in developing positive attitudes to personal study, high standards and high expectations. By doing this we aim to assist students in fulfilling their potential in their careers and personal development.

Our learner-focused approach recognises the individual learner’s needs and interests, and seeks to enhance their inherent skills and potential to encourage self-reliance and autonomy in life-long learning.

On application to a course programme, each student is required to complete a questionnaire outlining their career ideals. From this application, CoROM investigates where the student feels that their career will progress to. In this regard, CoROM can then ensure that the learner – focused approach is utilised to the best of the College's capabilities.

Further to this questionnaire, on arrival for taught modules, students have face to face contact with experienced career professionals on a day to day basis. This further ensures that courses (within confines of agreed academic syllabus) can be tailored to the needs of the student.

If a student outlines a need that CoROM view as being outside the scope of the syllabus to which they are subscribed, this is addressed firstly within the faculty (Executive Faculty). If it is deemed that the need has validity to the intended course, a review of need is undertaken with a prospective view of including that point in the syllabus. If it is deemed that the need of the student is not within the scope of the syllabus, the student is advised of same. In this regard CoROM strives to ensure that no student is entering a course with false ideals as to syllabus, content etc.

Training needs analysis (TNA) are undertaken at the end of each programme to ensure the syllabus and needs of the students have been fulfilled, and prior to commencement of the next course of training to make any required alterations to the syllabus. This is undertaken by the Executive Faculty (currently Executive Dean, Medical Director, Education Manager, and Registrar).

Senior Faculty also review all courses on an annual basis. Any course not providing an increase in employability is no longer offered on our curriculum. In addition, on introduction of new clinical pathways (e.g. NICE protocol), courses are content reviewed. This process is managed by the EM in conjunction with the Academic Review Board.

- How are students’ views taken into consideration as part of the review process? In what way?

Every course has an anonymous feedback form. These are reviewed by the Course Director, Medical Director, Executive Dean and Education manager. Any identified issues are immediately reviewed for validity and accuracy. In addition, students are invited to approach tutors at any time. In addition to this each student is afforded a weekly feedback session with the course tutor(s)

This will be achieved by

Providing high quality, leading-edge programmes in, but not limited to the areas of

Outdoor First Aid, Offshore First Aid, Dive Medicine, Wilderness Medicine (including Wilderness First Aid, Wilderness First Response and Wilderness Technician), Remote and Austere Environment Paramedic training, Tropical Medicine and Continuing Professional Development

Providing accessible third-level opportunities in part-time modes to cater for the needs of school leavers, graduates, international learners and mature adults.

Providing a learning environment conducive to the promotion, support and continuance of learning opportunities for all learners.

Offering a safe but challenging learning environment for clinicians of all grades and experience to learn how to deal with casualties in less than optimum locations.

Quality Assurance Framework

Quality is at the heart of all activities of CoROM. This is reflected in our mission statement which states;

“To provide high quality, leading edge programmes, delivered by subject matter specialists, and to produce competent, autonomous allied health professionals for the remote and austere medical environments”

This mission promotes a culture which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance while practising in less than ideal locations.

The continuous enhancement of quality at CoROM through its Quality Assurance procedures has continued to be developed over the past few years and has matured and progressed as the organisation has grown. The underpinning principles of these procedures are equity, fairness and standards.

CoROM recognises the impact and importance of quality assurance procedures on the learner and therefore seeks to involve learners in all levels of the QA process. This process will be aided by

- Course feedback forms
- Post course online surveys (Sent at 3 and 6 months after completion of course)
- Informal feedback sessions at the end of every contact day (class-based learning)

Quality Assurance within each course is managed by the course director (see section of roles/responsibilities of CoROM faculty). All Quality Assurance procedures are reviewed on a regular basis and the findings of the review, along with changes to policy and practice stemming from this, are reported to the Executive Dean and appropriate approval sought.

The QA Manual will be reviewed and updated and shall at all times adhere to international best practices. This process will also be aligned to, and adhere to the eleven (11) standards outlined in the national Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The responsibility for quality assurance shall rest with the course director of each course. The course director will report directly to the Dean in this regard.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Overall responsibility for QA will rest with the executive faculty of CoROM.

Individually, staff and learners alike are encouraged to provide constructive feedback

Quality assurance of faculty

CoROM will operate stringent QA procedures for faculty.

This will include, but will not be limited to

- Maintaining an up to date qualification and Continuing Professional Development database on all faculty
- Random observation of the delivery of courses by faculty

When a course is listed for observation, an independent faculty member, who is not part of the teaching cohort of that course, will attend the course and observe the course being conducted in its entirety.

The faculty member undertaking this task will not involve themselves in any presentations or teaching of any material.

On completion of this task the assigned faculty member will furnish a written report to both the Executive Dean and the Educational Faculty outlining their observations.

- Requiring all faculty to maintain clinical competency and providing proof of same

CoROM faculty are required to be clinically competent at their clinical level. In this regard, each member of faculty must submit copies of their clinical qualifications and renewals of same and show written (anonymised) evidence of patient contacts for each calendar year.

Any faculty member or tutor who is deemed to be

Not clinically current, or, not to have practised at their stated level for a period exceeding six months will be removed from the teaching roster

In this instance CoROM will endeavour to assist the tutor in clinical placements to refresh their clinical skills

- Requiring all faculty to provide evidence of educational qualifications

The responsibility for QA of faculty will rest with the Education manager who will report directly to the Executive Dean.

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

Quality Assurance is a dynamic process of reflection, evaluation, report, and feedback.

The aim of this is to provide consistency in standards and procedures throughout CoROM.

Quality Enhancement is informed by this process and ensures the credibility and integrity of quality assurance measures by remedying deficiencies.

Quality Assurance in higher education and medical training is a developing area of policy and procedural innovation.

The requirements Quality Assurance will continue to develop and evolve in line with best practice.

Therefore, CoROM will be flexible and embrace innovation within the context of its own provision.

SECTION TWO

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The following section outlines the policies for QA in relation to

Standard 1 – Policy for Quality Assurance
Page 8

Standard 2 – Institutional Probity
Page 12

Standard 3 – Design and approval of programmes
Page 14

Standard 4 – Student centred learning, teaching and assessment
Page 16

Standard 5 – Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
Page 21

Standard 6 – Teaching Staff
Page 26

Standard 7 – Learning resources and student support
Page 29

Standard 8 - Information Management
Page 30

Standard 9 – Public information
Page 31

Standard 10 - Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes
Page 32

Standard 1 – Policy for Quality Assurance (In accordance with NCFHE)

Roles and Responsibilities of CoROM staff (briefly outlined in attached organigram)

The **Executive faculty** (referred to herein as EF) have overall responsibility for QA. The EF will consist of the Executive Dean, the Academic Dean and the College registrar. (Roles and responsibilities are outlined in the attached organigram)

At this juncture, the Executive Dean will also fill the role of Head of Academic Administration

The **Executive Dean** (referred to herein as the Dean of CoROM) has overall responsibility for all programmes conducted in and for CoROM. As such the Dean of CoROM (currently Mr Aebhric O’Kelly) is in effect the head of School, whose responsibilities shall include but not be limited to

1. Conduct of Staff
2. Ensuring academic qualification of new staff (in conjunction with Education Manager)
3. Course content
4. Issues/Complaints arising from programmes or students enrolled on programmes
5. Ensuring that potential students meet entry criteria to course they wish to attend
6. Ensuring financial standards within the College.
7. Act in an advisory capacity on matters administrative and logistical on the EF

The **Academic Dean/Medical Director** will

1. Have overall responsibility for academic content of all CoROM programmes
2. Ensure that tutors (in conjunction with Education manager) are current and licenced for their appointed roles
3. Address any issues brought to his attention in relation to academic content
4. Address any issues brought to his attention in relation to course content
5. Act in an advisory capacity on matters medical within the EF

The **College Registrar** (currently Dr Andrew Grech) will

1. Have overall responsibility for admission to CoROM programmes
2. Have overall responsibility for maintaining CoROM records
3. Have overall responsibility for the registration of students
4. Have overall responsibility for maintaining any professional qualifications that may arise
5. Act in an advisory capacity on matters pertaining to records and admissions within the EF

The **Education Manager** (currently Mr Neil Coleman)

1. The education manager is responsible for setting and meeting educational content for students.
2. Carriers responsibility for exam policies and content
3. Is responsible for day to day interaction with students in the educational domain

Head of Finance

1. The head of finance will be responsible for fiscal and accounting matters within CoROM
2. They will liaise with the appointed accountancy firm and if required with CoROM legal representatives
3. They will advise to the EF on matters fiscal
4. They will hold responsibility within CoROM for financial review, including but not limited to prospective budgets
5. They will prepare accounts (see point 2) for annual returns in accordance with Maltese law.

Head of Student Services

1. Liaise with the EM in matters pertaining to student welfare
2. Assist students with identified special requirements
3. Assure the confidentiality of medical issues for students listed at point 2.
4. Implement in conjunction with the EM policies and programmes for students with disabilities
5. Support tutoring staff in the identification of students with special requirements
6. Assist students with advice on travel, accommodation and visa requirements
7. Advise the EF on matters pertaining to student welfare

Academic Review and Development Committee

The academic review and development committee will be formed from the Academic Dean, the Executive Dean, the Education Manager and any other faculty member of CoROM deemed suitable by the CoROM Executive faculty. Selection criteria will be a formal teaching/training/education qualification and demonstrable experience in the field of medicine or pre hospital medicine. At a minimum at any given time the Academic Review and Development Committee will consist of the Executive Dean, the Academic Dean and the Education Manager.

1. Review all feedback from tutors and students via EM

2. Advise on, and implement changes to courses because of point 1
3. Review not less than biannually all courses presented by CoROM
4. Offer suggestions to EF on changes to courses and or syllabus
5. Review any new courses
6. Ensure compliance with NCEHF requirements for accreditation

STAFF ROLES

Course Director

The course director is the instructor/faculty member directly in charge of the course they are presenting.

Therefore, this role is dynamic, as course directors will be appointed based on their specialisations. The course director reports directly to the Education manager (or in their absence the Executive Dean).

Key responsibilities are

Manage the day-to-day operation of existing courses

Actively participate in the QA procedure.

Manage the course tutors within the Programme(s) being delivered.

Coordinate the academic schedule

The course director will usually (but not always) be the senior tutor teaching on that given course.

Academic Staff Members (TUTORS)

1. Present face to face content to students (class-based learning).
2. Report directly to the Course Director.
3. Must be both licensed and current in their field of expertise and have demonstrated to CoROM (on employment) evidence of teaching practice

Where applicable, when students are undertaking distance/online learning, the responsibility for distance/online QA will rest with the Education Manager. The education manager will report directly to the Executive Dean.

Where students are undertaking class-based learning, the responsibility for QA daily, will rest with the course director. The course director will report directly to the Education manager, or in the absence of the Education manager, the Executive Dean.

The Executive Dean will assess all QA reports submitted by either course directors or the Education Manager and will schedule EF meetings at regular intervals (at the discretion of the Executive Dean).

In the absence of any reported QA issues, the EF will meet not less than once in each six-month calendar period to review QA as a routine function of the EF.

Additional Information

1. The College of Remote and Offshore Medicine Foundation does not have stakeholders or owners. There are three trustees as registered with the Malta Voluntary Organisations. This information is in the public domain and can be accessed on the government website.
2. CoROM receives no external funding for education.
3. CoROM does not have any subcontracted activities nor training

Student hardware/software

Students provide their own computers for the online learning. The hardware and software that hosts the online content is completely virtual. Moodle is an online platform used worldwide by universities. It is safe, reliable and provides suitable and continual access for all delegates.

Standard 2 – Institutional Probity

Accounting/ Legal representation/ Headship positions

CoROM's accountants are in Birzebbuga, Malta. We are required to submit accounts each September in accordance with Maltese law. (Contracted company is Parker Randall Turner Accountants, 13 Curate Fenech Street, Birzebbuga, BBG2032).

The accounting system in place involves quarterly meetings with the CoROM accountancy firm, and annual returns as outlined above.

A system of petty cash is available to CoROM on a day by day basis for incidentals, all of which is declared to the accounting firm.

We currently rely on the professional knowledge of the contracted accountancy firm for fiscal compliance with Maltese law.

We continue to be fiscally responsible. As outlined we conduct quarterly meetings with our accountancy firm and our procurement policy has been gradual. At no time has CoROM engaged in loan agreements for equipment or resources, and in doing so we have built our equipment based on sound financial principals.

We are small enough that our budget is quite manageable and transparent for all members of the Executive and Trustee levels within the College.

Our legal representatives are Gonzi associates in Valletta (115b, Old Mint Street, Valetta, VLT 1515). They are one of the largest law firms in Malta and were founded by a former prime minister. We feel that our legal representatives are fit for purpose.

Headship Positions:

In the event of a headship position becoming available, CoROM will in the first instance:

1. Advertise the position on the CoROM website
2. Advertise the position on professional websites relevant to the position in question
3. Advertise the position on generic job finder website
4. Clearly outline the period in which applications from suitable candidates will be accepted.
5. Clearly outline the selection criteria specific to the advertised position.
6. Collate and retain for the period of the selection process the applications of all candidates.
7. Inform at the earliest opportunity, any candidate who has applied, yet has been deemed by CoROM not to meet eligibility criteria (see point 5)
8. Conduct an internal screening process for each applicant who meets selection criteria (see point 10)
9. Conduct an interview with each candidate who meets selection criteria (see point 10)

10. In relation to both point 8 and 9, this process will be conducted by

- a) The Executive Dean
- b) The Medical Director
- c) The College Registrar
- d) The Education Manager

11. In the event of any of the headship positions outlined in point 10 being the available position, CoROM reserves the right to substitute the outgoing individual with a faculty member currently employed by CoROM. This will not include occasional or guest lecturers. In this instance the substitute faculty member shall be deemed the junior member of the selection panel.

Post interview and screening process, CoROM will advise within 14 working days, by email or post, the results of selection process.

Selection criteria will be based on professional qualifications, previous association with CoROM (where applicable and in line with the previous point), suitability for position based on experience and any other criteria as deemed necessary for the post by the EF of CoROM.

Standard 3 – Design and approval of programmes

New Course Procedure

Any member of staff can suggest a new course. On initial suggestion the EF would review the proposal for suitability and relevance to existing programmes or CPD. In this regard, all staff members of CoROM are experienced clinicians, and as such often have suggestions as to “gaps” in the educational domain of austere and remote care/medicine.

All new programmes for consideration will be reviewed fully by the Education manager in the first instance. Recommendations will then be passed to the EF for review.

The introduction of new programmes will be signed off by the EF, and no new programme will enter the curriculum until stringent educational and clinical scrutiny of the programme has taken place.

Faculty members are encouraged to continually improve and develop CoROM courses. In the example of a new programme (where a programme of similar content does not exist) being suggested, the following will take place

1. The faculty member will submit to the Education manager (EM) the programme for review
2. The EM will review the proposed programme for content and clinical accuracy
3. Should adjustments be required, the EM will return the programme to the author for corrections
4. This process will be repeated until the EM is satisfied as to content etc.
5. The EM will then pass the proposed programme to the Educational Faculty for review.
6. The EM will return (where applicable) the programme to the original author for corrections etc.
7. This process will be repeated until the Educational Faculty are satisfied as to content
8. The course will be approved for trial on completion of this process

Where a programme requires external accreditation, CoROM will ensure licenses and accreditation are in place prior to commencement of such courses.

The final approval of a new programme will rest with the Executive Dean.

Course content will be constantly monitored. This is to keep in line with best practice internationally. The review of best practice shall be the responsibility of the Education manager who will then pass observations and suggestions to the EF for review.

CoROM have taken the step of employing (as a faculty member) a clinically and academically experienced Education Manager (Mr Neil Coleman, Assistant Professor Clinical Medicine, MSc, PG Dip Ed, H Dip EMT-A), referred to herein as EM.

One of the roles of the EM is to ensure course content. In this regard the EM

1. Will review course feedback (tutors) from all courses
2. Will review student feedback
3. Will review on a tri-annual basis clinical course content to ensure best medical practice

4. Maintain open lines of communication with all CoROM tutors for suggestions for improvement of programmes

In the absence of any reported new programme reviews, or any changes to current practice for review, the Educational Faculty will meet not less than once in each six-month calendar period to review programme content as a routine function of the faculty.

Student centred approach to design of programmes

As CoROM is led by clinically qualified academics, our courses are either industry specific or CPD based. In the case of the former, all tutors have worked in the fields that students aspire to working in, therefore bringing industry knowledge to the classroom.

In relation to programme design, CoROM will where necessary, employ/invite industry experts onto programme design so as to ensure relevance to the employment market. CoROM will endeavour to ensure that its courses are current, both clinically and academically in order to provide our graduates with the highest opportunities of gaining employment in their chosen field.

All our senior faculty have been teaching and designing courses for many decades. We feel we are well versed in how many resources are required for course design.

In addition, via face to face and written feedback, students are invited to make suggestions as to how CoROM can improve programmes.

Standard 4 – Student centred learning, teaching and assessment

The main programme is divided into three modules

A) Online learning – via PowerPoint lectures, interactive exercises, and case reviews as knowledge increases

B) Classroom based learning. Intensive 5-week module with a high tutor/student ratio, utilising PPT presentations, informal discussion groups and significant motor skills practice. Students also undertake “Patient scenarios” every Thursday or Saturday involving fully moullage actors as patients for high fidelity training.

C) Clinical placements in Budapest. (explanatory MOU with clinical site in Budapest attached to document). Students liaise directly with the clinical site in Budapest to arrange dates of attendance. Students are required to provide CoROM with a copy of current insurance to cover clinical placements including but not limited to repatriation cover.

Student diversity and special needs

First Language: Where a student's first language is not the working language of the college (English), CoROM will address this in the following manner. CoROM does not facilitate the proficiency tests and students must undertake this test if required prior to acceptance of place on course. From initial email contact with EM, it can usually be deemed necessary or not quite quickly. Exam procedures for students who do not have English as a first language are outlined below.

1. The student must provide a recognised English language proficiency. The preferred method of CoROM is IELTS Academic, however CoROM will accept equivalent levels of English proficiency
2. Cultural differences: By mutual respect and professional understanding
3. Students who identify a physical disability are catered for by CoROM ensuring they attend courses at venues where said disability can be best assisted (Accessible lifts etc.)

CoROM aims to ensure that every student optimises their time in the college.

In this regard a range of learning supports are available including but not limited to

- Interactive online tutorials
- Podcasts
- Small group tutorials
- Verbal exam procedures for students who do not have English as a first language

In this instance, if it is so deemed that a language issue would be detrimental to the student receiving a transparent and fair exam, CoROM will employ the services of an independent translator (where a tutor present on the course is not fluent in the language of the student)

The exam would then be undertaken through the interpreter with the tutor being advised as to which answer the student has provided.

CoROM will ensure that the employed interpreters are non-clinical so that no advantage could be offered to the student

- Verbal exam procedures for students with dyslexia/dyscalculia*

*Students who wish to avail of special exam conditions may be required to provide proof of condition.

Any student who wishes to avail of special considerations for exams will be required to provide a certificate from a registered specialist clearly stating the issue under which they wish to seek special exam consideration

The Education Manager should be the first point of contact for any student wishing to avail of special exam conditions.

CoROM welcomes students and indeed tutors from all over the globe. Our experiences to date of cultural diversity has been completely positive. The opportunity to learn from other cultures in a classroom setting, for students who will most likely engage in employment outside their home nations, has been welcomed and embraced by all.

CRITERIA AND MODES OF ASSESSMENT

This is the responsibility of the EM. Criteria and assessment modes emailed to students on enrolment of course and on the advice of NCFHE will be visible on the website.

Grading is outlined to students via email, and on the advice of the board to which we have submitted this document, will now be available on the website. The EM operates a 1/3 rule which is outlined in this document (*see consistency and fairness of assessment*) For practical assessments, all students are assessed by two assessors. For written assessments, CoROM operates a policy of two tutors in the class at all times.

The EM, prior to any written exam, issues to each student a 5-digit alpha numerical code (e.g. AB123). Only the EM has access to each student's code. By this manner, the tutors grading the student's exam have no knowledge as to who the student is. The EM issues new codes for each written exam.

In addition, the answer matrix for written exams, off which the tutors grade written papers, will be reviewed pre exam for grammatical and typographic errors, and post exam in relation to the 1/3 rule implemented by the EM.

CoROM offers one to one feedback on all assessments undertaken by students.

The assessment of learners is laid out in the CoROM examination policy.

Each student entering a CoROM course will be directed to the CoROM examination policy.

The responsibility for the CoROM examination policy rests with the Education Manager.

Examination policy will be reviewed annually, and changes must be ratified by the Educational Faculty.

The EM has overall responsibility for quality of teaching methods. Any issue identified to him by any student or staff member is addressed immediately.

Staff members who do not hold formal teaching qualifications are required to undertake them as part of career progression

PLAGIARISM

All submissions to CoROM are vetted for academic content and originality using the *Duplichecker.com* programme

Should an incident of plagiarism arise, in the first instance it will be investigated by the EM.

Procedure:

1. The EM will bring to the attention of the student that there is a potential question pertaining to the submission.
2. The EM will advise the student that the submission is under review.
3. All submissions are vetted through a plagiarism software programme.
4. The EM will make a recommendation as to whether there are grounds to proceed with action based on plagiarism.
5. The student will be offered the opportunity to provide a written explanation as to how the incident may have arisen.
6. CoROM is aware and cognisant of the fact that titles, headings, and medical terminology will by nature be repetitive in many students' submissions and the EM will take account of this.
7. Where the EM decides that the incident was due to an accidental nature or was a genuine mistake on the part of the student, the student will receive a verbal warning and will be obliged to retake the Admin and Policies portion of the lecture that deals with plagiarism and academic theft.
8. Where the EM decides that the incident was deliberate in nature, and that the student has offered no satisfactory explanation as to how it arose, the matter will be referred to the Dean with a recommendation of a 5% reduction in the overall grade awarded for that submission. This will automatically carry with it a written warning.
9. Should the incident arise again with the same student, CoROM reserves the right to terminate the study of the student on the course to which they are subscribed.

ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

The methodology by which this is undertaken is informal and CoROM strives to ensure that this is as relaxed as possible. In that regard, results are usually presented to students on a one to one basis when the student has been successful, and a one student to two tutors where a student has been unsuccessful. In this process, irrespective of success or failure of assessment, students are encouraged to

- A) Outline their experience of the assessment
- B) Voice any concerns the assessment may have raised

C) Make suggestions as to how the assessment can be improved (or altered)

D) Ask any question pertaining to the assessment

Tutors will, during this assessment

- 9.1. Clearly outline the result and if applicable reason for unsuccessful assessment
- 9.2. Advise on resit policy if applicable
- 9.3. Advise on how to improve result/performance based on observations made during assessment
- 9.4. Acknowledge concerns, suggestions and experiences of the student during the assessment
- 9.5. Note the observations of the student in relation to improving the assessment

CONSISTENCY AND FAIRNESS OF ASSESSMENT

In written assessments, a 1/3 rule is applied. If an exam question is answered incorrectly by 1/3 of the group, the question is flagged for review. If the question is deemed ambiguous or unfair the mark is awarded. If not, the teaching process is reviewed to ensure topic was adequately explained. The same principle is applied to practical exams where practical errors are being demonstrated by over 1/3 of the exam cohort.

To ensure fairness and eliminate the possibility of cheating, a policy of one invigilator per 6 students is applied. Where there are only 6 students being examined this is always superseded by the practice of two tutors in the room. Students are advised as to what items are permissible and as to exam rules and regulations both on induction and prior to each exam.

For practical assessments, students are never examined by less than two tutors. Prior to any assessment, written or practical, a tutor meeting is conducted, wherein rules, regulations, times, expected outcomes and required standards are addressed to all tutors. This meeting is always scheduled to allow enough time for tutors to discuss potential issues, ambiguity, clinical differences. The rationale is to ensure and even and equal examination process for each student.

RECORD KEEPING OF GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

CoROM keep all assessment results and grades. They are kept in our classroom in a locked filing cabinet. (Written)

Additionally, we scan all coursework and keep electronic copies on a password protected external hard drive which is also kept in a locked safe.

We are compliant with Maltese data protection laws in relation to student grades, assessments, personal information etc.

STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE REGARDING ASSESSMENTS

The following is an excerpt from the CoROM Exam Policy outlining Review Procedures for students

REVIEW PROCESS

Written exams

1. In the event of failing a written exam, a student may request a review of the exam paper.
2. Once requested, the exam paper will then be remarked by a different member of faculty to the one who originally marked/graded the paper.
3. Once reviewed, the mark/grade awarded will be deemed final and the student shall have no further course of review open to them.
4. CoROM operate a policy of two examiners present in the room for all written exams.

Practical exams

1. In the event of failing a practical exam, the student will be informed, at the end of the exam process, of the decision of the exam team
2. CoROM operate a policy of two examiners conducting all practical exams.
3. The decision of the examination team in relation to practical exams will be final.

STUDENTS REQUIRING DISPENSATION

- 1.1. It shall be the responsibility of any student requiring dispensation to bring this to the attention of the EM
- 1.2. Where a student requires dispensation pertaining to exam processes, the student may be required to furnish CoROM with a report from a registered medical specialist as to the underlying reason for the applied dispensation
- 1.3. CoROM will endeavour to accommodate students in relation to, but not limited to,
 - A) Dyslexia
 - B) Dyspraxia
 - C) Dyscalcula
 - d) Any other condition deemed by CoROM to potentially affect the ability of the student to undertake exams

Standard 5 – Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Admissions process

There exists within CoROM an entry criteria (clinical) to all programmes.

1. In the first instance a student must apply for the course of their choice via an online application form (available on CoROM website)
2. They must then provide proof of suitability for entry to course (to the EM).
3. Should it be deemed that a student does not meet the criteria they are advised as to how to reach the required level by the EM.
4. Where a student is deemed to have met the entry criteria, they are advised of the academic requirements of the course (via email) along with a suggested weekly time requirement for study. The student is required to acknowledge this via return email.
5. Should the content and time suggestion be suitable for the student, they are offered a place on the course (subject to conditions, see below)
6. Depending on the course, there may be a limit on student numbers.
7. In the event of the course being sought by the student being full, the student will be offered a place on the next available course.
8. They will also be offered a place on a stand by list in the event of a booked student withdrawing.
9. Students are informed via email as to the success or otherwise of their application.
10. All courses are advertised on the CoROM website and as such, entry to courses with upper limit student numbers are offered on a “earliest application earliest offer” basis to suitable candidates.
11. Currently CoROM do not conduct pre-course interviews. If CoROM gains permission to run BA/BSc level courses in the future, it is envisaged that an entry interview would be conducted.

As a minimum qualification requirement to CoROM programmes exists, CoROM have endeavoured to ensure that minimum requirements are matched to the specific clinical grades of several countries.

All initial enquiries are dealt with by the EM. This provides consistency in answering of questions and accountability for entry to the course. On successful application, the college registrar becomes responsible for administration

Validation of student identity

Students are required to submit two copies of state issued papers such as passport and driving licence before enrolment.

Student induction

Student induction takes place on morning one of the taught blocks. The induction process covers:

1. An overview of the area in which the course will be conducted.
2. An introduction including professional background of the tutors involved in the course.
3. The layout of the classroom and location of fire escapes and toilets.
4. The Admin and Policies Lecture which includes
5. The CoROM exam policy including the appeals and resit policy
6. The CoROM behaviour policy including discrimination, bullying, complaints procedure, personal hygiene (in particular on Tropical Medicine courses which on occasion are conducted in humid climates)
7. CoROM policy on electronic devices in use during class time
8. CoROM policy on plagiarism and academic theft.
9. Introduction from students to colleagues and tutors
10. Open forum Q and A prior to commencement of course.

Student Progression

Student progression is documented in the online Moodle platform like many other universities. For the classroom setting, a more hand on student monitoring is accomplished due to our very low student to instructor ratio.

Due to the practical nature of much of the classroom training, this is achieved by daily faculty meetings to discuss the progression of each student. During classroom modules, each student receives one to one feedback weekly. Should a practical issue arise that the tutor staff deem to required addressing immediately, the tutor will bring that to the attention of the student during class time.

Should a tutor deem that a practical or hands on skill is being incorrectly executed, they will, as tutor, attempt to correct this immediately. They also have the benefit of having a second tutor in the room to which they can request that tutor to observe the student as they carry out the skill.

Staff induction takes place on progressing from CV acceptance to invited week of presentations for review of potential tutor (outlined elsewhere in document)

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students are permitted to apply for Recognition of Prior Learning. As CoROM offers specialised courses, RPL is only applicable to online content and not classroom-based learning.

When a student wishes to apply for RPL, an application in the first instance is made to the EM. The EM will then:

1. Review the application
2. Provide feedback and recommendations to the student via email as to the likelihood of success of application based on information provided. This would also include a request from the EM for further information if required.
3. Receive from the student via email the adjusted (where applicable) RPL application from the student.
4. Review document listed at point 3.
5. Make a recommendation to the executive faculty as to suitability for RPL
6. Receive ruling of EF in relation to RPL
7. Pass ruling of EF to student via email.

Students with Special Requirements

Students who identify a physical disability are catered for by CoROM ensuring they attend courses at venues where said disability can be best assisted (Accessible lifts etc.)

CoROM welcomes students and indeed tutors from all over the globe. Our experiences to date of cultural diversity has been completely positive. The opportunity to learn from other cultures in a classroom setting, for students who will most likely engage in employment outside their home nations, has been welcomed and embraced by all.

INCLUSIVENESS

CoROM welcomes students from all diversities.

Once a student has met the criteria for entry to their chosen programme of training, CoROM will ensure that no student shall be disadvantaged due to religious beliefs, sexual orientation or country of origin.

CoROM welcomes students from the LGBT community. Additionally, CoROM has hired faculty and staff from the LGBT community.

To ensure that student learning takes place in an inclusive environment, CoROM operate a policy of always having two tutors in the classroom at any given time (when students are present).

Policies governing inclusiveness,

1. Professional and academic checks and balances are in place so that no tutor inadvertently causes offence with an action or comment.
2. Students are aware that should a tutor inadvertently cause offence by a comment or action, there is immediately another tutor present that they can address the issue with.
3. Should a student feel that the informal discussion with a tutor has not to their satisfaction corrected the issue, the student can make formal representation to the Dean of the College in this regard. (Associated procedure is explained to students on day one of the taught modules in the Admin and Policies lecture: Please see below)
4. Should any student feel that the discrimination or intolerance is emanating from another student, in the first instance they should approach the first tutor available. The tutor will immediately address the issue. Should this not be to the satisfaction of the student, they will have recourse to make formal representation to the Dean of the College. Normally this will be conducted through the senior lecturer on the course or the appointed clinical lead for the course or that portion of the course.

Associated procedure for reporting of intolerance or inappropriate comments/behaviour

This policy constitutes part of the induction lecture presented to all students on day one of their course.

1. In the first instance the student should bring the issue to the attention of one of the two tutors in the classroom (without prejudice to paragraph B2 above) at the earliest possible time. Preferably this should be immediately.
2. The tutor that has been approached will immediately discuss with the other tutor present. (without prejudice to paragraph B2 as outlined above)
3. The tutor(s) will then address the issue with a) the student and B) the student or tutor who has allegedly made the remark or conducted the behaviour
4. Should the resulting discussion not be to the satisfaction of the complainant the matter will then be referred to the Dean.

5. The Dean will instigate a full investigation including but not limited to

- a) Interview with the complainant
- b) Interview with the alleged instigator of the offensive remarks/actions
- c) The tutor(s) who were first made aware of the offensive remark/action
- d) The Academic Dean will then make recommendations based on the result of the investigation which can include
 - Education to cultural differences to the instigator of the offensive remarks/actions
 - Verbal Warning as to inappropriate remarks/actions (first instance)
- e) Where any student has previously received a verbal warning as to comments/actions that CoROM deem inappropriate, they are subject on investigation to a written warning. The student will also be advised at this time that any further unacceptable behaviour pertaining to this issue will result in expulsion from the course to which they are subscribed.
- f) In the case of this complain procedure being levelled against a tutor/staff member, the same procedure will apply. However, pursuant to paragraph E, in this instance the final action will be termination of contract with CoROM.
- g) Should a student or tutor/staff member feel that they have been unfairly reprimanded, they will have the right of appeal. In this instance the entire matter will be reinvestigated by a faculty member of CoROM who has to date not been involved in this complaints procedure.

CoROM takes great pride in the fact that we attract students and indeed faculty from all over the world. On any given time, it is not unusual to have anything from 5-15 different nationalities present in the classroom. CoROM embraces this as a cross cultural learning experience for both staff and students alike and takes a very strict view of any comment, behaviour or action that would jeopardise our fully inclusive policies.

Course completion

Students receive a face to face meeting on completion of the course and prior to completion have the MQF and ECTS systems explained to them.

This will include but not be limited to the context of the qualification, The MQF level of the qualification, the amount of learning credits associated with the course, the content and status of qualification gained and the learning outcomes from the course. In addition, students will be informed of the clinical practice rights associated with the course.

Standard 6 – Teaching Staff

CoROM aims to ensure the highest standards of governance, professional management, academic rigour and quality throughout all our programmes:

This shall be managed by:

The appointment of suitably qualified staff both in the educational and clinical domains.

All potential staff members must firstly be clinically qualified in either their stated home nation, or the jurisdiction under which they are normally employed. This is checked by registration checks with the jurisdictions licensing authority

To date, CoROM has not offered any open calls for tutors and has instead drawn its tutor base from professional recommendations.

Prior to any application a potential tutor must be able to demonstrate

1. A checkable clinical work background of Advanced Life Support Clinical status or equivalent of not less than five years PQE
2. Proficiency in English language.
3. A formal qualification in teaching or education
4. Where it is deemed that a potential tutor has significant clinical experience but does not meet the requirements at point 3, they may be assessed for employment with CoROM. In this regard, they may be offered a limited role as a tutor (always supervised), until such time as they gain a formal teaching qualification.

Teaching experience is assessed in several ways:

a) The potential tutor submits a CV/Resume of teaching qualification and experience to the EM for review. The EM will review and if required investigate the submission and on review, if the EM deems the candidate to be appropriately qualified, he will make his recommendation as such to the Educational Faculty.

b) The candidate would then be invited to attend a course as a supernumerary instructor for one week. In the absence of a formal teaching qualification, or on successful acceptance of stated teaching qualification, the candidate will be tasked with presenting no less than 6 presentations (3 theory 3 practical) under the supervision of an experienced faculty member. In addition to this, the non-supervising faculty members present on the course will also observe the tutor candidate.

c) At the end of each day of this supernumerary week, the tutor candidate receives

Written feedback on performance from the supervising faculty member

Verbal feedback on performance from the supervising and non-supervising faculty members

d) Should a candidate be deemed suitable, CoROM then ensures that when invited back to teach on programmes, that they are the junior tutor on the course for a period of one year to allow for their own development as tutors. In this instance they will always have an experienced tutor with them.

e) CoROM have in the last twelve months, moved two candidates from CV to one-week review stage, and then at that point decided that they were not suitable for CoROM programmes. In the same period CoROM have approved one new tutor to the supervisory stage.

Teaching staff assessment

CoROM also conducts tutor evaluation. This is carried out by the Education Manager and addresses tutor presentation under the following headings:

1. Lesson content- tutors are required on assessment to provide lesson plan, learning objectives, didactic and cognitive outcomes of session.
2. Appearance and demeanour. CoROM will strive to ensure that tutors appear and carry themselves in a manner that is deemed appropriate. This will include appearance and demeanour when teaching.
3. Clinical Content. The assessment also reviews clinical content of lessons. CoROM strives to maintain best international practice by review of peer reviewed literature and assessment of the working systems in various other jurisdictions (medical).
4. Achievement of aims. On assessed sessions, students will be asked to fill out a feedback form requiring them to agree or disagree on whether stated learning objectives were met.

The Education Manager and CoROM reserves the right to assess with no prior notice any tutor employed by CoROM, irrespective of current position, experience or tenure within CoROM. CoROM faculty are required to be clinically competent at their clinical level. In this regard, each member of faculty must submit copies of their clinical qualifications and renewals of same and show written (anonymised) evidence of patient contacts for each calendar year.

Any faculty member or tutor who is deemed to be

Not clinically current

Not to have practised at their stated level for a period exceeding six months will be removed from the teaching roster.

CoROM endeavours to ensure that no staff member falls behind in their own professional development. In this regards CoROM envisages in house CPD limited to existing staff to be in place within the next two years (2020). In the interim period, tutors are responsible for their own professional development, assisted where possible and applicable by CoROM.

CoROM will endeavour to assist the tutor in clinical placements to refresh their clinical skills

It is envisaged that in the future CoROM will fully fund a PhD scholarship for a staff member

When this opportunity arises, all members of CoROM staff will be eligible to apply for scheme irrespective of duration of employment with CoROM, or position held within CoROM.

It is envisaged that the process will involve

1. Initial EOI from interested staff
2. Application form to scholarship scheme
3. Interview with panel (panel members will be formed from faculty who have not applied for scheme)
4. Assessment as to suitability for programme
5. Short-listing if applicable

CoROM have not committed at this point as to whether funding on such a scheme would be

- a) Funding in advance of programme
- b) Retrospective refund of fees on completion of programme

Standard 7 – Learning resources and student support

Operational Language of CoROM

CoROM will ensure that information provided is understandable in lay language.

The operational language of the College is English.

The college has a designated Education Manager, who is contactable via email for any non-administration related inquiries students may have (contactable at education@corom.org) (Admin/Logistic issues are not dealt with by the Education Manager)

Students are made aware of learning supports during the Admin and Policies lecture delivered on the morning of the first taught day of the programme, and via email for the preceding online study module.

Learning support

Students and staff have open access to all course materials via an online interface. When attending taught modules, students are permitted to use classroom facilities for study out of hours with a tutor present.

In addition, tutors give from their own time, review sessions and conduct recap out of hours. These come at no additional cost to the student and are not compulsory, so no student feels they must attend.

While on clinical placement, students still have an email line of contact to the EM on a daily basis and are under the supervision of a clinician who is either a staff member of CoROM or has received a detailed brief as to aims and objectives of CoROM in relation to student placements.

Students are encouraged to contact the EM once per week as routine. Students also have unlimited access to the EM in the event of issues arising

Standard 8 - Information Management

The online learning platform for CoROM is Moodle.

Moodle is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments

On registration with CoROM for your chosen programme, students are instructed how to register for Moodle (if applicable to course).

The management of content on Moodle shall rest with the Education Manager and the Registrar

On initial application of students, we assess for vulnerable groups by form of questionnaire. This is managed in such a way as to avoid embarrassment or difficulty for the student, and in that regard, questions are written in a sensitive manner in order to extrapolate information

Eg: Do you have and special access/egress requirements for the classroom

Do you require and assistance when undertaking exams and or lessons, such as large font, speakers, aids to writing?

We do have a tertiary knowledge of how many of our graduates gain employment upon graduation. This is done through graduate surveys. Response rates to date have been in line with online academic surveys conducted by faculty members for research purposes and are circa 40%.

We use an online survey platform (surveymonkey.com), which affords the graduate an opportunity to anonymously return the questionnaire. From this, we extrapolate data pertaining to career development, further study etc. For numerical analysis, SPSS statistical analysis software is utilised.

Standard 9 – Public information

CoROM are committed not just to education but to being part of the communities where we operate.

In this regard, public inquiries are welcome, and contact details are available in the public domain via the CoROM website.

The CoROM website, includes but is not limited to

1. Selection criteria for course and programmes
2. Intended learning outcomes
3. information on the EQF/MQF level and ECTS/ECVET learning credits
4. Teaching, Learning and assessment procedures used
5. Pass rates for all programmes
6. Further learning opportunities post qualification
7. Information on possible career pathways post qualification

Website and associated information are currently reviewed bi-annually (Jan and July) or when an issue/error or omission is identified by either a staff member or student. The responsibility for this task rests with the EM.

Students in the first instance engage in email conversation with the EM to ensure that the programmes they wish to undertake are suitable for them and their career requirements.

While most potential students approaching CoROM have already researched the course they wish to undertake, on occasion, the EM has advised a potential student that the course may not fit what they are currently seeking professionally. As CoROM is an NFP organization, we have no desire to “sell” courses that are obviously not of benefit to the prospective student, or would not match the expectations of the student at this point in their career.

Standard 10 – Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

If a student outlines a need that CoROM view as being outside the scope of the syllabus to which they are subscribed, this is addressed firstly within the faculty (Executive Faculty). If it is deemed that the need has validity to the intended course, a review of need is undertaken with a prospective view of including that point in the syllabus. If it is deemed that the need of the student is not within the scope of the syllabus, the student is advised of same. In this regard CoROM strives to ensure that no student is entering a course with false ideals as to syllabus, content etc.

Training needs analysis (TNA) are undertaken at the end of each programme to ensure the syllabus and needs of the students have been fulfilled, and prior to commencement of the next course of training to make any required alterations to the syllabus. This is undertaken by the Executive Faculty (currently Executive Dean, Medical Director, Education Manager, and Registrar).

1. Senior Faculty also review all courses on an annual basis. Any course not providing an increase in employability is no longer offered on our curriculum. This is monitored by means of reviewing the available job requirements on the accepted and reputable sites that advertise for remote/austere paramedics. Normally, the industry will clearly outline the requirements for each post and by monitoring the job market, CoROM is in a position to provide courses that will offer the highest chances of employment for our graduates. When it is noted the employers have moved their preferences away from a specific course (e.g. Pre Hospital Trauma Life Support which fell out of favour circa 2015), CoROM would in this instance no longer offer this course. In addition, on introduction of new clinical pathways (e.g. NICE protocol), courses are content reviewed. This process is managed by the EM in conjunction with the Academic Review Board. Further to this we invite employers to engage at a development level in relation to course design and delivery to ensure as best as is possible that our graduates are prepared for the employment market on completion of their programme.
2. Every course has an anonymous feedback form. These are reviewed by the Course Director, Medical Director, Executive Dean and Education manager. Any identified issues are immediately reviewed for validity and accuracy. In addition, students are invited to approach tutors at any time. In addition to this each student is afforded a weekly feedback session with the course tutor(s) There exists a clean implementation, management, monitoring and reporting structures for all CoROM operations, academic developments and amendments
3. CoROM will adhere to organisational procedures in relation to legislative and external policy requirements, in accordance with local and national laws.
4. The views of students in relation to this feedback loop mechanism is outlined earlier in this document.

CoROM operates robust monitoring and risk assessment of current and programmes and currently the following external institutions have accredited courses within CoROM:

- International Board for Safety Certifications for the Flight Paramedic and Critical Care Paramedic board certification exams.
- Wilderness Medical Society for the TTEMS, RMLS and RAMS courses.
- International Trauma Life Support for the ITLS courses.
- American Safety and Health Institute for the ACLS and PALS courses. (BLS/ACLS).
- CoROM are independently reviewed by all organisations for quality of delivery of their programmes as per their internal accreditation requirements.

Any deficiencies are quickly addressed. In matters pertaining to content changes, they would be communicated to faculty prior to implementation and on successful completion of accreditation will also be advised to the NCFHE.

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