



# Advice on obtaining qualifications in clinical forensic medicine

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The medico-legal guidelines and recommendations published by the Faculty are for general information only. Appropriate specific advice should be sought from your medical defence organisation or professional association. The Faculty has one or more senior representatives of the MDOs on its Board, but for the avoidance of doubt, endorsement of the medico-legal guidelines or recommendations published by the Faculty has not been sought from any of the medical defence organisations.

## Introduction

The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM) Quality Standards in Forensic Medicine (FFLM, 2019) recommend that all trainees should consider further academic qualifications in forensic medicine (as applicable) and should obtain the FFLM Licentiate qualification within three years or the FFLM Membership qualification within five years of commencing work in this field.

In relation to continuing professional development the FFLM fully supports the GMC requirements for Revalidation see <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/managing-your-registration/reevaluation>

It is essential that forensic physicians have an annual appraisal by a trained medical appraiser that covers their full scope of practice. For doctors working with portfolio careers the appraisal should be robust in covering the forensic aspects of their work.

For more information about the supporting information required see <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/managing-your-registration/reevaluation/guidance-on-supporting-information-for-appraisal-and-reevaluation>

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.

## Membership of the Faculty of Forensic & 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 subsequently for Medico-Legal and for Dento-Legal practitioners. 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 five years).

The exam consists of two parts. The part 1 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 2 written exam tests the application of knowledge to problems in modified short answers. All Candidates will have a 2.5 hour paper with 8 compulsory questions.

The Observed Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and the Observed Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) 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/OSPE is composed of 8-14 stations for each of the specialties (general forensic medicine and sexual offence medicine) over a period of a minimum of 2 hours.

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 2 syllabus is different for each of the three disciplines. For details see our website: [www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/mfflm](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/exams/mfflm)

To read a candidates' experience of the examination please see:

*Obtaining the MFFLM – General Forensic Medicine by Dr Daniel Hurley*

Individuals who wish to sit the exam are encouraged to become affiliates of the FFLM. To apply, please go to: [www.fflm.ac.uk/faculty/application](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/faculty/application)



## Licentiate of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine - LFFLM (GFM) (SOM formerly the DFCASA)

The Licentiate (GFM) was instituted by the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM) in 2014.

LFFLM (GFM) – This examination is open to doctors and other health care professionals (nurses and paramedics) working in the field of forensic medicine.

LFFLM (SOM) There are 3 options for this examination:

1. LFFLM (SOM), which is available to doctors only;
2. LFFLM (SOM) (a) (adults only), which is available to both doctors and nurses;
3. LFFLM (SOM) (c) (children only), which is available to doctors only.

The Examination for the Licentiate is divided into two parts:

**Part 1** is designed to assess a candidate's knowledge and understanding of general forensic medicine and/or sexual offence medicine with a Single Best Answer (SBA) paper. This will consist of a 3 hour examination in a best-of-five format (where the candidate is asked to select the best answer from five possible answers).

**Part 2** is a clinical competency assessment. All Candidates will complete a Compendium of Validated Experience (COVE) and a Case Portfolio. Candidates will also have to complete a series of OSCEs.

**Candidates wishing to take the exam should carefully study the regulations. A detailed syllabus has been published outlining the areas of knowledge and understanding for both parts of the exam.**

GFM: <https://fflm.ac.uk/exams/lfflm-gfm>

SOM: <https://fflm.ac.uk/exams/lfflm-som>

There is also a route to LFFLM SOM (c) for experienced paediatricians (with MRCPCH) via recognition of prescribed/equivalent experience - for more details see here: <https://fflm.ac.uk/>

## Diploma of Legal Medicine (DLM)

The DLM commenced in 2014 and the aim of the examination is to demonstrate those persons who have a detailed knowledge of the specialty of forensic & legal medicine.

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: *DLM Regulations, syllabus and information for candidates*

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.

## Postgraduate Certificate - Advanced Forensic Practice (Sexual Assault or Custody)

## Postgraduate Diploma - Advanced Forensic Practice (Sexual Assault and/or Custody)

## Masters in Advanced Forensic Practice (Sexual Assault and/or Custody)

The United Kingdom Association of Forensic Nurses & Paramedics (UKAFN) has developed advanced standards for education and training in forensic practice (ASET) and is now able to offer education providers the opportunity to develop and deliver courses that meet the ASET standards under licence.

This means that while education providers can still be innovative and create their own course, successful students will be leaving with a recognised qualification by a Professional Organisation.

The core elements of an UKAFN ASET accredited course are:

- Completion of the UKAFN competency document in either custody or sexual assault
- Students are assessed by providing written and oral evidence for court
- Courses meeting these standards are underpinned by theoretical aspects of forensic practice
- Students successfully completing courses meeting the ASET standards and approved by UKAFN, will receive a UKAFN ASET certificate
- Accredited at Postgraduate Level

Staffordshire University was the first Higher Education Institution to offer a UKAFN ASET Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Forensic Practice in either Custody or Sexual Assault and they also offer progression onto a Postgraduate Diploma and full Master Degrees. The Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Forensic Practice in either Custody or Sexual Assault is also offered by Teesside University and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh.

For more information: <https://ukafn.org/aset>

For further details contact:

## Staffordshire University

[www.staffs.ac.uk/study](http://www.staffs.ac.uk/study)

Margaret Bannerman  
Course Leader, Staffordshire University  
Centre of Excellence in Healthcare Education  
Blackheath Lane  
Stafford ST18 0YB  
Email: [marg.bannerman@staffs.ac.uk](mailto:marg.bannerman@staffs.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01785 35385



## Teesside University (TU)

<https://www.tees.ac.uk/>

Email: [apprenticeships@tees.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@tees.ac.uk)

Tel: 01642 384068

## Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh (QMU)

Please note that this course has 20 funded places from Scottish Government in 2021/22. Applications can be made below:

<https://www.qmu.ac.uk/study-here/postgraduate-study>

Jessica Davidson, Programme Lead

Advanced Forensic Practice

MSc Person Centred Practice

School of Health Sciences

Queen Margaret University

Queen Margaret University Drive

Musselburgh EH21 6UU

United Kingdom

Email: [JDavidson@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:JDavidson@qmu.ac.uk)

Tel: 07738 736881

From November 2017 The Faculty Board agreed that the UKAFN ASET can be badged by the FFLM. Also candidates who hold the ASET in custody and/or sexual offence medicine will be exempt from having to provide a COVE and will be required to provide a Case Portfolio of five mandatory cases only and will not have to pay a fee for assessment. Candidates will still be required to sit the SBA paper and sit the OSCE and pay the relevant fees. See [The Convergence of the ASET and the LFFLM](#)

## 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

<https://www.apothecaries.org/diploma-in-forensic-medical-sciences/>

For details of the course contact:

## London:

<https://www.afms.org.uk/forensicmedicalsciences>

Mr Adam Konstanciak, Course Administrator

Email: [info@afma.org.uk](mailto:info@afma.org.uk)

## Recommended Societies

### The Medico-Legal Society

Medico-Legal Society

<https://www.medico-legalsociety.org.uk/>

Membership email:

[membership@medico-legalsociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@medico-legalsociety.org.uk)

### The British Academy of Forensic Sciences (BAFS)

Applications for BAFS Membership and Enquiries please visit the website: [www.bafs.org.uk](http://www.bafs.org.uk)

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

[www.rsm.ac.uk](http://www.rsm.ac.uk)

1 Wimpole Street, London W1G 0AE

### The Chartered Society of Forensic Sciences

[www.csofs.org](http://www.csofs.org)

Email: [info@csofs.org](mailto:info@csofs.org)

## 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 suggested reading list on the web site for a comprehensive list of recommended publications.

[FFLM Examinations Reading List](#)

## Recommended courses

MFFLM & LFFLM Part 2 Examination Revision Day (GFM) January

MFFLM & LFFLM Part 2 Examination Revision Day (SOM) December

DLM and MFFLM Part 1 Revision Day (September)

For more information: <http://fflm.ac.uk/events>

## Recommended E-learning / webinars

There is an e-learning course run by the FFLM & Ulster University: [www.fflm.ac.uk/e-learning](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/e-learning)

There are a number of webinars available via the FFLM website: <https://fflm.ac.uk/e-learning/webinars/>

VIMEO Channel: [www.fflm.ac.uk/e-learning/vimeo-channel/](http://www.fflm.ac.uk/e-learning/vimeo-channel/)