Module Definition Form (MDF)

Module code: MOD005794	**Version:** 6 **Date Amended:** 10/Jul/2025

1. Module Title
Forensic Pathology

2a. Module Leader
Samantha Tipper

2b. School
School of Life Sciences

2c. Faculty
Faculty of Science and Engineering

3a. Level
6

3b. Module Type
Standard (fine graded)

4a. Credits
15

4b. Study Hours
150

5. Restrictions

Type	Module Code	Module Name	Condition
Pre-requisites:	None		
Co-requisites:	None		
Exclusions:	None		
Courses to which this module is restricted:	BSc (Hons) Forensic Science, BSc (Hons) Crime and Investigative Studies (all versions)		

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

6a. Module Description

Forensic pathology is a discipline of pathology concerned with the investigation of deaths where there are medico-legal implications, for example, suspected homicide and other complex medico-legal cases. Forensic pathologists are medically qualified doctors who perform autopsies on sudden, unexpected and suspicious deaths. The forensic investigation of death is a multi-disciplinary approach that involves collaboration between pathologists, crime scene investigators, forensic scientists and other experts in the forensic field. You will be introduced to the field of forensic pathology, which contributes to the investigation of suspicious death and identification of the deceased. We will cover the code of conduct and performance standards that are developed for forensic pathology. You will study the role of forensic pathology in fulfilling the key functions of the medico-legal autopsy determination of cause of death, postmortem changes after death, estimate of time since death, traumatic causes of death and asphyxias. You will also learn how the forensic pathologist works in close collaboration with police and crime investigators in the investigation of a suspicious death. A number of case studies and peer-reviewed articles relating to the subject area will be covered in the lecture and seminar sessions. This module will help you to develop your critical thinking, teamwork, communication and presentation skills

6b. Outline Content

* Medico-legal autopsy and its objectives, the role of the forensic pathologist at the scene of death, ancillary investigations, autopsy report and the information relating to obscure autopsy.

* The pathology of wounds: mechanisms of wounding; classification description and medico-legal importance of wounds such as abrasions, contusions or bruises, lacerations, blunt penetrating injuries, incised wounds and regional injuries.

* Post-mortem changes such as hypostasis, rigor mortis, putrefaction, adipocere, mummification and post-mortem damage by predators.

* Time since death: estimation of time since death by body cooling, stomach emptying, the use of vitreous humour chemistry in timing death, the entomology of the dead and post-mortem interval.

* Asphyxia: various types of mechanical asphyxia, signs of asphyxia and asphyxia caused by fatal pressure on the neck.

* Case studies on forensic pathology from peer reviewed journals.

6c. Key Texts/Literature

The reading list to support this module is available at: https://readinglists.aru.ac.uk/

6d. Specialist Learning Resources

None

7. Learning Outcomes (threshold standards)		
No.	**Type**	**On successful completion of this module the student will be expected to be able to:**
1	Knowledge and Understanding	Demonstrate a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of the major principles of forensic pathology
2	Knowledge and Understanding	Analyse and critically review the role and responsibilities of the Forensic Pathologist in the investigation of suspicious death, having due regard to legal and professional behaviour.
3	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Show a detailed and critical knowledge of the investigation of causes of death.
4	Intellectual, practical, affective and transferrable skills	Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the cause of traumatic and non-traumatic deaths within the context of forensic pathology.

8a. Module Occurrence to which this MDF Refers				
Year	**Occurrence**	**Period**	**Location**	**Mode of Delivery**
2026/7	ZZF	Template For Face To Face Learning Delivery		Face to Face

8b. Learning Activities for the above Module Occurrence			
Learning Activities	**Hours**	**Learning Outcomes**	**Details of Duration, frequency and other comments**
Lectures	24	1-4	12 x 2 hrs lectures/active learning
Other teacher managed learning	15	1-4	lab 1 x 2hrs, fieldtrip 5hrs, seminar 1 x 2 hrs Presentations 6hrs
Student managed learning	111	1-4	Background reading, online activities, preparation for lectures and practicals, and completion of assessments
TOTAL:	150		

9. Assessment for the above Module Occurrence

The assessment for some modules includes a presentation (see below for details on how this particular module is assessed). We recognise that presenting, especially to a large group, can cause significant anxiety or distress for some students. If this may affect you, please contact your Module Leader or the Disability and Neurodiversity Service as early as possible. We will work with you to consider appropriate reasonable adjustments. Depending on your individual needs, these might include, for example, presenting to a smaller group or presenting only to a member of academic staff.

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
010	Practical	1-4	50 (%)	Fine Grade	30 (%)
Oral Presentation (1500 word equivalent)					

Assessment No.	Assessment Method	Learning Outcomes	Weighting (%)	Fine Grade or Pass/Fail	Qualifying Mark (%)
011	Coursework	1-4	50 (%)	Fine Grade	30 (%)
In-class test (1.5 hours)					

In order to pass this module, students are required to achieve an overall mark of 40% (for modules at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6) or 50% (for modules at level 7*).

In addition, students are required to:
(a) achieve the qualifying mark for each element of fine graded assessment as specified above
(b) pass any pass/fail elements

[* the pass mark of 50% applies for all module occurrences from the academic year 2024/25 – see Section 3a of this MDF to check the level of the module and Section 8a of this MDF to check the academic year]