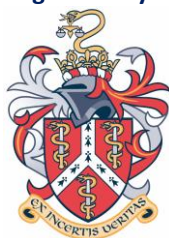


FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians of London



Roles and Duties of FFLM Examiners

There are huge benefits from being an examiner for the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine (FFLM) of the Royal College of Physicians. The FFLM is now well established. There are clear professional developmental advantages in joining the FFLM's examiner team. The FFLM's main objectives are "*to develop and maintain the highest possible standards of competence and professional integrity in forensic and legal medicine*", as well as to raise standards in forensic and legal medicine, and to protect vulnerable people. We expect examiners to subscribe to the FFLM's aims.

The FFLM's examinations include: [DLM](#), [LFFLM \(GFM\)](#), [LFFLM \(SOM\)](#), and the [MFFLM](#). For more information on each examination above please click on the links. Other information about the examinations including dates, the regulations and syllabi, is available on the FFLM's examinations webpage: [Fees & Diary - FFLM](#). It is essential that examiners are familiar with this information and check it regularly for changes and updates.

Academic Dean (AD)

The Academic Dean is responsible for the arrangement and conduct of examinations held by, or on behalf of, the Faculty and recommending to the Board any change in the list of examiners, including the appointment of Chief Examiner and Deputy Chief Examiners.

Chief Examiner (CE)

The role of the Chief Examiner is to assist the Academic Dean discharge their duties to the board with respect to the administration and conduct of Faculty examinations. The Chief Examiner is accountable to the Academic Committee, on behalf of the Board, for all aspects of activity relating to the examination including chairing the Chief Examiner's Committee and ensuring the probity of the conduct of the examinations.

Deputy Chief Examiners (DCEs)

The DCEs are responsible, together with the respective leads in each discipline (General Forensic Medicine, Sexual Offence Medicine and Legal Medicine (including medico-legal and dento-legal practitioners) for developing the blueprint yearly, which ensures that the breadth of the syllabus is appropriately examined by the use of different types of assessment, e.g. Single Best Answer (SBA), Short Answer Questions (SAQ), Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE), the Compendium of Validated Evidence (COVE) and Case Portfolio. The DCE and leads are responsible for the overall development and production of each discipline's examination, allocating the examiners to write and/or mark questions, as well as providing written and/or oral feedback to unsuccessful candidates. The three DCEs are members of the Chief Examiner's Committee.

Examination Leads

There are examination leads for different parts of the exams in each discipline. They are responsible for ensuring their questions are written in a timely manner and to a high standard. They are also members of the Chief Examiner's Committee. It is the responsibility of the Examination Leads in each discipline to ensure that questions are submitted by the deadline set, and to contact the individual examiner if the deadline is not met. It is not the responsibility of the Examinations Manager to do so.

Duties of an Examiner

The role of an FFLM examiner is one of significant responsibility. There are expectations that tasks will be completed in a timely manner and to the necessary high standards. The work includes the following:

1. Preparation of "single-best-answer" questions (SBA)

These are required for the Part 1 examinations: LFFLM (GFM), LFFLM (SOM) and MFFLM. The Part 1 MFFLM paper is also taken by candidates for the Diploma of Legal Medicine (DLM), whose candidates may not be practising clinicians. The pass mark for the DLM is normally around 10% lower than that of the Part 1 MFFLM exam.

Examiners can expect to be allocated a number of questions to write involving any topic area in Part 1 or in their specialty (GFM, SOM or LM) for other examinations. After the questions have been reviewed by the lead examiner, they may need to be re-written if not deemed suitable or to the correct standard. Examiners will be asked as to how and if they can assist yearly.

There is one exam Part 1 and Diploma diet (session) per year, in mid-October. As the papers need to be finalised in good time for the examination, questions will be allocated some months before the examination date and it is expected that examiners will complete this task within around four weeks.

2. Writing short answer questions (SAQ)

These questions are needed for the Part 2 MFFLM examination for GFM, SOM and MLM papers. There is one Part 2 diet per year, in mid-March. Examiners may not be allocated an SAQ to write every year, but, if requested to do so, they will be expected to write a question which is of high standard and which includes some elements to "stretch" the more able candidates. If the SAQ is not considered satisfactory at first draft by the lead examiner, the examiner must be prepared to improve or rewrite it. This is part of the learning process for the examiner. Examiners may also be asked to assess the candidates' answers after the examination once a year (see below).

Eight SAQ questions are required for each of the subspecialties (GFM, SOM and MLM). They will be allocated after the blueprinting meeting has taken place, usually in early summer, and should be written and any final amended version submitted by October.

3. Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) & Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE)

The MFFLM GFM and SOM OSCE examinations require 14 OSCE stations each. The MFFLM LM exam requires eight OSPE stations, of which two are written-only questions, rather than practical tasks. The LFFLM OSCE arrangements are as follows:

- GFM – 14 stations
- SOM adults + children – 14 stations
- SOM adults only – 11 stations
- SOM children only – 11 stations

Examiners can expect to write a new station, or re-write/improve a previously used one each year.

A great deal of work needs to be completed before March. There is usually an OSCE and an OSPE rehearsal day in mid-January, with actors.

Therefore, when an examiner is allocated an OSCE/OSPE to write, this will be requested by May and the work needs to be submitted by the end of July with final revisions completed by October.

4. Standard Setting

All examinations are standard-set to ensure that they are fair. The FFLM uses the modified Angoff method to establish the pass marks of each paper. See: [Examiners' Area \(Restricted\) - FFLM](#), where resources are available to assist with standard setting.

All examiners should expect to be involved in this work for at least one paper each year. This involves individual work considering the paper, and estimating the proportion of borderline candidates who are likely to pass each individual question, and then completing the spreadsheet with their scores.

This is submitted to the examinations manager, and a videoconference, requiring at least five examiners, is arranged to review only those questions where the variance in scores is more than 30%. This process is chaired by a DCE or Lead examiner, and is essential so that the examination and its outcome are robust.

5. Marking

The SAQ papers need to be marked manually and we require two examiners for each paper: to mark the paper individually first and then to have a discussion about any areas of disagreement with their fellow marker so that a consensus mark can be reached. Each examiner will do their first marking with an experienced marker, and then the following year mark alongside a new marker. In addition GFM and SOM examiners will be expected to mark COVE and Case Portfolios, which are written projects, for the LFFLM examinations.

6. Examining

For the OSCE examinations, which take part in mid-March and mid-June, on a Saturday, and/or a Sunday, at least 14 examiners will be needed for each OSCE circuit (14 for GFM and 14 for SOM). At least six examiners are needed for each OSPE circuit (however, some OSPE stations are written-only stations, which only require an invigilator). OSPE examinations usually take place during the week, in the afternoon on a Thursday. The SAQs are held on a Friday (for which examiners are not usually required), and the OSCEs on a Saturday and sometimes on a Sunday, too. The three days are usually in the same week.

Examiners will be allocated a station to mark and those who are dually qualified in GFM and SOM may be allocated a station on each circuit, which may mean they will be needed for the whole day on OSCE exams day(s). Examiners in training may also be needed to observe a number of stations.

For information, if held on one day, only, the OSCE exam (GFM or SOM) which has fewer candidates will normally take place in the morning; the other in the afternoon. Please note that examiners are not usually needed for the Part 1 and Diploma exam days, where only invigilators are required.

The Part 1 and DLM exams, as well as the SAQs and some of the OSCE stations, as well as **all** the OSPEs are now undertaken 'online'. OSCEs via Microsoft Teams; the other exams are facilitated by TestReach.

7. Other preparatory work

From time to time other preparatory work may be required. Examiners will be approached individually about this and such work will usually be on a voluntary basis.

8. Training, Probity and Records

- All examiners must undergo initial training, and continuous professional development as determined by the Chief Examiner or as required by other organisations, e.g. the GMC.
- It is a requirement that the Academic Dean, with the Chief Examiner, keeps a record of the appointed examiners, their service and attendance at examinations.
- At the time of appointment, each examiner will be expected to provide confirmation that they have completed training in Equality & Diversity, which must be updated every three years. Similarly they will be required to assent to the Examiners' 'Form of Faith'.

9. Quality Assurance of Examiner Performance

Examiners will receive feedback from the Chief Examiner and from the Examination Leads, after the March exam. Examiners may use this feedback in their annual appraisal, at their place of work. It is hoped that this will assist examiners in demonstrating the breadth of their work.

The role of the examiner is a voluntary, nevertheless there are important responsibilities and it is essential that examiners communicate in a timely fashion with the Examination Manager and with their Leads. This is particularly important if they envisage there will be a delay, for whatever reason, in complying with the deadlines for receiving work.

Appointment as an examiner is for three years, in the first instance, subject to approval by the Board. Re-appointment/continuing as an examiner is dependent on the examiner contributing to the examinations as described above and their continuing appointment being ratified by the Board.

It is our expectation that all examiners will take an active part in quality assurance of examiner performance. If the latter is not satisfactory, the Board may not give initial approval of examiner status and/or may review examiner status.

If an examiner should require a 'sabbatical' or break from their duties, this may be agreed subject to the approval of the Chief Examiner for a maximum period of 12 months. Should an examiner require a longer period of exemption from their duties, it would be necessary to resign and reapply when their circumstances allow.

10. Financial Matters

Travel and accommodation costs are paid for, (please refer to the FFLM's expenses claims rules); the Faculty aims to provide all examiners with training at least yearly and an honorarium of £400 per day is available for examiners who participate in events in person, for example in practical or clinical exams, rehearsals and training days. If it is a half-a-day event, the honorarium available will be paid, pro-rata. For examiners who are on standby, on the morning of the exams, when the exam with which they are helping is in the afternoon, so they are present for the day, £400 will be payable.

Dr Sandy Fielding, Chief Examiner & Dr Marie-Elle Vooijs, Former Chief Examiner

Dr Deryn Evans, Academic Dean

Dr Bernadette Butler, President

Prof Margaret Stark, Former Educational Advisor, Past President and Founding Academic Dean

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