



My MFFLM Experience – General Forensic Medicine by Dr Anna Wiles

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Planning

My start point was making an informed decision to do the exam. As there are restrictions on eligibility to sit part 1 and part 2, a requirement to obtain part 2 whilst part 1 is still valid, and only a single opportunity each year for each part, it did require some careful planning. So I didn't miss any opportunities for sitting part 2, I sat part 1 only after I was eligible for part 2. I took part 2 when I felt I had adequate time to prepare but that allowed an opportunity to re-sit, if needed, before my part 1 expired.

See: *Membership of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (MFFLM) Regulations, Syllabus and Information for Candidates*

Resources

There are lots of resources out there to help with the studying which was great but it took some time to go through them and plan which were going to be of the most help to me. Below is what I found to be particularly helpful.

My start point was a print out of the syllabus *Membership of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (MFFLM) Regulations, Syllabus and Information for Candidates* and the Oxford Handbook of Forensic Medicine. The book seemed to touch on virtually all aspects of the syllabus and I found gave me a concise summary and firm foundation. It also meant I didn't miss any big areas by mistake.

I built up from there really. The other main textbooks I used were on the reading list (*Part 2 MFFLM (GFM) and LFFLM (GFM) Suggested Reading List*): 'Clinical Forensic Medicine'; 'A Physician's Guide'; 'Knight's Forensic Pathology'; and 'Symptoms and Signs of Substance Misuse'. Having a textbook about forensic pathology was a specific help as online resources were very limited for this topic.

The FFLM website was a huge help and I looked in detail at all their guidance (fflm.ac.uk/resources/publications/). In addition to the current guidance booklets which the GMC produce (and are accessible online), I found some of their interactive case studies on the website helpful to work through, for example one on confidentiality and abuse in the elderly eg *Should a doctor disclose evidence of abuse without the patient's consent?*

The FFLM webinars (fflm.ac.uk/e-learning/webinars/) provided me with a good summary of relevant topics and gave helpful suggestions for further reading. Often, the speakers used clinical examples to illustrate points something I particularly liked. I made a list of my key learning points for each one, which was a handy reference, and watching the webinars made a pleasant change to all the bookwork.

The online learning modules from the Royal College of General Practitioners which were pertinent to custodial medicine eg Acutely Ill People, Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol, Mental Health Problems (elearning.rcgp.org.uk) were also useful to me. Currently all healthcare professionals can register for an RCGP eLearning account, which provides free access to selected RCGP courses.

References cited in books or documents I was reading could often be accessed online and I found it helpful to look at some of these for more detail about particular topics eg a Journal article on *Management of potentially violent detainees*. I kept a list of them on my computer so I could refer back to them easily as needed.

I went on the part 2 revision day run by the FFLM and found it particularly useful for three things: clarifying an aspect of the syllabus (the relationship of psychiatry to crime – defence of insanity, M'Naghten Rules, non-insane automatism); exam technique for part 2 written; and the opportunity to do a mock OSCE station. I made myself volunteer for the latter, which was a fairly excruciating experience in front of a room full of colleagues, but worth it!

Doing the Work

Whenever I was on shift, after every detained person I saw, I tried to reflect on the consultation as a possible OSCE. For instance, what were the possible gaps in my knowledge? What could I have done better? This helped me to highlight areas of difficulty that I needed to focus on.

Otherwise, well it's a bit of a cliché but I started studying early – several months before the examination. This is not an exam to underestimate, it's expensive, there is much to cover and to think it can be done at the last minute with a string of late nights is unrealistic. I tried to do a bit every morning before the rest of the day began in earnest. Obviously as the exam date got closer the number of hours I put in went up but I found that this way, whatever the day ahead had in store, I always got some revision in.

Other than that, some nice new stationery and pens for my notes bear testimony to my efforts!!!