

Introduction

The Greek Atomic Energy Commission (EEAE) continues to provide training on radiation protection and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this respect it has conducted 5 training courses for RPOs from March to November 2020. This work presents the challenges encountered by EEAE in carrying out its training activities due to the restrictions introduced by the pandemic.

Requirements for the approval of RPOs

The qualifications, competence and training requirements for the approval of RPOs include:

- For practices including medical exposure:
 - radiologist, nuclear medicine physician or dentist with a 4 month experience (registered practices)
 - Medical physicist (licensed practices)
- For practices not including medical exposure:
 - academic degree relevant to the practices of interest
 - 3 or 6 months on the job training for registered and licensed practices respectively.



Challenges

The main challenges encountered during the conduct of EEAE's training activities include:

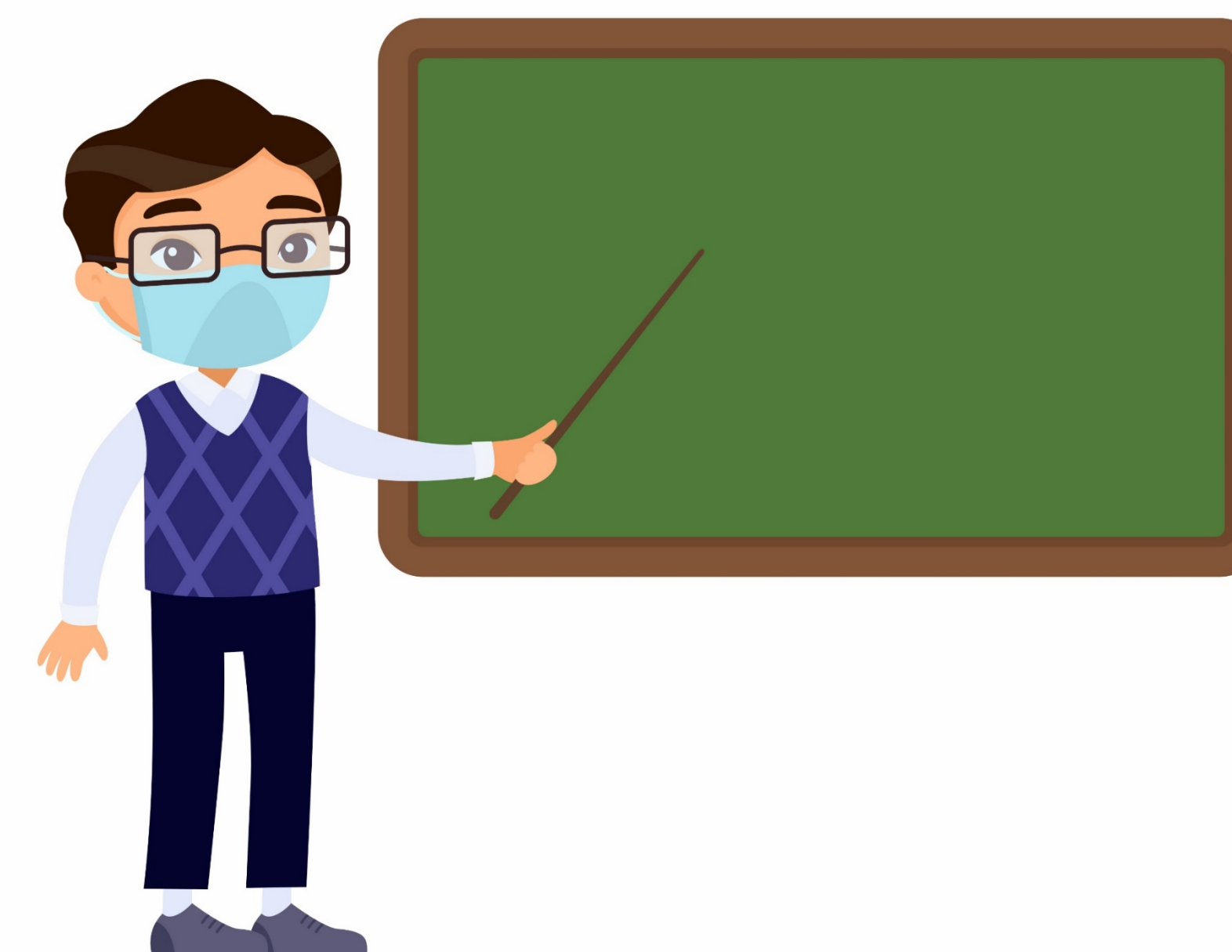
- Limitations in the maximum allowed number of participants per face to face course.
- Implementation of distancing and safety precautions according to national and workplace protocols.
- Technical problems in the use of web-conferencing applications.
- Limited communication of lecturers with the participants using web-conferencing applications tools.
- Limitations in virtual demonstration of practical exercises.

Opportunities in the COVID-19 era

- EEAE demonstrates the necessary flexibility and continues to provide training services of high standards.
- On-line courses were incorporated in EEAE's training strategy by appropriately adapting the training material and the related procedures in its management system.
- EEAE's IT and Public Relations personnel is effectively involved in the organization, conduct and promotion of on-line courses.
- EEAE's distance training is acknowledged by the government as an innovative action of the public sector (<https://bit.ly/3iJlxd1>)

Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a number of challenges to be encountered by EEAE during its training activities. However, these challenges were also an opportunity for EEAE to evolve its training strategy by incorporating suitable procedures, applications and tools.



EEAE's training activities

- EEAE conducted in 2020:
 - 3 on-line courses (46 participants) for RPOs in organizations using radioactive sources for geological studies and industrial purposes, and X-ray systems for security purposes,
 - 1 face to face course (3 participants) for RPOs in organizations using X-ray systems for security or quality control purposes, and
 - 1 on-line training course (20 participants) for vascular surgeons during their national conference.
- In average: 8 training courses/y and 100 participants/y (in the last 5 years).

Management system

The development and conduct of EEAE's training activities are in line with the implemented management system that meets the requirements of the ISO 29993:2017 standard* (Learning services outside formal education - Service requirements).

* ISO 29993:2017 standard specifies requirements for learning services outside formal education, including all types of life-long learning.

