



Advice on obtaining qualifications in clinical forensic medicine

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Introduction

The Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (FFLM) Quality Standards in Forensic Medicine (FFLM, 2010) recommend that all doctors should consider further academic qualifications in forensic medicine and those who wish to become consultants will need to pass the Membership examination of the FFLM.

In relation to continuing professional development the FFLM fully supports the GMC requirements for Revalidation. Forensic Physicians should practice in accordance with FFLM Core Competencies for Re-licensing/Revalidation (October 2008).

It is essential that forensic physicians have an annual appraisal by a trained medical appraiser and that for doctors working with portfolio careers the appraisal should be robust in covering the forensic aspects of their work. Furthermore forensic physicians should complete an average of 50 credits (representing 50 hours of CPD activity) each year and achieve a minimum of 250 credits over each 5-year cycle. For doctors working with portfolio careers the content of the 50 credits should reflect the areas of work and personal development plan appropriately.

Studying for a qualification in clinical forensic medicine will fulfil many of the above criteria and lead to excellence in clinical practice and the opportunities to provide an independent opinion to relevant authorities such as, for example, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and defence, in the increasingly complex field of clinical forensic medicine.

University Certificate in Postgraduate Professional Development in Forensic Medicine (UCPPD)

An introductory training course in clinical forensic medicine is run by the FFLM in conjunction with the National Policing Improvement Agency at Harperley

Hall, Co Durham. It is a five-day residential course suitable for doctors, nurses or postgraduate paramedics and provides a practical base upon which to build the additional skills needed to fulfil the role of a forensic physician/custody nurse. Following the course it is essential to have a period of appropriately supervised workplace-based training.

The learning outcomes include, for example, the ability to understand, evaluate and use techniques to assess fitness to be detained and fitness to be interviewed; to understand the role of the forensic physician/custody nurse in relation to sexual and violent assault, alcohol and drug related offences; to produce detailed witness statements; be able to discuss the medical aspects of forensic examinations, including the presentation of evidence in court.

The course is externally accredited by Teesside University and after satisfactory completion of course work and reflective case studies, students will be awarded a University Certificate in Postgraduate Professional Development in Forensic Medicine. Details of the course can be found at www.fflm.ac.uk.

Membership of the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine - MFFLM (GFM) (SOM)

The first full Membership exam (MFFLM) was completed in April 2010. Starting in October 2009 the exam was set up for Forensic Physicians of both disciplines – General Forensic Medicine (GFM) and Sexual Offence Medicine (SOM), and for Medico-Legal Advisors. It is hoped that the exam will become compulsory for those who wish to pursue a career in forensic and legal medicine in the United Kingdom at consultant level.

Doctors who pass the exam will have the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to practise as independent practitioners within the speciality of forensic and legal medicine.

To be eligible to sit the exam candidates must have been working in the speciality for three years (within the past 5 years).

The part I is a knowledge-based test covering medical law and ethics, testing factual knowledge. The Part 1 Examination has one-paper in a best of five format (where the candidate is asked to select the best answer from five possible answers).

The part II written exam tests the application of knowledge to problems in modified short answers.

All Candidates will have a 3 hour paper with 8 compulsory questions.

The Observed Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) assesses the ability to integrate and apply clinical, professional, communication and practical skills appropriate for forensic and legal medicine. It simulates patient/client consultations that are relevant to forensic and legal medicine using simulated patients/clients. A range of scenarios drawn from forensic and legal practice are used and each consultation is marked by a different assessor. The role of the patient/client is taken by a trained role-player. The OSCE is composed of 12 stations for each of the specialties (general forensic medicine and sexual offence medicine) over a period of a minimum of 2hrs.

Candidates in General Forensic Medicine (GFM) and Sexual Offence Medicine (SOM) will have a specialty specific question paper and clinical examination. Candidates wishing to gain qualification in more than one specialty will have to sit the question papers and attend the clinical examinations specific for their choice.

Candidates wishing to take the exam should carefully study the regulations. A detailed syllabus has been published outlining the areas of knowledge and understanding required for both parts of the exam; the part II syllabus is different for each of the three disciplines. <http://fflm.ac.uk/education/mfflmexam/>

To read a candidates' experience of the examination please see <http://fflm.ac.uk/education/mfflmexperience/>

Individuals who wish to sit the exam are encouraged to become affiliates of the FFLM. To apply, please go to

LLM/MA and Postgraduate Diploma in Forensic and Legal Medicine

(DFLM, previously DFMB)

The Lancashire Law School at the University of Central Lancashire offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Forensic and Legal Medicine, as a part time course over two years with the option to do an MA or LLM in the third year.

The clinical team of Dr Vicky Evans and Professor Ian Wall work in conjunction with Dr Kartina Choong and other members of the Lancashire Law School at Preston to deliver this exciting course which has been designed to be a preparatory course for Membership of the Faculty (MFFLM). As well as being suitable for Forensic Physicians, Sexual Assault Examiners, Psychiatrists and Paediatricians, it will also be suitable for Forensic Nurses, Lawyers and Forensic Scientists.

The course consists of the following 6 modules:

- Legal Skills and Sources of Medical law
- Medico-Legal Principles and Dilemmas
- The Structure of Health Care Delivery in the UK
- Understanding Criminal and Civil Litigation
- Death, Science and Forensic Medicine
- Mental Health Law, Psychiatry and Crime.

The first module will be delivered via e-learning and the other five modules are delivered in 5 three day blocks during January, May and November. Students can enrol and start the course during any of the blocks after completing the first module. Mock OSCEs are held to give students real experience of this type of assessment.

For further details please contact:

Dr Kartina A Choong

Barrister and Senior Lecturer in Medical law

Lancashire Law School

University of Central Lancashire

Preston PR1 2HE

Email: kachoong@uclan.ac

Tel: 01772 893063

MSC/PG Diploma/PG Certificate Forensic and Legal Medicine (DFLM & Cert FLM)

This part time fully online distance learning course is delivered by the Faculty of Life and Health Sciences, School of Biomedical Sciences at the University of Ulster. Three taught modules with a total credit value of 60 points are required to obtain the PgCert Forensic and Legal Medicine. Students must complete six taught modules with a total credit value of 120 points for a Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip) in Forensic and Legal Medicine. On satisfactory completion of all of the six modules, students may proceed to undertake a research project/dissertation module with a credit point value of 60 in order to graduate with a degree of Master of Science in Forensic and Legal Medicine. The length of the course for PgDip is four semesters (part-time study). Further semesters are required for completion of the MSc project.

Assessment takes various forms such as problem-based coursework, case studies, on line discussion assessment, written examinations, project reports, poster presentations and video linked interviews.

This year for the first time the University of Ulster are offering a fast track course which will serve as preparatory study for Membership of The Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine (of the Royal College of Physicians). This will consist of short intensive courses of less duration which will prepare candidates for the Faculty examination.

Two courses will be offered: each course will end with an online viva by real time video-link, which will replicate the faculty examination process. The timing of the University of Ulster viva exam will be planned to run in close proximity to the Faculty exam for each course.

Further details are available from:

Dr Tara Moore, Course Co-ordinator

University of Ulster

School of Biomedical Sciences

Cromore Road

Coleraine.

Tel: 02870124805

Email: t.moore@ulster.ac.uk

<http://prospectus.ulster.ac.uk/>

Apply online at www.ulster.ac.uk/applyonline

Diploma in the Forensic and Clinical Aspects of Sexual Assault (DFCASA)

This examination is provided by the Society of Apothecaries since 2010 and is open to doctors and nurses (who maybe non-graduates) who have achieved a basic level of experience in the care of complainants of sexual assault (adults and/or children).

The examination is based on a knowledge based part I (single best answer) and competency-based part II. A curriculum has been published setting out the knowledge criteria, generic professional skills and attitudes, competencies and evidence required for the objectives in each of the six modules: Initial contact; History; Examination; Aftercare; Statement; and Court.

For Part II each candidate has to present a Compendium of Validated Evidence (COVE) which must be signed by "Clinical Validators" to confirm that the candidate has completed the modules satisfactorily. Candidates also need an educational supervisor whose role is to certify the completion of all the components of the modules. These doctors should have significant experience in the examination complainants of sexual assault, have experience in the field of education and training, have some experience as an educational supervisor and adhere to the PMETB standards. This evidence is submitted for Part II with a record of 10-13 anonymised case reports for assessment with marks awarded for the construction and presentation of the case, the assembly of ideas and reflective analysis. There is also an OSCE with 12 stations of 7-10 minutes each.

Diploma in Forensic Medical Sciences (DipFMS)

This examination was initiated by the University of Glasgow in 1987 but, with some adaptation, was transferred to the Society of Apothecaries in 1997. It is open to medical practitioners as well as non-graduates with an interest in the field, including other healthcare professionals, lawyers and police, provided they have successfully completed a nine month part time course (Course in Forensic Medical Sciences). The course currently runs in both Glasgow and London over three academic terms (one evening per week), with both venues now also having an online option.

The examination comprises submission of a dissertation on a specified topic, plus a three hour written paper taken in June.

For details of the examination contact: Society of Apothecaries (www.apothecaries.org), Tel 0207 236 1180

For details of the courses contact:

Glasgow – Dr John Clark, (j.clark@formed.gla.ac.uk), Tel 0141 330 4145

London – Prof Peter Vanezis (vanezis@btinternet.com), Tel 0207 882 3401

Diploma in Medical Jurisprudence (DMJ)

The Diploma of Medical Jurisprudence (DMJ Clinical) was withdrawn in January 2011. It was administered by the Society of Apothecaries since 1962 in both clinical and pathological formats and the pathological format will continue.

Recommended Societies

The Medico-Legal Society

www.medicolegalsociety.org.uk

Portland Customer Services, Portland Press Ltd, Commerce Way, Colchester C02 8HP

01206 796351

email: sales@portland-services.com

The British Academy of Forensic Sciences (BAFS)

www.bafs.org.uk

Applications for BAFS Membership and Enquiries

Dr Denise Syndercombe Court

Haematology, ICMS, Barts and The London, 4 Newark Street, London E1 2AT

Tel: 020 7882 2276

Fax: 020 7882 2182

email: y.d.syndercombe-court@qmul.ac.uk

The Royal Society of Medicine Section of Clinical Forensic and Legal Medicine

www.roysocmed.ac.uk

1 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AE

Tel: 0207 290 7290

The Forensic Science Society

www.forensic-science-society.org.uk

18a Mount Parade, Harrogate, North Yorks HG1 1BX

Tel: 01423 506068

Journals

- The Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine, formerly the Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine
- Medico-Legal Journal (Journal of the Medico-Legal Society)
- Medicine Science and the Law (Journal of the BAFS)
- Science and Justice (Journal of the FSS)

Recommended reading

See the FFLM book List on the web site for a comprehensive list of recommended publications.

<http://fflm.ac.uk/education/mfflmreadinglist/>