



# **Diploma of Legal Medicine (DLM) Regulations, Syllabus and Information for Candidates**



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## **Foreword**

The Diploma of Legal Medicine (DLM) Examination Regulations 2016 apply from 01 January 2017 and cover the DLM examination. This document supersedes any previous version.

## **Notice of future amendments to the Regulations**

The DLM examination will continue to change to reflect developments in legal medicine. While every attempt has been made to ensure that this document is accurate, further changes may be implemented over time.

Candidates should refer to the Exams page of the FFLM website ([www.fflm.ac.uk/exams](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams)) for the most up-to-date information, where any such changes will be detailed. In addition, wherever changes are made, notices will be issued indicating the nature of these changes. In order that candidates are fully briefed about the status of any proposed changes, they are advised to read these notices along with this publication.

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The following Regulations apply to candidates entering the DLM examination.

## 1. Duties of a Healthcare Professional

All registered healthcare professionals have a duty placed on them by their regulatory body to be honest and trustworthy. Similar standards are expected from those candidates without a background of work in healthcare. Candidate performance in DLM assessments is reviewed by healthcare practitioners who themselves have a duty to notify the General Medical Council (GMC), General Dental Council (GDC), Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) or Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) if they have concerns. Misconduct before, during or after assessments or evidence of lack of competence may be referred to the GMC, GDC, NMC and/or HCPC.

Candidates whose registration (or its equivalent overseas) is subject to suspension, referral or any condition must provide the FFLM with full details in advance of sitting the assessment.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Purpose of these Regulations

These Regulations relate to the assessments undertaken by candidates sitting the DLM.

### 2.2 Date of publication

The DLM Regulations first came into effect on 01 January 2014. They will change over time. Candidates should ensure that they familiarise themselves with the Regulations current at the time they are taking the DLM. The current version will always be downloadable from the FFLM web site. The FFLM will give appropriate advance notice of any change which may have a material effect on candidates to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged as a result.

### 2.3 Data protection

The personal data and test data of DLM candidates will be stored with the consent forms signed by candidates and processed by the FFLM in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Candidates wishing to exercise their data subject rights under the Act should contact the FFLM's Administration office.

### 2.4 Test security and copyright

Material relating to DLM assessments is confidential, protected by copyright and subject to non-disclosure requirements which candidates must observe. It must not be placed on the World Wide Web, disclosed to or discussed with any unauthorised person in any circumstances, except with the express, written permission of the FFLM. Candidates who are found to have infringed these requirements will be penalised in accordance with the guidance on misconduct in these Regulations.

### 3. Purpose of the assessment

- 3.1 The DLM is an examination and its successful completion is required of candidates who wish to obtain the Diploma of Legal Medicine.
- 3.2 A person who successfully completes the DLM is not eligible to be considered for Membership of the FFLM. However, a registered medical practitioner who obtains a distinction will be offered exemption from the Part 1 Membership of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (MFFLM) Examination for a period of three years.

### 4. Constitutional Framework: Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine

#### 4.1 The FFLM has the power under Standing Orders:

- 4.1.1 to set professional standards for admission to membership of the FFLM; and
- 4.1.2 to conduct examinations and award qualifications.

#### 4.2 The FFLM has the power to:

- 4.2.1 determine the terms and conditions of entry to the DLM examination. The FFLM reserves the right to refuse admission to the DLM examination.

#### 4.3 To maintain the academic quality of the examination, the FFLM is responsible for:

- 4.3.1 appointing examiners with appropriate qualifications and experience;
- 4.3.2 producing syllabuses for appropriate parts of the examination;
- 4.3.3 monitoring candidate performance; and
- 4.3.4 arranging suitable examination facilities.

#### 4.4 In the exercise of these powers and responsibilities, the FFLM will comply and ensure compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation, such as the:

- 4.4.1 Equality Act 2010;
- 4.4.2 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- 4.4.3 Disability Discrimination Act 1995;
- 4.4.4 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2001;
- 4.4.5 Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006; and
- 4.4.6 Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998.

#### 4.5 The FFLM Board believes that equality of opportunity is fundamental to the many and varied ways in which individuals become involved with the FFLM, either as members, members of staff and Officers, as advisors from the medical and related professions, as members of the FFLM's committees or as practitioners in training and examination candidates. Accordingly, it warmly welcomes, and actively seeks to recruit, contributors and applicants from as diverse a population as possible, regardless of race, religion, ethnic origin, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation.

5. Academic Framework: The Aims and Objectives of the DLM examination
  - 5.1 It is the aspiration of the FFLM that the DLM examination will play a role in the overall educational experience and continuing professional development of persons with an interest in legal medicine.
  - 5.2 Aim

The aim of the DLM examination is to demonstrate those persons who have a detailed knowledge of the specialty of legal medicine.
  - 5.3 Objectives

Successful completion of the DLM examination will provide objective demonstration of a detailed knowledge of the field of legal medicine.
  - 5.4 Assessment methodology

The DLM examination includes questions that require an understanding of the legal framework that underpins medicine in general and the practise of legal medicine in particular.
  - 5.5 The examination
    - 5.5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the DLM examination - which is a knowledge test - is to identify those candidates who have knowledge of the legal and regulatory infrastructure that governs clinical practice.
    - 5.5.2 Aims

The aim of the DLM examination is to test the acquisition of a representative sample of medico-legal knowledge as specified in the published Syllabus for the examination.
6. Mitigating Circumstances
  - 6.1 Mitigating circumstances will **not** result in additional marks being awarded. However, candidates who report mitigating circumstances that are accepted by the FFLM may, under the following Regulations, have the fees for a re-sit waived, and/or be assisted in taking a re-sit.
  - 6.2 The FFLM would normally expect a candidate who believed that their performance was likely to be affected by mitigating circumstances arising **before** an assessment to withdraw from that sitting and re-sit at a later date.
  - 6.3 Where mitigating circumstances arise **during** an assessment, which the candidate believes are having a material, detrimental effect on performance, the candidate would normally be expected to withdraw from the sitting and re-sit at a later date.

- 6.4 If a candidate decides to proceed with an assessment even though s/he believes that mitigating circumstances are having an effect on performance, then the mitigating circumstances must be reported to the invigilator who will complete a contemporaneous record, which will be signed by the candidate. Candidates reporting mitigating circumstances during an assessment will not normally be allowed any additional time to complete an assessment unless an error of process on the part of the FFLM or test centre has denied them the full time to complete the assessment.
- 6.5 All reports of mitigating circumstances should be submitted to the FFLM's Administration Office as soon as the circumstances arise or as soon as possible thereafter and no later than 48 hours after the assessment takes place. The only exception is where the candidate was unaware of the mitigating circumstances at the time of the assessment. An email giving written evidence of the mitigating circumstances must be provided to the FFLM.
- 6.6 Mitigating circumstances for reasons of illness must be stated in an email and evidenced in the form of a medical certificate, whose scanned copy can be sent electronically.
- 6.7 Where mitigating circumstances arise that affect all candidates, the invigilator supervising the assessment will be responsible for deciding what action to take and will provide a written report to the Chief Examiner.
- 6.8 No report of mitigating circumstances, submitted after the publication of results, will be considered unless the candidate can provide compelling and independent evidence that s/he was unable, for whatever reason, to make the FFLM aware of them at an earlier stage.
- 6.9 All reports of mitigating circumstances will be considered by the Chief Examiner or a nominated deputy, who may consult others as they see fit. Records of any mitigating circumstances submitted in respect of other assessments may be used to inform the decision-making process.
- 6.10 If an application for mitigating circumstances is refused, the candidate may complain to the Faculty using the complaints procedure contained in these Regulations (10).

## 7. Special Arrangements

### 7.1 Disability

- 7.1.1 Reasonable adjustments will be made to assessment procedures where necessary to meet the needs of individuals who have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These adjustments will not entail the lowering of standards of assessment.
- 7.1.2 Candidates who would like special arrangements to be made to assist them when taking the DLM must inform the FFLM of their disability **when they apply to sit the assessments** and must complete the disability declaration form. Evidence of the disability will be required. For dyslexic candidates, for

instance, a report from an educational psychologist will be required. It is important to note that the report cannot be older than three years and needs to specify what assistance is necessary (e.g. extra time, larger font, different colour paper etc.). Failure to include this information at the time of application may affect the arrangements that can be put in place in time for the examination.

- 7.1.3 Each case will be separately assessed by the Chief Examiner or a nominated deputy. Candidates will be informed in writing whether or not adjustments to assessment procedures will be made to meet their needs.

## 7.2 Pregnancy

- 7.2.1 Candidates should ensure that they arrange to take an assessment some time before or after their due date.
- 7.2.2 If a candidate has booked a sitting of the exam and subsequently develops pregnancy-related problems or illness close to the date of the assessment, or is in sufficient discomfort on the day of the assessment for her to believe that her condition will have a detrimental effect on performance, she should withdraw from the sitting and, as soon as possible thereafter submit a medical certificate to the FFLM Administration office. In these circumstances and at the discretion of the FFLM, no fee will be payable when the candidate next applies for that examination.

## 8. DLM examination

### 8.1 The format

- 8.1.1 The DLM examination is designed to assess a candidate's knowledge and understanding of legal medicine relevant to clinical practice.
- 8.1.2 The DLM examination has a one-paper format. The paper consists of 150 best-of-five multiple-choice questions. Candidates have three hours to complete it. Candidates are tested on a wide range of topics in Legal Medicine as set out in the published Syllabus – Schedule 1.

The examination may include pre-test questions (trial questions that are used for research purposes only). A small number of pre-test questions may appear in any paper. Responses to them do not count towards a candidate's final score. The use of pre-test questions is in line with the assessment criteria set out by the General Medical Council (GMC). Candidates are directed to this [page](#) of their website for further information.

- 8.1.3 Drugs are normally referred to by their recommended International Nonproprietary Names (INN) rather than by their trade names.
- 8.1.4 Biochemical and other measurements are expressed in SI units and normal or reference ranges are provided.
- 8.1.5 The DLM examination is criterion referenced. Before the examination, the difficulty of each question is considered by the FFLM Chief Examiner's Committee. The standard setters assess the difficulty of the questions against the level of knowledge expected of candidates using a procedure known as the modified Angoff method.

8.1.6 All judgements by all standard setters on all questions are then analysed and a criterion-referenced pass mark is established. In order for wild fluctuations in the pass rate to be avoided, there are limits outside which it has been decided the pass rate may not fall. As a result of the standard setting and the restrictions on pass rates, the pass mark and pass rate can vary slightly from one examination to the next.

8.1.7 The marking system for the DLM examination is as follows:

- (a) one mark is awarded for a correct answer;
- (b) no mark is awarded or deducted for an incorrect answer;
- (c) no mark is awarded or deducted if a question is left unanswered;
- (d) no mark is awarded if more than one response is recorded or if the answer is not sufficiently clear; and
- (e) no mark is awarded for any answer that the scanner queries as:
  - (i) insufficiently erased;
  - (ii) smudged.

In these circumstances the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine does not consider it is appropriate to interpret a candidate's intentions.

- (f) The final mark for each candidate is the mark obtained in the examination paper expressed as a percentage.

## 8.2 How to complete the DLM examination answer sheets

8.2.1 Answer sheets will be printed to include candidate numbers. Candidates must ensure that their candidate number matches the one issued at the time of application.

8.2.2 The answer sheets for the DLM examination are machine readable, like [this](#). Candidates should indicate the single correct answer in accordance with the instructions provided.

8.2.3 Papers will be marked by an Optical Mark Reader (OMR). The OMR output is processed by computer and marks are allocated according to the candidate's responses. Scores are then calculated and statistical data across candidates are calculated relating to individual questions. This information is produced in printed form for the FFLM Examining Board.

8.2.4 As the completed answer sheets will be computer marked, candidates must comply fully with the instructions given on each answer sheet, otherwise answer sheets may be rejected by the machine or the candidate's intention misinterpreted.

8.2.5 The Faculty reserves the right to mark the examination papers manually if the numbers of candidates warrants this method.

8.2.6 Candidates should use only the pens supplied in the examination. A pencil may also be used. Dubious or multiple answers for the same question cannot be read by the OMR and may therefore result in a zero score.

8.2.7 Candidates may **not** erase any answer. To avoid making mistakes, they may indicate their choices in the question book in the first instance, before

transferring them to the answer sheet. Candidates should remember to allow sufficient time to do this, as additional time will not be allowed.

8.2.8 The answer sheet must **not** be folded, creased or contain anything other than the answers A, B, C, D or E.

8.2.9 It is important that candidates fully understand how to complete the answer sheet before sitting the examination.

### 8.3 Entry requirements

There are no restrictions on who may sit the DLM Examination. The DLM may attract a wide variety of people, including:

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| (a) A & E clinicians          | (p) GPs                                    |
| (b) Academics                 | (q) Gynaecologists                         |
| (c) Barristers                | (r) LMC Secretaries                        |
| (d) Claims handlers           | (s) Medical and nursing managers           |
| (e) Clinical risk managers    | (t) Medical Examiners                      |
| (f) Coroners                  | (u) Medical Reviewers                      |
| (g) Dento-legal Advisers      | (v) Medico-legal Advisers                  |
| (h) Expert witnesses          | (w) MPTS panellists (both medical and lay) |
| (i) Forensic Nurses           | (x) Surgeons                               |
| (j) Forensic Odontologists    | (y) Paediatricians                         |
| (k) Forensic Paramedics       | (z) Responsible Officers                   |
| (l) Forensic Pathologists     | (aa) Solicitors                            |
| (m) Forensic Physicians       | (bb) Sexual Offences Examiners             |
| (n) Forensic Psychiatrists    | (cc) Tribunal doctors                      |
| (o) GMC performance assessors |  |

Those candidates who are registered with a regulatory body will have to sign a Declaration of Faith that they are in good standing with their regulatory body or bodies. If the applicant believes they may have a difficulty in this respect, then they should discuss the matter in confidence with the FFLM Registrar in advance so that they may make an informed decision on whether or not to proceed with their application at that time.

## 8.4 Exemptions

There are no exemptions.

## 8.5 How to enter the DLM examination

8.5.1 Candidates can apply for the DLM examination by completing and submitting the application form available on the FFLM website [www.fflm.ac.uk/exams](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams) and paying the appropriate fee.

8.5.2 It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that their application is completed by the required closing date. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted unless this was caused by exceptional circumstances.

8.5.3 Paper applications will **not** be accepted.

## 8.6 Fees

Details of fees, which are subject to annual revision, dates and opening and closing dates for applications are available on the Exams page of the FFLM website: [www.fflm.ac.uk/exams](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams).

## 8.7 Visas

8.7.1 The FFLM Office is aware of the difficulties encountered by some candidates in obtaining visas in sufficient time to attend the DLM examination in the UK. If a candidate requires a visa to sit an examination in the UK, it is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the visa application is made in sufficient time before the examination date for which it has been sought. A refund will not be given if a candidate is unable to attend the exam as a result of visa-related problems.

8.7.2 DLM Visa Statement for candidates visiting the UK:

- (a) If you are applying from a country where the processing of visas is known to take some time, we encourage you to apply early.
- (b) Please let us know, when you apply, that you need examination entry confirmation and we will send you a formal letter, which can be used to apply for your visa.

8.8 It is ultimately the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they can meet the requirements concerning entry to the UK for attendance at the DLM examination. This is a matter over which the FFLM has no control and can accept no responsibility. We therefore ask each candidate to consider carefully whether there is a possibility of having their visa application rejected or not processed in time as we will not refund fees due to visa refusals.

## 8.9 Applying for the exam

Please apply for the exam using the link provided on the Exams page of the FFLM website: [www.fflm.ac.uk/exams](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams).

## 8.10 Payments

8.10.1 The preferred payment method is online, by credit/debit card or PayPal account, using the link provided in the Exams page of the FFLM website.

Alternative methods are also possible. Please email [forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk](mailto:forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk) for details.

8.10.2 A candidate's application is only processed once his/her complete application form and payment are received.

## 8.11 Names

8.11.1 Candidates will be required to provide photo identification at the time of sitting the examination. The only means accepted are normally a passport, driving licence or National Identity Card.

8.11.2 Entries may not be accepted if there is any discrepancy in the spelling, order or number of names given in their identification document.

8.11.3 It is the candidate's responsibility to resolve any discrepancies, including the expansion of initials, by obtaining a statement from the issuing authority certifying that the candidate, in his or her full and correct name, is the same person as that named on the diploma.

8.11.4 Candidates who change their names by marriage or deed poll must submit authenticated documentary proof of this if they wish to be admitted to the examination in their new names.

8.11.5 Names are phonetically translated into English from some languages and this can lead to spelling variations. Some candidates are inconsistent in the spelling of such translations and must realise that this does not allow accurate identification and is not acceptable to the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine. Candidates should ensure that the spelling of their name is consistent on all documents submitted.

8.11.6 The records of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine will show a first name followed by the family name. For example, Alan Smith. Correspondence will be addressed using the candidate's title followed by his/her first name and then the family name as it appears on the candidate's diploma of medical qualification, for example, Dr Alan Smith.

## 8.12 Centres

The DLM examination may be held anywhere in the UK but normally takes place in Central London. Candidates should refer to the Exams page of the FFLM website ([www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm)) for the most up-to-date information.

## 8.13 Withdrawal from the examination and refund of fees

8.13.1 Notice of withdrawal from the examination must be given in writing, by email, to the Administration Office. Candidates are asked to quote their FFLM candidate number (if known), full name and date of birth in their withdrawal notice to allow Faculty staff to easily identify them.

8.13.2 Only written requests to withdraw will be accepted as official withdrawal requests.

8.13.3 In no circumstances can examination applications or fees be transferred from one examination session to another.

8.13.4 Candidates who submit their withdrawal request on or before the closing date will be refunded 90% of the fee. Where possible this refund will be paid in the same way as the original payment was made. Refunds will not be made where candidates submit their withdrawal request after the closing date unless there

are circumstances deemed exceptional, which can be substantiated. Further, such requests (accompanied by supporting evidence) must be submitted within four weeks from the examination date if they are to be considered. Decisions on these cases will be made by the Chief Examiner in consultation with the Chief Examiner's Committee whose decision is final. If exceptional circumstances are accepted, the candidate will be refunded 90% of the fee paid.

#### 8.14 Number of attempts

8.14.1 Candidates can apply and sit the DLM examination as many times as required.

#### 8.15 After the DLM examination

##### 8.15.1 Review of the examination

- (a) Results are released when the Chief Examiner and the Academic Dean of the FFLM are satisfied that the examination was conducted appropriately and in accordance with the procedures of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine.
- (b) The Chief Examiner's Committee considers each question in the DLM prior to its appearance in the examination and reviews the question's performance after every examination, as well as reviewing the examination as a whole. In addition to the final scores obtained by the candidates, the Chief Examiner's Committee will also note the mean score for the examination and the mean scores for, and the discriminatory power of, the questions that comprise each paper. A detailed analysis of the responses to each item (including a separate index of discrimination for every item), and a coefficient indicating the internal reliability of the examination as a whole, are also considered by the Committee. In the light of these analyses, the FFLM Chief Examiner's Committee may make modifications to the questions and answers that it deems desirable to ensure that the quality of the examination is maintained.

##### 8.15.2 Results

- (a) Results will be published on the website within four weeks of the date of the examination, subject to 8.15.1 Confirmation and details of results will be emailed within a further three weeks. Results cannot be collected from FFLM or given over the telephone.
- (b) The FFLM candidate numbers and results of all candidates, both passes and fails, will be published in the Exams page of the FFLM website ([www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm)). Candidates will not be identified by name. Candidates are advised to take careful note of their candidate number upon receipt of their admission document.
- (c) Candidates should notify the FFLM of any change of email address as soon as possible. Please note that **personal** email addresses, rather than work ones, are preferred, as these change less often.

##### 8.15.3 Pass result

Candidates passing the DLM examination will be entitled to use the postnominal DLM.

##### 8.15.4 Fail result

A candidate not achieving the pass mark in the DLM examination will be deemed to have failed the examination.

#### 8.15.5 Queries on results

- (a) Candidates may request that their answer sheets are re-marked. There is a charge of £150.00 per paper for this service. This charge will be refunded if an error is identified.
- (b) Requests for the re-marking of answer sheets should be addressed in writing to the Chief Examiner, via [forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk](mailto:forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk), and must be received within six weeks of the publication of results.
- (c) Candidates are reminded that their answer sheets are held for one year only.

#### 8.15.6 Award of Distinction

The mark to be awarded to obtain a Distinction will be set by the Angoff method and will allow a registered medical practitioner exemption from the MFFLM Part 1 examination for a period of three years. This mark is the pass mark for that examination session's MFFLM Part 1 examination.

### 9. Attendance at, and conduct during, the DLM examinations

9.1 Candidates presenting themselves for the DLM examination must have complied fully with all admission requirements.

9.2 Candidates are warned that any breach of DLM examination Rules and Regulations will result in severe penalties, including the risk that the relevant Examining Board will permanently debar the candidate from taking any further FFLM examinations.

9.3 Candidates should note that, owing to issues of heightened security, the examination start times might vary. Consequently, candidates are advised not to make travel plans that could be jeopardised if the examination starts late or is interrupted. The DLM examination normally starts at 10:00 (UK time).

#### 9.4 Monitoring candidate behaviour

9.4.1 Candidates are advised that the DLM Chief Examiner's Committee may employ various systems to identify those candidates who attempt to copy, collude or perform some other act that may be regarded as academic misconduct in DLM examinations. Set out below is an update on the system that is currently in use in RCP examinations which the Faculty may use and an explanation of what the Faculty would intend to do with the information it collects.

9.4.2 The Anomaly Monitoring System (AMS) seeks to detect instances of copying or collusion by looking for anomalous patterns of responses by candidates, the answers of one candidate being more similar to those of another candidate than would be expected by chance alone. There are many different combinations of answers by which candidates can achieve a particular score. If two candidates have an unusually high number of exactly the same answers then this may be regarded as an anomaly. AMS systematically considers all possible pairs of candidates and looks at the similarity of their answers.

- 9.4.3 In comparing candidate responses, the AMS programme takes into account the expected number of answers in common, relative to the candidate's performance on the assessment.
- 9.4.4 Candidates should note that in doing this:
- (a) the programme does not know the centre at which candidates are sitting the exam; and
  - (b) the programme does not know the seating plan of the candidates at the centre.
- 9.4.5 The programme is therefore inherently conservative in its detection of anomalous candidates. If a pair (or group) of candidates is identified as having an unusually high proportion of similar answers then a further independent investigation is carried out looking at the centre where the candidates sat, the seating plan and any other information that may be provided by the invigilators and staff administering the examination. Should it be agreed that the matter requires full investigation the candidates concerned will be contacted and asked to attend an interview.
- 9.4.6 The DLM Chief Examiner's Committee is fully aware that candidates could be implicated in an act of academic misconduct through the conduct of others. In order to avoid such allegations being levied, candidates identified at one sitting to be part of an anomalous pair may be requested to sit in specific locations in the examination hall at the next sitting. There will be no assumption of guilt in making this request; it is simply a pre-emptive measure.
- 9.4.7 AMS is one tool that the DLM Chief Examiner's Committee may use to monitor candidate behaviour in the DLM examinations.

## 9.5 Examination Rules and Regulations

- 9.5.1 Any infringement of the following Rules and Regulations may be reported to the Academic Dean, Administration Office for consideration by the Board.
- 9.5.2 Candidates are advised to allow for any transport delays when planning their time of arrival at the examination hall as, for security reasons, and to avoid disruption to other candidates, we cannot guarantee that they will be permitted to enter the examination hall after the start of the examination.
- 9.5.3 Candidates should assemble outside the examination hall at least 30 minutes before the start of the examination and should not enter until instructed by the invigilator(s).
- 9.5.4 Candidates will not be admitted to any paper if they arrive more than 30 minutes after the examination has started, unless in exceptional circumstances with the express permission of the invigilator(s).
- 9.5.5 Identification documents are checked during the examination, soon after the start. Admission to the examination will be at the discretion of the invigilator(s). The FFLM observes sensitivity in the visual identification of candidates, but advance notice should be given by candidates of any anticipated difficulties.
- 9.5.6 Candidates must not bring into the examination hall any papers, bags, calculators, mobile phones, pagers, PDAs (or any electronic audio or communication device), textbooks or documents, or items of any kind other than those specifically allowed for that particular examination and previously notified to them. The possession of calculators, mobile phones, pagers, personal stereos or electronic wrist watches or any other such devices that are audible, make calculations, store information or can be used for

communication in the examination venue is strictly forbidden. Any unauthorised material will be confiscated and a report detailing the incident and identifying the candidate will be submitted to the Chief Examiner.

- 9.5.7 Where examination halls do not have secure areas to store personal items, any coats, bags or other item(s) brought into the examination hall should be deposited as directed by the invigilator(s). Electronic items must be deactivated and placed away from the candidate's desk.
- 9.5.8 With prior approval (via submission of special need requirements at the time of application), candidates may bring into the examination hall aids that will enable them to remedy a disability e.g. of sight and/or hearing.
- 9.5.9 If a candidate has unwittingly brought any unauthorised paper or item into the examination hall, this should be handed to the invigilator(s) before the examination starts or at the earliest possible opportunity thereafter.
- 9.5.10 Question papers are individually numbered (with candidate numbers) in the top right-hand corner. Candidates must sit at the desk where the question paper is marked with their candidate number.
- 9.5.11 Candidates must not start reading or answering the examination questions until the start of the examination is announced by the invigilator(s).
- 9.5.12 Candidates must use only the stationery approved by the FFLM. Any rough work must be completed on the approved stationery and handed in with the completed papers.
- 9.5.13 Candidates must comply with all instructions given to them by invigilator(s). Such instructions may include the instruction to leave the examination hall and not to return during the period of the examination. It is the duty of a candidate to comply with an invigilator's instruction even if they judge the instruction to be unreasonable (there is the right of appeal if a candidate considers that the invigilator has not acted in accordance with these Regulations).
- 9.5.14 Whilst in the examination hall, a candidate must not attempt to read the work of any other candidate or communicate in any way with any other candidate or any other person without the express permission of the invigilator.
- 9.5.15 Where an invigilator suspects a candidate or candidates of infringing FFLM examination Regulations/examination hall rules he/she shall:
  - (a) confiscate any unauthorised material in the possession of the candidate;
  - (b) endorse the front cover of the candidate's script with a note of the time when the alleged infringement was discovered. In cases of suspected collusion, invigilators should endorse the script of each candidate suspected of being involved. Wherever possible an invigilator will invite another invigilator to act as witness by countersigning the endorsement;
  - (c) allow the candidates in question to continue the examination;
  - (d) inform the candidate(s) in question at the end of the examination that a written report of the incident will be submitted to the Chief Examiner; and
  - (e) prepare within three working days a written report on the alleged incident and send it with any confiscated materials to the FFLM Administration Office.
- 9.5.16 Any invigilator or examiner present is empowered to refuse to allow a candidate to continue with the examination on grounds of misconduct. Ejection from the examination hall should normally take place only in the event of a candidate's conduct causing disruption to other candidates.

- 9.5.17 Candidates who wish to attract the attention of the invigilator(s) during the examination should do so by raising a hand.
- 9.5.18 Candidates should bring to the attention of the invigilator any factor (e.g. distracting noise) that is adversely affecting them during the examination. Where necessary they should communicate the same in writing to the Chief Examiner DLM at the Administration Office immediately following the examination concerned.
- 9.5.19 Once admitted to each part of the examination, candidates must stay for the full duration of each paper. Candidates may not leave the examination hall as a result of finishing the examination paper early. Those who attempt to do so will be deemed to have breached the examination Regulations.
- 9.5.20 Candidates must not leave the examination hall temporarily, during the period of the examination, unless given express permission by the invigilator(s) to do so. If such permission is given, they must not attempt to contact any other person or consult any material relating to the examination whilst outside the examination hall. They should report to the invigilator(s) on returning to the examination hall.
- 9.5.21 Candidates may not temporarily leave the examination hall during the first 30 minutes of any paper or in the 10 minutes before the scheduled end of each paper.
- 9.5.22 Candidates should stop writing when instructed to do so and remain in their seats in silence while papers, empty answer books, continuation sheets or other papers are collected.
- 9.5.23 Candidates should not remove from the examination hall any papers or examination materials. Question papers or any part of them, or any individual questions, must not be copied or removed from the examination hall. All FFLM examination questions are confidential and are copyrighted by the FFLM. A candidate may not communicate any question or part of a question to any other person or organisation. To do so would be a serious breach of copyright and of these Regulations, and Misconduct Procedures may be invoked.
- 9.5.24 When authorised to do so by the invigilator(s), candidates should leave the examination hall in an orderly manner.
- 9.5.25 Smoking is not permitted in any part of an FFLM examination centre.
- 9.5.26 Candidates are asked to note that any allegation of academic or professional misconduct that is sustained against a candidate is likely to be reported to employers, sponsors and relevant professional bodies, such as the GMC, GDC, NMC and HCPC. Candidates should note that if any information comes to light at a later stage that indicates that examination Regulations have been breached, the FFLM reserves the right to invoke the Misconduct Procedures retrospectively.

## 9.6 Award of the DLM Qualification

Successful candidates will receive an email confirming that they passed the DLM examination. Subsequently they will be contacted about membership opportunities and will be offered the choice to either receive their Diploma Certificate by email or to have the Diploma formally presented at the next FFLM Annual General meeting, which normally takes place in May each year.

The full name of each successful candidate will appear on the list of DLM diplomates on the FFLM website ([www.fflm.ac.uk](http://www.fflm.ac.uk)), accessible by members of the general public.

The names will appear in alphabetical order of surname. The information will be strictly limited to the full name of the diplomate and the date the diploma was awarded.

## 10. Appeals

10.1 An Appeal to the FFLM is open to a candidate if s/he is not satisfied with the decision of their exam result.

10.2 The following conditions apply:

- (a) The appeal must be received within 28 days of the candidate being notified of the examination result or the feedback or reviewing report;
- (b) The appellant shall set out in writing the detailed grounds on which the appeal is made to the FFLM office;
- (c) All the supporting evidence (for example, medical certificate, supporting statement from other candidates) must accompany the appeal submission.

10.3 The Appeal Tribunal is a working group of the Academic Committee. An appeal may be rejected by the Chief Examiner without selecting the Appeal Tribunal for any of the following reasons, or if it is judged to be vexatious or frivolous, without further recourse to the appeals procedures:

10.3.1 The candidate did not understand or was not aware of the published examination regulations.

10.3.2 The appeal is on grounds that poor syllabus information affected performance. In such circumstances a candidate should submit a complaint (12).

10.3.3 That no contemporaneous, independent, medical or other evidence has been submitted to support an application that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill health.

10.3.4 The candidate was not aware of the procedures for presenting mitigating circumstances as detailed in regulation 6. These extenuating circumstances include health or other problems, or difficulties with the running of the programme or way in which the assessment was conducted.

10.3.5 No valid reason, i.e., circumstances beyond a candidate's control, has been submitted as explanation for not submitting extenuating circumstances to the attention of the Chief Examiner's Committee before it met.

10.3.6 The appeal concerns a long-standing health problem, which the student was aware of when applying for the exam.

10.3.7 The candidate was subject to a disturbance or illness during an examination and that there is no valid reason for it not to have been brought to the attention of the Chief Examiner's Committee before it met (6.5).

10.4 The appeal process could be of two sorts:

- (a) A document review – The Written Evaluation; or
- (b) An oral hearing and document review –The Oral Hearing.

The candidate is required to select which option he/she wishes to use.

## 10.5 The Written Evaluation

10.5.1 Personnel of the Academic Tribunal:

- (a) The Academic Dean;
- (b) The Chief Examiner;
- (c) A member of the Academic Committee or Faculty Board who has not been directly involved in the candidate's examination.

#### 10.5.2 Process:

- (a) All documentation submitted by the candidate will be considered. Written evidence will be required from the examiners involved. Any contributory information, which would assist the Tribunal in resolving the Appeal, will also be sought.
- (b) The Chief Examiner will inform the candidate as to the likely date by when a decision might be expected if it is to exceed 10 days of the deliberation.
- (c) The Chairman of the Appeal Tribunal will communicate the outcome of the appeal in writing to the candidate.

### 10.6 The Oral Hearing.

All written evidence to be considered would be required at the time of the submission of the request for an appeal and any late evidence is to be presented no later than 14 days in advance of the hearing.

#### 10.6.1 Personnel:

- (a) The candidate is required to present his/her case in person and can be accompanied by a friend or adviser should s/he so wish;
- (b) The Appeal Tribunal will consist of three members, whose names are to be communicated to the appellant 14 days in advance to ensure they have no objections. Otherwise the candidate can opt for a second chairman and two others.

NB. Should the appellant choose this option then a second, six-week time frame applies from the date that the Registrar is notified of the appellant's decision.

- (c) A note-taker will be designated for the session.
- (d) A summary will be agreed by the members of the Appeal Tribunal and the appellant.

## 11. Compliance with diversity legislation

11.1 The FFLM is committed to promoting and developing equality and diversity in all its work. It aims to have policies and ways of working that are fair to all individuals and groups. The FFLM has an equal opportunities policy.

11.2 FFLM examiners are trained in equal opportunities.

11.3 The FFLM collects data on all applicants and analyses all results in relation to equal opportunities monitoring variables.

11.4 The FFLM will consider special arrangements for candidates with disabilities taking the examination.

## 12. Complaints

Complaints should be made in writing and addressed to the Chief Examiner at [forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk](mailto:forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk). Complainants should expect a written acknowledgement from the Chief Examiner within 21 days.

## 13. Academic misconduct

Information in respect of academic misconduct may be obtained by contacting the Academic Dean, FFLM Administration Office.

## 14. Language Requirements

14.1 The DLM examination is conducted in English.

14.2 The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine advises candidates that in order to be sufficiently prepared to sit the DLM examination, their English language ability should be equivalent to IELTS Level 7 in each module. However, candidates do not need to have taken IELTS, the assessment of the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB), or any other language examination, to sit the DLM examination.

14.3 The DLM cannot be used as demonstrating competency in the English language, for which PLAB is necessary before doctors can obtain Limited Registration with the GMC. Full details are available from:

PLAB Test Section

Tel: +44(0)845 357 3456

General Medical Council

Email: [registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org](mailto:registrationhelp@gmc-uk.org)

Regent's Place

350 Euston Road

London NW1 3JN

For further information please refer to the GMC website ([www.gmc-uk.org](http://www.gmc-uk.org)).

## 15. Preparation for the DLM examination

15.1 The FFLM recommend that candidates prepare for the examination by gaining clinical experience in medico-legal medicine and by studying up-to-date postgraduate clinical textbooks and current medical journals.

15.2 There is an e-learning course, which has been available since 01 March 2014, that covers most of the syllabus of the exam. Further details can be found on the FFLM website ([www.fflm.ac.uk/e-learning](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/e-learning)).

15.3 There is a published syllabus for the DLM examination on page 21.

15.4 A reading list is available from the FFLM website – [www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm)

15.5 Sample MCQ, are available on the FFLM website: [www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/dlm)

15.6 The FFLM may be able to provide lists of recommended FFLM courses. The details of most courses are contained in the Exams page of the faculty website.

## 16. Syllabus for DLM examination

### Foreword

This syllabus outlines the areas of knowledge and understanding<sup>i</sup> covered in the DLM examination.

The examination aims to encourage candidates to read widely on medico-legal and ethical issues outwith their day-to-day practice as a basis for further professional development.

The syllabus aims to describe broadly the areas of knowledge expected of candidates to pass the examination: it is not to be taken as exhaustive or inclusive; not every area of the syllabus will be tested at each examination diet and the absence of a topic does not guarantee that it will not be included in the examination paper. Candidates can expect the majority of questions to relate to the broad areas specified.

The examination covers all jurisdictions within the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). The syllabus will highlight this in some of the areas where the differences between jurisdictions are of particular importance, but candidates should be aware that this principle applies throughout the DLM examination.

### 1. STRUCTURE OF HEALTHCARE DELIVERY IN THE UK

Candidates should have an understanding of the structure and organisation of healthcare in the UK including:

- 1.1 Structure of the NHS;
- 1.2 Independent contractor status of GMS GPs, PMS GPs;
- 1.3 GP Performer's Lists;
- 1.4 Private medical practice;
- 1.5 NHS indemnity and other indemnity arrangements;
- 1.6 Clinical governance;
- 1.7 Issues of access to healthcare; and
- 1.8 The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and the Scottish Medicines Consortium.

### 2. REGULATION OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

2.1 The General Medical Council, the General Dental Council, the Health & Care Professions Council, The Nursing & Midwifery Council and others.

2.1.1 Candidates should have an understanding of the structure and functions of the regulatory bodies, including:

- (a) Composition; and
- (b) Fitness to practise procedures.

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<sup>i</sup> The sections refer to either:

- understanding of a subject
- A "basic" knowledge and understanding of a subject or
- A "detailed" knowledge and understanding of a subject

This is intended as a guide to candidates with respect to the level at which the subjects are likely to be examined. Thus, for example, only a basic knowledge and understanding is required of "philosophical medical ethics", whereas a detailed knowledge and understanding of "Consent" is required

2.1.2 Candidates should have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the ethical guidance published by the regulatory bodies (including the GMC's "Good Medical Practice" and all supporting ethical guidance – see also "Medical Ethics in Practice").

### **3. SOURCES OF LAW AND LEGAL SYSTEMS**

Candidates should have a basic knowledge and understanding of the sources of law in the UK and of the legal systems of England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Examples of question topics might include:

- 3.1. the structure and functions of the main courts in the jurisdictions;
- 3.2. the legislative process;
- 3.3. the effect of judicial precedent/case law;
- 3.4. European Community law; and
- 3.5. Human Rights legislation.

### **4. CRIMINAL LAW**

Candidates should have a basic knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of the criminal law in the UK jurisdictions, particularly in relation to those areas where this may be relevant to medical practice. Examples of question topics might include:

- 4.1 Police powers;
- 4.2 Principles of the law of Manslaughter, including corporate manslaughter and gross negligence manslaughter;
- 4.3 Sexual offences;
- 4.4 Offences against the Person; and
- 4.5 Criminal Procedure Rules.

### **5. CIVIL LAW**

Candidates should have a basic knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of the civil law in the UK jurisdictions and a more detailed knowledge and understanding of the law relating to medical negligence and medical injuries. Examples of question topics might include:

- 5.1 Duty of care in the law of negligence;
- 5.2 Tests for medical negligence;
- 5.3 Failure to warn of risks;
- 5.4 Actions for assault or trespass to the person;
- 5.5 Principles of causation;
- 5.6 Civil procedure; and
- 5.7 Damages

## **6. PHILOSOPHICAL MEDICAL ETHICS**

Candidates should have a basic knowledge and understanding of the main philosophical approaches to medical ethics including:

- 6.1 Utilitarianism;
- 6.2 Deontological systems; and
- 6.3 Principle-based systems and of the core principles to be found in most principle-based systems of medical ethics:
- 6.4 Beneficence;
- 6.5 Non-maleficence;
- 6.6 Respect for autonomy; and
- 6.7 Justice.

## **7. MEDICAL ETHICS IN PRACTICE**

Candidates should have an understanding of the regulatory bodies' ethical guidance including the GMC's Good Medical Practice. Examples of question topics might include:

- 7.1 GMC, GDC, NMC and HCPC probity requirements;
- 7.2 Sharing information with and working with colleagues;
- 7.3 Responding to concerns about colleagues;
- 7.4 Revalidation; and
- 7.5 Raising concerns.

## **8. CONSENT <sup>ii</sup>**

Candidates should have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the law and ethics relating to consent for medical treatment including:

- 8.1 Regulatory bodies' and NHS guidance;
- 8.2 Requirements for consent to be valid;
- 8.3 Forms of consent; and
- 8.4 Consent and mentally incapacitated adults (including consent given by others e.g. welfare attorneys).

## **9. CONFIDENTIALITY <sup>iii</sup>**

Candidates should have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the law and ethics governing the duty of confidentiality, including:

- 9.1 Legal basis;
- 9.2 GMC, GDC, NMC and HCPC guidance;
- 9.3 Disclosures required by law;
- 9.4 Disclosures in the public interest;
- 9.5 Data protection legislation;
- 9.6 Patients' rights of access to health records and medical reports;

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<sup>ii</sup> Note that consent in children is included in "Children and Young People"

<sup>iii</sup> Note that confidentiality in children is included in "Children and Young People"

- 9.7 Confidentiality and mentally incapacitated adults; and
- 9.8 Confidentiality after death.

## **10. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

- 10.1. Candidates should have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the law of consent as it applies to children and young people including:
  - 10.1.1 Differences between the UK jurisdictions;
  - 10.1.2 Competence to consent;
  - 10.1.3 Refusal of treatment by children and/or parents;
  - 10.1.4 Parental responsibility;
  - 10.1.5 16 – 18 year olds; and
  - 10.1.6 GMC, GDC, NMC and HCPC guidance.
- 10.2. Candidates should have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the legal and ethical requirements of confidentiality in relation to young people. Examples of question topics might include:
  - 10.2.1 Parental requests for information;
  - 10.2.2 Disclosure in the public interest; and
  - 10.2.3 Requests for information about children and young people under data protection legislation.
- 10.3. Candidates should have a detailed knowledge and understanding of the legal and ethical principles involved in child protection issues. Topics for questions might include:
  - 10.3.1 Relevant legislation and government guidance;
  - 10.3.2 GMC and NMC guidance;
  - 10.3.3 Sources of advice and assistance;
  - 10.3.4 Role of the social work department;
  - 10.3.5 Confidentiality; and
  - 10.3.6 Child protection procedures.

## **11. DEATH AND DYING**

Candidates should have an understanding of the legal and ethical issues surrounding death including:

- 11.1 Definition of death;
- 11.2 Death certification and cremation;
- 11.3 The role of the coroner and the structure and function of inquests
- 11.4 Fatal Accident Inquiries in Scotland;
- 11.5 Withholding and withdrawing life prolonging treatment;
- 11.6 Patient refusal of life-prolonging treatment;
- 11.7 Advance directives;
- 11.8 Euthanasia and assisted suicide;
- 11.9 Organ donation; and
- 11.10 Retention of organs and tissue.

## **12. MENTAL HEALTH LAW**

Candidates should have an understanding of the applicable mental health law (including mental capacity and related legislation) and Codes of Practice in the UK jurisdictions. Examples of question topics might include:

- 12.1 Detention under the mental health acts;
- 12.2 Detention of mentally incapacitated adults;
- 12.3 Community treatment orders;
- 12.4 Treatment without consent; and
- 12.5 Vulnerable adults.

## **13. PRESCRIBING**

Candidates should have an understanding of the medico-legal issues relating to prescribing medicines. Examples of question topics might include:

- 13.1 GMC, GDC and NMC guidance on prescribing;
- 13.2 Medico-legal issues involved in prescribing controlled drugs (including regulatory requirements);
- 13.3 Medico-legal issues involved in unlicensed and off label prescribing.

## **14. REPORT WRITING AND GIVING EVIDENCE**

- 14.1 Rules of evidence
- 14.2 The Professional and the Expert Witness
- 14.3 Court room procedures