Master of Forensic Medicine

Postgraduate - Course

Commencement year:
This course entry applies to students commencing this course in 2018 and should be read in conjunction with information provided in the 'Faculty information' section of this Handbook by the Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. Unit codes that are not linked to their entry in the Handbook are not available for study in the current year.

Course code:
M6009

Credit points:
72

Abbreviated title:
MForensMed

Managing faculty:
Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

Admission and fees:
Australia

Course type:
Specialist
Master by coursework

Standard duration:
3 years PT
Part-time study only.
You have a maximum of 5 years to complete this course including any periods of intermission and suspension, and must be continuously enrolled throughout.

Mode and location:
Off-campus (Southbank)
Studies are completed at the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine, Department of Forensic Medicine, Southbank, Melbourne.

Award:
Master of Forensic Medicine

Alternative exits
Graduate Certificate of Forensic Medicine
Graduate Diploma of Forensic Medicine
Refer to 'Alternative exits' entry below for further requirements and details.

Notes
This course is not available to international students who are holders of an Australian student visa, for study onshore in Australia. However holders of some other categories of Australian visas living in Australia, and students studying off-campus by distance learning (where this option is available) and living outside of Australia, may be eligible for this course.

Description
In this course, you will gain advanced expertise and specialised knowledge enabling you to become highly sought after in the forensic medical, dental or science fields. Building on your qualification in medicine, dentistry, biomedical science or radiography, you will be able to apply your knowledge in the interests of justice and will learn to make high level, independent judgements in the forensic setting, gain sound knowledge of medico-legal principles, gain the skills to clearly communicate medico-legal issues to the justice system, prepare effective and objective medico-legal reports, critically evaluate the ethical and legal issues arising in forensic medical practice, and interpret wounds and injury patterns. You will develop a range of skills to equip you with the necessary attributes to work in the fields of forensic medicine, dentistry, or science within the parameters of the justice system.

Specialisations
Clinical forensic medicine

Clinical forensic medicine has evolved into an increasingly specialised area within the wider field of forensic medical practice. Clinical forensic medicine encompasses a wide range of activities at the interface of medical practice and the law. The range of medico-legal services overlap with many other medical specialty areas; paediatrics, gynaecology, clinical toxicology, emergency medicine, psychiatry, dentistry and forensic pathology. However, the discipline of clinical forensic medicine has become the home of the special issues inherent in child and adult sexual/physical assault, traffic medicine and custodial...
Forensic medical science

Forensic medical science encompasses a number of disciplines including forensic toxicology and pharmacology, mortuary technical science, forensic imaging, forensic aspects of molecular biology, and forensic aspects of nursing practice.

This field is focused on the recognition, identification and evaluation of physical evidence, the results of which will apply to a variety of case types, both for living and deceased individuals. In addition to the laboratory aspects of their work, forensic medical scientists require a sound understanding of forensic pathology and death investigation as the majority of work is conducted in a coronial environment.

Forensic medical science increasingly involves an understanding of advanced imaging modalities, such as CT, and an appreciation of the capabilities of fields such as forensic anthropology, molecular biology, and most especially clinical forensic medicine, forensic pathology and death investigation systems and protocols. The increasing demand for rigorously tested and analysed forensic evidence in the medico-legal environment means that practitioners now require higher level specialist tertiary qualifications.

Forensic odontology

Forensic odontology can be defined as the proper handling, examination and evaluation of dental evidence which will then be presented in the interest of justice. Forensic odontology is concerned with a wide range of activities at the interface of dental practice and the law such as human identification (including mass fatality victim identification), bite mark analysis, craniofacial trauma analysis, age estimation (of both the living and the deceased), child abuse, and dental malpractice. Forensic odontology expertise is utilised across the medico-legal spectrum where practitioners work closely with forensic pathologists, clinical forensic medical practitioners, forensic anthropologists, and forensic scientists. Forensic odontology is an integral part of the medico-legal process and practitioners now require formal qualifications and ongoing training in order to satisfy the evidence-based needs of the courts and the justice system.

Outcomes

These course outcomes are aligned with the Australian Qualifications Framework level 9 and Monash Graduate Attributes (http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/handbooks/alignmentofoutcomes.html).

Upon completion of the course and depending upon the specific specialisation it is expected that students will be able to:

1. integrate an advanced body of theoretical and practical knowledge and cognitive skills to demonstrate safe practice in your field of forensic medicine, dentistry or science
2. exercise initiative and expert judgement in the field of forensic medicine, dentistry or science practice
3. appropriately interpret and incorporate medico-legal principles to the practice of a specific field of forensic medicine, dentistry or science
4. provide advanced analytical skills in the application of a specific field of forensic sciences in the community
5. evaluate current research and critically apply the results to the practice of forensic medicine for the benefit of the community
6. conduct independent research to further enhance the practice of forensic medicine
7. work and communicate effectively as a service provider in the field of forensic medicine.

Structure

The course is structured in two parts: Part A. Forensic medical and scientific foundations and Part B. Advanced expertise.

Part A. Forensic medical and scientific foundations

These studies will enable you to develop an understanding and the skills of three key areas required for high quality forensic medical and scientific service and will apply to medical practitioners, dentists and biomedical medical scientists and radiographers: medical evidence, elements of forensic science and ethics, medicine and the law.

In particular, you will gain practical skills and knowledge of the legal and procedural rules and administrative arrangements for the presentation of evidence to courts and tribunals within the justice system. You will become familiar with the tools and vocabulary of ethical discourse in forensic medicine and science. You will learn how the broader forensic science disciplines interact with your own area in the performance of case work, including rules of evidence collection and preservation and chain of custody for forensic samples.

Part B. Forensic medicine, dentistry and science advanced expertise

In these studies you will complete either a program of coursework or a research project.

The studies enable you to develop specialised knowledge and advanced skills in areas of forensic medicine that suit your interests, skills and career goals. You will gain in-depth
knowledge of a range of key areas within either forensic medicine, forensic dentistry or forensic science. Depending on your interests and motivation, you have the option to apply and consolidate the knowledge and professional skills gained by completing a supervised research project.

Requirements

The course comprises 72 points structured into two parts: Part A. Forensic medical and scientific foundation (18 points) and Part B. Forensic medicine, dentistry and science advanced expertise (54 points).

Units are 6 credit points unless otherwise stated.

Part A. Forensic medical and scientific foundations (18 points)

Students must complete:

- FOR4001 Medical evidence
- FOR4003 Ethics, medicine and law
- FOR4004 Elements of the forensic sciences

Part B. Forensic medicine, dentistry and science advanced expertise (54 points)

Students must complete a. or b. below.

a. Research stream

- MAP5000 Research in advanced health professional practice (12 points)
- MAP5001 Advanced health practice research project (12 points)
- MAP5002 Minor thesis (12 points)
- elective units (18 points) chosen from the list of units for any specialisation below

b. Coursework stream

- 54 points of electives chosen from the elective list below

Note: Due to unit prerequisites some units are only available to medical practitioners and others only to dental practitioners.

Clinical forensic medical

Students must complete:

- FOR4002 Injury interpretation
- FOR5005 Adult sexual assault
- FOR5008 Custodial medicine
- FOR5012 Child and adolescent sexual abuse
- FOR5013 Non accidental injury in childhood

plus 24 points of elective studies chosen from:

- FOR5006 Traffic medicine
- FOR5007 Elements of forensic toxicology
- FOR5009 Advanced issues in sexual violence
- FOR5010 Project in forensic medicine
- FOR5011 Advanced issues in non-accidental injury of children
- FOR5014 Elements of forensic odontology
- FOR5016 Clinical forensic odontology
- FOR5018 Elements of forensic anthropology
- FOR5020 Forensic cross sectional imaging
- FOR5022 Advanced methods in forensic science: Emerging trends and issues
- FORxxxx Elements of forensic pathology
- any units from the medical scientist specialist studies below
- other level 5 units offered by the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, other faculties at Monash University, or other tertiary institutions (with departmental approval). Suitable Monash units can be identified using the browse units (http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/handbooks/units/search) tool in the current edition of the Handbook.

Forensic odontology

Students must complete:

- FOR4002 Injury interpretation
- FOR5014 Elements of forensic odontology
- FOR5015 Post-mortem dental identification - Principles and methods
- FOR5016 Clinical forensic odontology
- FOR5017 Disaster victim identification (DVI) - Principles and methods
- FOR5018 Elements of forensic anthropology
plus 18 points of elective studies chosen from:

- FOR5007 Elements of forensic toxicology
- FOR5010 Project in forensic medicine
- FOR5013 Non accidental injury in childhood
- FOR5020 Forensic cross sectional imaging
- FOR5022 Advanced methods in forensic science: Emerging trends and issues
- FORxxxx Elements of forensic pathology
- FPA5007 Death Investigation
- any units from the Forensic medical science specialist studies below
- other level 5 units offered by the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, other faculties at Monash University, or other tertiary institutions (with departmental approval). Suitable Monash units can be identified using the browse units (http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/ handbooks/units/search) tool in the current edition of the Handbook.

Alternative exits

You may exit this course early and apply to graduate with one of the following awards, provided you have satisfied the requirements for that award during your enrolment in this master's course:

- Graduate Certificate of Forensic Medicine after successful completion of 24 points of study including all units in Part A of the master's
- Graduate Diploma of Forensic Medicine after successful completion of 48 points of study including all units in Part A of the master's, with a minimum of 36 credit points at level 4 or above.

Progression to further studies

You can choose to complete a research stream that will provide a pathway to a higher degree by research.

Forensic medical science

Students must complete:

- FOR5007 Elements of forensic toxicology
- FOR5021 Mortuary technical science
- FORxxxx Elements of forensic pathology
- FOR5023 Quality management in the forensic sciences

plus 30 points of elective studies chosen from:

- FOR4002 Injury interpretation
- FOR5010 Project in forensic medicine
- FOR5011 Elements of forensic anthropology
- FOR5020 Forensic cross sectional imaging
- FOR5022 Advanced methods in forensic science: Emerging trends and issues
- FORxxxx Advanced mortuary technical science
- FORxxxx Forensic pharmacology
- FPA5004 Autopsy practice
- FPA5007 Death investigation
- other level 5 units offered by the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, other faculties at Monash University, or other tertiary institutions (with departmental approval). Suitable Monash units can be identified using the browse units (http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/ handbooks/units/search) tool in the current edition of the Handbook.