

FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians of London



Email: forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk

Website: www.fflm.ac.uk

Registered Charity No 1119599

FFLM House Style Guidance

The aim of this guidance is to support officers, managers and other voluntary staff in their work, by providing them with clear and simple guidelines on the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine's (FFLM's) approach to communications and on the use of a consistent house style.

Font and Format

All FFLM letters should be written in Arial 12 point (pt) and justified. Page margins should be set at 2cm. The FFLM has an electronic letterhead which is used instead of headed paper, as most communication is carried out by email.

The full name of the Faculty is: Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians of London. The abbreviation is simply FFLM. Please avoid using "and" in its name, use the ampersand "&".

The registered charity number is 1119599.

A copy of the letterhead is available from the FFLM office upon request. The letterhead can be adapted to add individual contact details if necessary, providing the details are added in the same font and format as the original. The postal address now appears on the footer of the letterhead.

Please remember to save Word documents as PDF before sending out the final document.

Contact details

11 St. Andrews Place, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4LE.

Email address: forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk

Website address: The Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine

We no longer have a landline number.

Copies of correspondence

If you are sending out official correspondence on behalf of the FFLM please ensure a copy is emailed to the FFLM office, at forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk, for central records.

Logos

The presence of the FFLM crest on a document implies FFLM endorsement. For this reason, the crest must **not** be released to third parties without permission from the FFLM office.

Presentations

The FFLM presentation template must be used to ensure the house style is used when giving a presentation on behalf of the FFLM.

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Email guidance

All FFLM emails should be sent in Arial 11 pt, in black font, using HTML format.

All external emails should include an auto signature, in Arial 11 pt, in black font.

The disclaimer under the email signature should be in Arial 10 pt. The best way to use the correct one, is to copy one from the managers (in Outlook). See example below:

Name

Job Title



Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians
11 St Andrews Place,
Regent's Park,
London
NW1 4LE

[View Our Vision and Strategy for 2025–28](#)

Website: www.fflm.ac.uk

Facebook: [FFLM](#)

Bluesky: [FFLM](#)

LinkedIn: [FFLM](#)

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This message may contain confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient, please inform the sender that you have received the message in error before deleting it. Please do not disclose, copy or distribute information in this email or take any action in reliance on its contents: to do so is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. Thank you for your co-operation.

Reports

The FFLM report template should be used to ensure that house style is used when writing a report on behalf of the FFLM. The report can be accessed once you are logged in to the FFLM website: [Committee Toolkit - FFLM](#)

References

All FFLM documents that require formal referencing must use the Vancouver style.

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When to cite:

- Cite authoritative sources for facts, figures, legal requirements, clinical recommendations and any non-original material.
- Prefer primary sources from UK statutory bodies, regulators and peer-reviewed journals.

Style by document type:

- External publications (guidance, standards, recommendations, position statements, consultation responses): use Vancouver style with a numbered reference list at the end.
- Internal papers (Board, committee, strategy drafts): use a short "Supporting documents" section with hyperlinks. Full Vancouver is not required.
- Member communications and web pages: embed hyperlinks in text. No reference list unless needed for clarity.

In-text citations (Vancouver)

- Use superscript Arabic numerals in order of first citation. Example: "Retention periods vary across jurisdictions³"
- Place the superscript after the punctuation where possible.
- Reuse the same number for a source cited again later in the text.
- For multiple sources at one point, separate by commas or use a range. Example: "...as set out previously.^{2,5-7}"

Reference list formatting (Vancouver)

- List references in numerical order at the end, before any appendices.
- Authors: surname then initials without full stops. List up to six authors; if more than six, list the first six followed by "et al".
- Titles: sentence case. Journal titles in full.
- Include DOI where available. Include accessed date for web pages.

Examples:

Journals

1. Smith J, Patel R, O'Connor L, et al. Title of article in sentence case. *Journal title*. 2023;17(4):215-223. doi:10.xxxx/xxxxx

Books and reports

2. General Medical Council. *Good medical practice*. London: GMC; 2024.

Chapters

3. Reid T. Clinical governance. In: Brown P, ed. *Forensic medical practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2022. p. 45-60.

Web pages and guidance

4. NHS England. *Sexual assault referral centres: service specification*. 2023. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/> [Accessed 12 September 2025].

Legislation

5. Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, c.60. London: The Stationery Office.

Standards or professional statements

6. *Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine. Recommendations for the collection of forensic specimens from complainants and suspects*. London: FFLM; 2024.

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FFLM publications (web references)

When citing an FFLM document published on the website, use the following simplified format:

- Organisation Month Year [Hyperlinked title text to landing page]

Example:

FFLM September 2024 [Recommendations for the documentation of injuries – FFLM](#)

Supporting documents format (internal papers)

- Heading: Supporting documents.
- Bullet list with short description and live link.

Example:

- o GMC. *Good medical practice*. 2024. [Link]
- o NHS England. *Forensic healthcare commissioning guidance*. 2023. [Link]

Figures, tables and data

- Acknowledge third-party images, tables and datasets in the figure/table caption and in the references or “Acknowledgements” as appropriate.
- Confirm permissions where required. Do not reproduce copyrighted material without written permission.

Consistency rules

- Use British English throughout.
- Use “the FFLM” in external documents rather than “the Faculty”.
- Do not include raw URLs in external publications if a DOI is present. For internal documents, hyperlinks are acceptable.
- Ensure every in-text citation has a corresponding entry in the reference list, and vice versa.

Placement and accessibility

- Place the reference list after the main text and before appendices.
- For PDFs, ensure hyperlinks are active and have meaningful link text.
- For presentations, include a final slide titled “References” or add a discrete footnote on the relevant slide.

Dates and times

Set out dates as follows:

- On 12 January 2025;
- From 12 to 14 September 2025;
- 2024 to 2025;
- 1990s, 1800s;
- When an event is in the current year, there is no need to write the year (so 13 May should do, rather than 13 May 2025).

Set out times as follows:

- From 09:00 to 17:00;
- At 10:00.

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Abbreviations

Full stops should not be used between or after upper case abbreviations or acronyms (FFLM, RCP, CME, CPD, NHS, Dr, Prof, St etc).

Spell out the abbreviated term in full at the first mention in the text and put the abbreviation in brackets. e.g. "The incidence of tuberculosis (TB) declined over the course of the 20th century, but this has now reversed: the number of cases of TB has risen by nearly 33% since 2000."

If there are many abbreviations and acronyms in a document, it may be useful to have a list of them with their definitions at the beginning.

Note that 'the FFLM', rather than 'the Faculty' should be used as the abbreviated term for the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine in all external documents, including emails and letters.

Initials

Do not use full stops after people's initials, e.g. Dr ID Redmond (not Dr I. D. Redmond).

Numbers

Express numbers below 10 in words (one, two...). Use numerals for 10 and above. 3,000 (with comma), 30,000, £3,000.00.

Spelling

Use British spelling, not American. Use –ise, not –ize; e.g. realise, not realize; modernise, not modernize.

Use fetus (not foetus), in line with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG). Fetus reflects the original Greek spelling, whereas foetus is a later Latinised form.

Similarly, use British spelling, wording and grammar, e.g. outside (not outside of).

And caution with the use of apostrophes:

- Forensic Science Activities - abbreviated to FSAs (not FSA's)
- St Thomas' Hospital (not St Thomas's Hospital)

Also consider word use, for example, 'which' may be more suitable than 'that', or the use of 'that' several times in the same sentence.

Singular or plural

Please use the singular when referring to organisations or collective nouns in general. Examples: The RCP is (not "are"); the FFLM has (not "have"); The UK Government is (not "are").

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Updating and review of FFLM Publications

Publications are written on the standard FFLM pro-forma which is generally formatted in two columns. Paragraph text is Arial 9 pt with main headings Trebuchet MS 13 pt. The spacing and formatting (including colours of fonts) for these documents is automatically set in the template provided so please ensure you have the latest version of the template before editing; however, authors should consider accessible formats.

At the end of the document a QR code should be included to ensure people access the latest version.

On completion of a document, prior to publication as a pdf authors should double check that document properties (which can be found under File -> info in word) are correct with the title matching the actual document title and author being FFLM. Tags and comments should both read www.fflm.ac.uk

FFLM documents, e.g. guidance, proforma, quality standards and recommendations are usually reviewed every three years. The recommendations for forensic sampling are an exception as they are reviewed every six months. Where there have been significant changes, for example, in legislation, or as a result of new research, it may be necessary to review earlier.

The start of the review is usually to contact the original, (or most recent) author or reviewer. This is noted at the end of each document, for example:

Produced by Prof Catherine White on behalf of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine
This guidance was first published in 2016 and has been reviewed and updated in 2021 and 2024.

© Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine, July 2024

Review Date: July 2027

Send any feedback and comments to: forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk

And when reviewed, something like this would appear above the details of the original details:

Updated by Dr XX in 2027

Originally produced by Prof Catherine White on behalf of the Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine
This guidance was first published in 2016 and has been reviewed and updated in 2021 and 2024.

© Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine, July 2024

Review Date: July 2027

Send any feedback and comments to: forensic.medicine@fflm.ac.uk

The font in this attribution section is Arial 6 pt.

Document control

All internal FFLM documents must include a document control table. This records when the document was created, when and by whom it has been amended, the nature of the changes, and the approval route. The table should appear at the end of the document, after the references and before any appendices.

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Example (for this document):

Version	Date	Author / Editor	Changes made	Approved by
1	July 2024	Prof Catherine White	First issue	FFLM Board
1.1	September 2025	Halita Obineche, CEO; Bernadette Butler, Immediate Past President	Added accessibility section; clarified spelling (<i>fetus</i> not <i>foetus</i>); introduced document control requirements; expanded references guidance	SOVP
Next	August 2028	To be assigned	Scheduled review	TBC

Version numbering

- 1.0, 2.0, 3.0... Major versions. Use when a document is first approved, or when it is substantially revised (new policy, full restructure, major content changes).
- 1.1, 1.2, 1.3... Minor versions. Use for small updates (corrections, clarifications, formatting changes, adding examples).
- When a document is reviewed but no changes are made, update only the review date in the document control table. The version number remains the same.

Where appropriate, documents should also carry a footer on each page showing the document title, version number and date (for example: FFLM House Style Guidance | Version 1.1 | September 2025).

Note on attribution

The document control table does not replace the attribution block.

- External-facing publications (such as guidance, standards, recommendations) must include both:
 - o an attribution block at the end of the document (e.g. Produced by... Updated by... Review date...), and
 - o a document control table after the references for internal record-keeping.
- Internal-only documents (such as policies, strategies, committee papers) should include the document control table but do not need a public attribution block.

Accessibility

- Ensure sufficient colour contrast in figures and presentations.
- Run the Microsoft Readability Tool in Word before finalising documents.

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1.2	December 2025	Alex Gorton, President	Included a sentence on the correct template for FFLM publications and added a paragraph on ensuring the document title is accurate in the document properties	
Next review	August 2028	To be assigned	Scheduled review	TBC