Dissertation Titles 2026
Diploma in Forensic Medical Sciences (DipFMS)

Candidates choose from one of four dissertation topics below:

1) **Title: The contribution of forensic practitioners**
   Guidance Statement:
   "Against the background of present-day conflicts in theatres such as Ukraine, the Middle East and elsewhere what evidence may there be to suggest that War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity may have been committed? How might forensic pathologists and forensic scientists contribute to the identification of evidence which establishes the existence of such crimes and the identity of the perpetrators".

   Candidates should review the material stemming from areas of conflict such as Ukraine, Gaza, the DRC, less recent areas such as the Balkans (as examples) suggesting that there have been Human Rights abuses, War Crimes and potentially Crimes Against Humanity.

   Areas to consider could be detention without trial; torture; forced disappearances; extra-judicial executions; hostage taking; military attacks on civilians and civilian institutions such as hospitals and schools

   Candidates should also consider the roles to be played by forensic scientists and pathologists in the investigations of such matters.

   It may be necessary to exhume bodies and perform autopsies in order to determine the cause of death; DNA may enable identification; likewise forensic anthropologists.

   Candidates may wish to reflect on law and science working together for the greater good.

2) **Title: The current and future role of AI in the UK criminal justice system**
   Guidance Statement
   Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly common in everyday life. Within the Criminal Justice System (CJS), there are many existing and potential uses of AI such as drafting and summarising documents, court transcription, risk-scoring algorithms for probation cases, facial recognition, data analysis and evidence comparison in forensic science, etc. Whilst AI has the potential to improve efficiency and, in some areas, objectivity, there are ethical considerations to using it in the CJS e.g. errors, training data perpetuating existing inequalities, the 'black box' nature of AI systems, making transparency difficult, etc. This topic can be written about broadly or using specific relevant examples from law, medicine, forensic science, policing, etc.

3) **Title: What effect has the increase in litigation in relation to medical care had on the medical profession and the provision of medical care?**

Guidance Statement

In recent years, there has been a noticeable rise in litigation, with medical professionals facing civil claims and scrutiny within the Coroner's Court regarding the care provided to their patients. Decision-making is also subject to challenge, with recent developments such as Martha's Law emphasising the rights of patients and their families to get an urgent review from an independent clinician if they are concerned about the care provided and deteriorating condition.

The stress of making life-saving decisions, whilst often under extreme stress, and the repercussions of this on the individual when things go wrong has reportedly led to some clinicians leaving the profession altogether (for example Adam Kay, author of "This is Going to Hurt").

Consider what protections are in place to support patients following potentially damaging care, and what support is available to support those clinicians whose care is being challenged. Are there sufficient safeguards in place? Do you consider the balance between safeguarding the patient and scrutinising clinical decisions to be appropriately struck? If not, explain where you think the balance needs to be changed. You may wish to consider how this could be put into effect.

4) **Title: What serious accidents are commonly seen in the home environment?**

Guidance Statement:

Give an account of accidents which are seen in a domestic environment in all age groups with emphasis on the possible differences in types between the age categories. Discuss in relation to prevalence, type and measures which may be taken to prevent them. In addition, discuss how you would differentiate an accidental incident from self-harm or homicide. There is abundant literature to assist you.