



My LFFLM Experience – Sexual Offence Medicine by Keeley Roe

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Introduction

Having undertaken nursing qualifications as a mature student, to work solely within the field of forensic healthcare for sexual offences, the Licentiate of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (LFFLM) Sexual Offences Medicine (SOM) seemed like the ideal next step to take, in order to further develop my knowledge and skill base around the subject matter.

Resources

When I first discovered the LFFLM SOM qualification and explored the *Part 1 Sample Examination Questions*, which gave me an insight into the level of understanding needed to complete this qualification, it initially felt a bit daunting. To clarify some of my concerns, I contacted the administration team to address some worries about my own skill base. As a nurse, I have not been exposed to the same level of academic study as doctors, and this qualification seemed...well...a little above me. However, the administration team could not have been more helpful, putting me in touch with the relevant people, some of whom had already sat the examination and some mid-way through, who were able to offer me valuable advice and guidance on where to start. I felt reassured and confident that I was going to be able to complete the qualification successfully.

The reading list found on the FFLM webpage (see *DLM and Part 1 MFFLM Suggested Reading List*) was my 'go to' document and actually is still my 'go back to' reading list. I have purchased some of the literature and use this almost daily when I am planning training sessions for new Forensic Nurse Examiners (FNEs).

Planning and preparation

Preparation was always going to be the key, as studying whilst working full-time meant I had to carefully manage my time to ensure that I was able to put in the hours required to be prepared for the Part 1 Examination. I made a plan early on, which consisted of the following:

1. Study for the Part 1 Examination, Single Best Answer (SBA) paper within Year 1.
2. Complete my Compendium of Validated Evidence (COVE) and take the Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), Part 2, within Year 2.
3. Complete the case portfolio within Year 3, (although I did start this within the second year, it took me over 16 months to submit something with which I was satisfied).

The syllabus on the FFLM site (*LFFLM – SOM, Regulations, Syllabus and Information for Candidates*) fully explains the procedures for candidates, and this helped me to set my three year plan.

As the Part 1 SBA examination and Part 2 OSCEs are only held once per year, (October and March, respectively), being prepared would be my biggest tip to anyone thinking of undertaking the LFFLM.

Doing the work

Being supported by my employer, during the 3 years I have spent studying, has made a huge difference and meant I had access to and support from doctors, not just my educational supervisor, who have had direct experience of both the LFFLM and the MFFLM. This meant that, after each case I saw in practice, I looked at it as if it were within an OSCE scenario or an examination question, and asked myself questions, such as; 'How could I improve my practice?' 'Had anything changed recently within the field of forensics that meant, should I have done this examination several years ago, it would be done differently?'

I attended the FFLM's SOM revision day which was especially useful for someone who had no previous experience of OSCEs.

The examinations

Having some nerves regarding the examination was actually beneficial, as it encouraged me to fully apply myself. I spent more time studying for the Part 1 examination, and I felt equipped to sit amongst more highly-skilled practitioners than I. All the hard work definitely paid off, and it felt great to pass first time!

The OSCE day came around quickly too and the sinking feeling on the train into London of "What will I see behind the curtain?" set in. Again, nurses do not regularly sit OSCEs, which led to some anxiety. I need not have worried so much, because as soon as the curtains were drawn on each station, I went into 'nurse mode'. Trying to not focus on the examiners at each station was made easier by the amazing actors, the 'simulated patient', within the OSCE scenarios, and I was able to apply my practical knowledge and experience to each one.



Conclusion

If I was reading this article, thinking “*Should I undertake this qualification or not?*”, I would want to know if it was worth it?

Without a doubt, this is been the most enjoyable piece of study I have undertaken. The qualification content has made me feel like a knowledgeable practitioner, who feels more competent in delivering a higher standard of care to the service users I see daily. Meeting so many people within the field of forensic medicine has led me into the FFLM Forensic Science Subcommittee and, each day within my working practice, the skills I learnt on the qualification, have made a difference to the work I do.

As the arena of forensic medicine moves forward, I am passionate about more nurses taking on this level of study and being seen within this field as competent experts, with a sound knowledge base to support them. I am pleased to say, achieving this qualification has certainly given me a thirst for knowledge and I am already excited to embark on my next education adventure!