

# BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

## College Full Inspection

**INSTITUTION:** Academy of Forensic Medical Sciences

**ADDRESS:** 117 Charterhouse Street  
London  
EC1M 6AA

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Professor Peter Vanezis OBE

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 8 October 2015

**ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION:** Accreditation awarded for six months.

### DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Accreditation awarded for the full four-year period.
- Decision on accreditation deferred.
- Award of accreditation refused.

Date: 26 Nov 2015

### 1. Background to the institution

The Academy of Forensic Medical Sciences (the Academy or AFMS) was established in 2010, building on existing provision which had been offered since 2003 through Cameron Forensic Medical Sciences, a department of Queen Mary University, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry (henceforth: Barts and the London). The relationship with this major teaching hospital remains a close one.

Forensic medicine is distinguished from its allied discipline, forensic science, in that it spans a broader range of medical, legal and ethical issues, in particular addressing the interface between medical and legal matters. Following a general reduction in the higher education provision in forensic medical science, nationally and internationally, AFMS aims to accommodate an unmet demand for this specialised education and training, both nationally and internationally. The Academy's Director and Chairman is a leading figure in this medical academic field, with an established and recognised reputation in both research and practice. He previously headed a department at the University of Glasgow and currently holds a professorship at Queen Mary University, where he contributes to Masters level programmes and research.

AFMS is a private company limited by guarantee. It is based administratively in small office premises adjacent to Barts and the London's main campus, Charterhouse Square in the City of London.

The Academy has one full-time member of teaching staff (the Director), and three part-time teaching staff on long term contracts. The nature of the AFMS programmes means that the delivery of teaching takes place mainly through employing, on short-term contracts, specialist academic experts, invited from an extensive and well-established network of contacts, who work on a freelance consultant basis. The full time Registrar has responsibility for all administrative and course management aspects and is supported by three part-time administrative staff.

AFMS has established a number of international links. Of particular note is the close collaboration with medical education in Malaysia, where AFMS programmes are recognised, and attendance funded, by the Government.

AFMS also has in place Memoranda of Understanding agreements with institutions in Hong Kong, Greece, Norway and Italy. The Academy has worked to extend its provision at an international level by the ongoing development of technology supported learning, allowing flexible online study of its courses.

### 2. Brief description of the current provision

AFMS currently offers a range of programmes, predominantly part-time and short courses, delivered in different learning modes and at different times across the year. These are as follows:

\* Fellowship course in Forensic Medicine and Human Identification:

A one-year course aimed at specialist forensic practitioners who wish to gain recognition as senior consultants. In addition to postgraduate classes, the programme arranges placements within London for the development of practical skills in pathology. The Fellowship is recognised as a qualification by the Specialty Board of Medicine in Malaysia and other far eastern countries. This is an internal award of the Academy and does not currently carry recognition by a UK awarding body.

\*Diploma in Forensic Medical Sciences (DipFMS): offered both face-to-face and online. This is a sixty-hour course running over 30 weeks. Students successfully completing the course sit for the examinations of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries, which is the awarding body for the Diploma.

\*Diploma in Forensic Human Identification:

An intensive one-week course providing specialist training in forensic investigation and human identification. The course is linked to the Diploma in Forensic Human Identification offered by the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians, which is the awarding body for the Diploma.

\*Diploma in Medical Jurisprudence training programme:

This course offers support to pathologists in forensic pathology to satisfy the requirements for eligibility to sit for the Diploma offered by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries.

\*Management of the Dead:

This is a one-week training course offered biennially in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross, in Geneva. It deals with all aspects of managing the deceased in armed conflict situations.

An adapted four-day version of this course has recently been designed and delivered as part of the in-house London-based provision of AFMS.

\*Medical Negligence course:

A one-day training programme to provide doctors and health professionals with a comprehensive overview of issues relating to medical negligence and GMC revalidation.

The total number of students admitted by the Academy in any one year is around 80. Other than the Fellowship, all of the students are part-time. Of these, around 90% are UK-based, with 5% from the EU and a further 5% from other

countries. Admission to all the programmes is normally at postgraduate or post-qualification level, with the requirement being a relevant university degree in medicine, law, science, social science or related studies. The short course programmes are designed to appeal to a wide field of forensic practitioners from medicine, science and legal fields. Students therefore come from a variety of career backgrounds and have included, in addition to medical pathologists, senior medical practitioners wishing to extend their range of expertise, police officers, coroners and a high court judge. A number of the Academy's programmes carry recognised CPD credits for medical training, and AFMS has also been formally accredited as an approved learning provider by the Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Services (ELCAS) in the Ministry of Defence Enhanced Learning Scheme.

All of the AFMS courses are offered for online study through the Blackboard platform, and the Academy has a number of overseas students following its programmes in this study mode, and these include additional tutor support and feedback.

The Academy therefore has an established track record in teaching diploma and professional development courses at postgraduate level. It has collaborative relationships with universities nationally and internationally, and students successfully completing AFMS teaching and training have been successful in their subsequent assessment for awards made by recognised UK awarding bodies.

### **3. Inspection process**

A one day candidacy inspection by a single inspector took place in April, followed by a Stage 3 inspection in October 2015.

Comprehensive documentation was provided covering all aspects AFMS as an organisation and the programmes that it offers, and an informative self-evaluation statement was submitted. The two inspection visits covered: interviews with the Director and the Registrar and with part-time AFMS administrative staff; visits to the AFMS administrative offices and to the teaching facilities of the Barts and London as used by AFMS; a meeting with a visiting lecturer (a senior pathologist); meetings with students and former students; observation of two teaching sessions .

## PART B - JUDGEMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

### INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

#### 1. The institution is effectively managed

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 1.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body.                    | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

An organisation chart was provided, outlining the very straightforward pattern of reporting relationships across the small number of employees. It was clear that this was well understood and followed by all the AFMS staff.

A formal Constitution outlines the main aims and purposes of the Academy. AFMS is a compact organisation with focused educational aims, working at a specialist level of medical education. The qualifications and experience of the senior staff are excellent. Communication is close and direct, with contact between the Director and the Registrar taking place on a daily basis.

There is a small Board of Directors nominated by the Company, with clear terms of reference, which meets every two months. It has responsibility for strategic direction, finance, and staffing matters.

A valuable level of academic oversight and advice is provided by an Academic Advisory Board (AAB), composed of some thirty recognised experts in forensic medicine and allied fields, drawn from senior academics and practitioners across the world. Meetings of the Board have thus far been infrequent and relatively informal in character, acting essentially in a consultative and advisory capacity, with a view to ensuring standards and enhancing the quality of provision.

Recently, AFMS has established a Subcommittee for Academic Development (SAD), members of which are drawn from the AAB. Its terms of reference show that this smaller subcommittee will have oversight of academic programmes, policies and procedures, and for the assessment of the quality and effectiveness of programmes. The subcommittee is to meet at least twice a year and its members are leading academics in the forensic science field. This external evaluative perspective upon its work is a welcome and valuable development in the quality management of AFMS

## 2. The administration of the institution is effective

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.        | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

### Comments

There is a single full-time administrator, the Registrar, who oversees admissions and admission enquiries, student records, quality assurance, management of assessment and all day-to-day administration. Some further administrative support is provided on a part-time basis by two graduate tutors. The evidence available suggested that administration was handled efficiently and the capacity was sufficient to meet needs. AFMS has a full range of documented procedures covering all aspects of its work, including comprehensive handbooks for students and for staff.

The collection and management of administrative data and information is carried out effectively through the use of a laptop, regularly backed up to a secure Cloud-based server and a portable disk. This system permits flexible and rapid retrieval of key information for staff and students.

## 3. The institution employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| 3.1 | There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 3.2 | Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 3.3 | There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

### Comments

All positions are discussed with the Director of the Academy; qualifications are checked. The Academy has in place a comprehensive Staff Handbook, which sets out clearly all contractual arrangements and staff-related policies. Recruitment, interview, induction, attendance, holiday and pay arrangements are all covered. Review of staff responsibilities, performance, and activities takes place regularly on a relatively informal discussion basis. However, there is currently no regular formal appraisal system in place, perhaps understandable given the small size of the organisation and small number of full-time employees.

It is therefore recommended that AFMS should now produce formal job specifications for its main full and part-time administrative staff and that, linked to these job definitions, AFMS should introduce a more formal performance appraisal discussion for its staff on an appropriate periodic basis. An outline of the the appraisal procedure should be included in the list of policies and in the Staff Handbook.

4. **Publicity material , both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum**

4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered.  Yes  No

4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

There is no general printed promotional material for the Academy. Marketing and provision of information takes place exclusively through the AFMS website, which was found to present a full and accurate account of the provision. The website includes all course details and the policies of AFMS, together with more general news and information regarding forensic medicine, including an archive of published papers. The website professionally presented and is managed through a consultancy contract, its content is defined and monitored by the Registrar.

Comprehensive printed information is available to students on course, through a Student Handbook and through detailed course curriculum documentation.

It is recommended that, as intended, the website includes information regarding the facilities and resources available to students studying with AFMS.

5. **The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses**

5.1 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students.  Yes  No

5.2 A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.  Yes  No

5.3 Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries responded to promptly and appropriately.  Yes  No

5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.  Yes  No  NA

5.5 Students receive a proper initial assessment which includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The website and course-related documents clearly specify the entry requirements for entry to the courses, normally a University degree in a relevant field. Other applicants may be considered on the basis of relevant professional experience, involving an interview. Proof of English proficiency is required. The Academy's Director reviews all applications, qualifications are checked and references are required from a minimum of two referees. Applicants judged not likely to succeed are not accepted.

6. **There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it**

- 6.1 There is a clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality, requiring that they attend at least 80% of their scheduled classes.  Yes  No
- 6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.  Yes  No
- 6.3 Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The attendance policy is included in the Student Handbook and 100% student attendance is required. Registers are taken at classes, recorded on the Academy's computer system and reviewed. There is a procedure for repeated unsatisfactory attendance, with exclusion as a final sanction. As the majority of AFMS students are fee-paying postgraduates with a commitment to their professional development, absence is rarely an issue.

7. **The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**

- 7.1 The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution's provision, including formal student representation where appropriate.  Yes  No
- 7.2 Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.  Yes  No
- 7.3 The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary.  Yes  No
- 7.4 There is a mechanism for reporting on the institution's response to the feedback to the student body.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

AFMS conducts a full evaluation of its provision, with a feedback questionnaire completed by participants for every class session or short course component. Evaluations are analysed by the Registrar and discussed by the staff (in future the Sub-committee for Academic Development will also be involved). Evidence was heard of action being taken in response to student evaluation, and students praised the responsiveness of the management, confirming that their opinions were sought with a view to ongoing improvement.

However it was observed that AFMS currently has only informal arrangements in place for reporting back to students on actions taken, and this area could usefully be strengthened.

Recommendation: AFMS regularly informs students (e.g. through the Blackboard online learning platform) of actions taken as a result of student feedback.

8. **The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement**

- 8.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution's performance.  Yes  No
- 8.2 Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates.  Yes  No
- 8.3 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Systems for review are in place and are currently being strengthened. The small size of AFMS management and administration has meant that organisation-level monitoring and review have taken place in a continuous, and regular but relatively informal manner. Standards for programmes are set through drawing on internal experience and external advice, in both cases from highly experienced practitioners. The evaluation of delivered courses, including student feedback on all classes, is intensive and is carefully monitored. More general evaluation of the work of AFMS has been less formally conducted, primarily through discussion in the Board of Directors and the Academic Advisory Board, but with little evidence of formal record. The establishment of the new Sub-committee of Academic Development (SAD) which will receive regular reports and which is responsible for taking an overview of standards and course performance, will significantly improve this aspect.

An annual report must be received by SAD which includes the data, as relevant, in 8.2 above, and that an annual action plan is drawn up following its considerations. The report and the action plan should also be received by the Board of Directors of AFMS.

**INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

9. **Academic management is effective**

- 9.1 There is a suitably qualified and experienced academic manager or academic management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment.  Yes  No
- 9.2 Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.  Yes  No
- 9.3 The allocation of teachers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience.  Yes  No
- 9.4 There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Academic management is led by the Director, assisted in administrative aspects by the Registrar. Lecturers for AFMS programmes are very highly qualified and include eminent and experienced academics in the forensic medicine field. Academic resources are provided through the close association with Barts and the London medical school.



10. **The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable students to succeed**

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 10.1 | Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow students to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.2 | Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body.           | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.3 | Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.4 | Students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.5 | Full-time courses requiring students to attend for 15 hours or more per week are time tabled over at least three days.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.6 | Any required coursework and revision periods are scheduled in advance.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.7 | The academic backgrounds and particular needs of students are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

As the courses offered by AFMS are postgraduate, students are accustomed to learning independently, and are strongly self-motivated. Clear information on the assessment pattern is included in course syllabus details. The assessments for AFMS programmes leading to external awards are carefully designed to prepare students for the relevant Diploma, and students are advised on progress towards those qualifications.

AFMS makes significant use of the 'Blackboard' online learning platform, with course notes, slides, and audio and video recordings of lectures made available to students. These resources are used to support the online study of the courses offered, but are also accessible to attending students. Students much appreciated this facility which enabled them to prepare topics before attending the relevant lecture.

11. **Teachers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and effective in delivering them**

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 11.1 | Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 11.2 | Teachers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively.                     | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 11.3 | The appraisal procedures for teaching staff incorporate regular classroom observation.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 11.4 | Teachers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of students.       | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 11.5 | Teachers respond to different learning needs of students where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 11.6 | Teachers employ effective strategies to involve all students in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content.              | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

As noted above, AFMS lecturing staff are highly qualified and experienced academics, the majority working in reputed UK medical schools, many at professorial level.

12. **The institution provides students and teachers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study**

This standard is judged to be:  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Through a formal agreement, AFMS uses the facilities of the University for its teaching; this arrangement covers all teaching and study areas, the University Library and the Medical School Library. AFMS also has its own specialist library of key texts in forensic medical science at its main office premises. Specific course materials accompany lectures and seminars.

13. **Students receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored**

13.1 Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to students and teachers.  Yes  No

13.2 Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate.  Yes  No

13.3 Students are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement.  Yes  No

13.4 The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders.  Yes  No

13.5 Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.  Yes  No

13.6 Oral and written feedback is given to individual students on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery.  Yes  No

13.7 Students have appropriate access outside class time to teachers or personal tutors for academic support.  Yes  No

This standard is judged to be:  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

For the courses where this applies, there are clear statements on assessment, students are regularly advised on progress. Students confirmed that they had helpful feedback and that access to tutors was straightforward

14. **The institution offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate**

14.1 For courses leading to the award of a UK degree, the institution has a formal agreement with a recognised UK degree-awarding body.  Yes  No  NA

14.2 For courses leading to other UK awards, the awarding body is recognised by the relevant regulator.  Yes  No  NA

14.3 For courses leading to the award of an overseas degree, the institution has a formal partnership agreement with the overseas degree-awarding body, which is itself accredited by a recognised national agency.  Yes  No  NA

This standard is judged to be:  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

AFMS offers programmes that prepare students for the Diploma examinations for awards listed in Section 2 above; it does not itself directly offer UK awards. The AFMS Fellowship course in Forensic Medicine and Human Identification carries formal recognition by the Specialty Board of Medicine in Malaysia and is listed in the Malaysian National Specialist Register of medical qualifications (<https://www.nsr.org.my/qualifications1.html>).

15. **There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards**

- 15.1 There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the NQF/QCF and evidence that students who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.  Yes  No  NA
- 15.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study.  Yes  No  NA
- 15.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

AFMS short courses are accredited for professional development credit by ELCAS and by the Ministry of Defence

16. **There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment**

- 16.1 The institution complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration.  Yes  No  NA
- 16.2 For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for students to appeal against their marks.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

AFMS conducts all assessment and formal examinations for its internal Fellowship award. It also manages some administrative aspects of the examination procedure (Board of Examiners etc) for the Diploma award in Forensic Human Identification on behalf of the awarding body. AFMS staff have experience of conducting examinations in a university-level environment, they follow the normal practice required by external awarding bodies, and there is no reason to doubt that this is done efficiently. The development of a formally documented system for the administration of examination and of an appeals policy were both in progress at the time of the inspection visit.

As a priority, AFMS should complete and publish these intended procedural statements.

17. **There is appropriate provision of advice for students intending to proceed to employment or higher/further education**

- 17.1 Students have access to advice from appropriate staff member on further study and career opportunities.  Yes  No
- 17.2 If the institution offers courses preparing students for higher education, they have access to prospectuses and to advice from a designated staff member both on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Senior AFMS staff are well able to give career development advice if that is necessary, but in general the career path of students at AFMS is already well established, and their aim is to gain additional professional qualifications

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## INSPECTION AREA - STUDENT WELFARE

### 18. Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

- |      |   |   |
|------|---|---|
| 18.1 | There is at least one named staff member responsible for student welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counselling. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.2 | Students receive appropriate advice before arrival.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.3 | Students receive an appropriate induction and relevant information upon arrival.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.4 | Students are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.5 | The institution has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

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The part-time administrative support tutors at AFMS have previously studied at the Academy and play a valuable role in supporting student welfare. They provide both study advice and, if necessary, direct personal support to students. Students confirmed that information provided at the commencement of the course was appropriate and helpful, and in general staff were approachable and accessible. AFMS has published policies on Equal Opportunities, Race Equality, Disability, and Harassment.

### 19. International students are provided with specific advice and assistance

- |      |  |   |
|------|--|---|
| 19.1 | International students receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.2 | International students receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area.   | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.3 | Information and advice specific to international students continues to be available throughout the course of study.  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.4 | Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, students have access to speakers of their own first language. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

#### Comments

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International students receive advice at a personal, informal level. They are supported in finding accommodation and in orientation in London. In general these are mature students with an fluent command of English. International students met by the inspector confirmed that they felt well supported.

20. **The fair treatment of students is ensured**

- 20.1 Students apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms  Yes  No and conditions.
- 20.2 Students have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing  Yes  No at the start of the course.

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

AFMS has a Complaints and Feedback policy in place, and published on its website. Students believed that they would have no difficulty in raising an issue for complaint with the management of the Academy.

21. **Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised**

- 21.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of students.  Yes  No
- 21.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where students under 18 are accommodated.  Yes  No  NA
- 21.3 Clear rules and fire, health and safety procedures are in place, with appropriate precautions taken for security of students and their property.  Yes  No
- 21.4 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of students.  Yes  No
- 21.5 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for students under 18.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

AFMS does not provide accommodation for its students. For the small number of students seeking accommodation, advice on suitable local agencies is made available.

22. **Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of students is ensured and the institution's relationship with hosts is properly managed**

- 22.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for students and is appropriately located for travel to the institution and back.  Yes  No
- 22.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before students are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the institution.  Yes  No
- 22.3 The institution has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision.  Yes  No
- 22.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and students before and during the placement.  Yes  No
- 22.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for student feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

Homestay is not offered

23. **The institution provides an appropriate social programme for students and information on leisure activities in the area**

- 23.1 Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest.  Yes  No
- 23.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students.  Yes  No  NA
- 23.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of students.  Yes  No  NA
- 23.4 Any activities organised by the institution are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

In general, a developed social programme would not be expected, as students are part-time on short courses or else mature full-time professionals. There is, however, a substantial programme of ancillary academic activity from which students benefit. The Academy's two support administrators maintain regular contact with students, and organise a study group and a Journal Club for the presentation of academic papers.

The provision is further complemented by the organisation of study visits to medical sites to illustrate and experience practice. These visits have included forensic laboratories, court visits, Coroner office visits, post-mortem observations, the Pathology Museum and the Natural History Museum.

More informal social activity may be organised by student themselves, with after-lecture meetings in the many cafes and restaurants in the vicinity of the Academy's teaching facilities.

## INSPECTION AREA - PREMISES AND FACILITIES

### 24. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

24.1 The institution has secure tenure on its premises.  Yes  No  NA

24.2 Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.  Yes  No  NA

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

The administrative offices of the Academy are sub-leased under 'licence to occupy' from a firm of City accountants, with a monthly licence fee payable. It is judged that this arrangement offers the necessary level of security and flexibility at this stage in the development of the organisation, and further accommodation on the same premises may be available as required.

The Academy has an agreement, annually reviewed, with the Charterhouse Campus of Barts and the London. This allows AFMS to make use of the medical school's facilities for all of its teaching and learning activities. In its letter of agreement the School notes that this negotiation is justified on the basis of the staff who teach in both institutions, and the shared lectures offered by the Academy. Some additional administrative accommodation and social space is also available to the Academy through this arrangement.

### 25. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

25.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.  Yes  No

25.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.  Yes  No

25.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to students, staff and visitors.  Yes  No  NA

25.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors.  Yes  No

25.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information.  Yes  No

25.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.  Yes  No

25.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.  Yes  No

25.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

The Academy's administrative offices, while small, are secure and well maintained.

Students will mainly use the teaching accommodation provided through the agreement with Barts and the London. This includes the teaching rooms and study spaces (library) made available for use by the Academy and also the social spaces and refreshment facilities normally found on a university campus. It can therefore be assumed that signage and health and safety requirements are met under the university's regulations. Special requirements relate to the involvement of students in post-mortem forensic pathology and laboratory work. It was not possible to observe or check these aspects, but given the high level of professional experience and reputation of AFMS staff there is a level of assurance that these are properly addressed.

26. **Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered**

- 26.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them.  Yes  No
- 26.2 Classrooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course.  Yes  No
- 26.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The university-standard teaching rooms of the Barts and the London are used by AFMS. A full lecture theatre and seminar rooms are available, all equipped with video, overhead projection. This were viewed in the course of the inspections and considered to be entirely fit for purpose.

27. **There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff**

- 27.1 Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources.  Yes  No
- 27.2 Teaching staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation.  Yes  No
- 27.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate.  Yes  No  NA
- 27.4 Students and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate.  Yes  No  NA
- 27.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.  Yes  No
- 27.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the institution.  Yes  No

**This standard is judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The AFMS administrative offices include a suitable space for staff to hold meetings and prepare teaching sessions. Students are able to use the study facilities of the Barts and the London: these include a medical school library, and also refreshment facilities. AFMS has its own specialist collection of key text on forensic science, which can be borrowed by students.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.  Yes  No



## PART C - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

### MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

#### Institution's strengths

AFMS benefits from the communication and administration advantages of a relatively small academic organisation. Leadership, both academic and administrative, is strong and effective. The close links with established medical education providers, in particular the Barts and the London medical school are a significant strength. Recruitment and enrolment to the Diploma-based programmes is carefully managed. The website and the populating of the online learning portal are well managed.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
(8.2) AFMS must introduce an annual report and action plan	<input type="radio"/> High <input checked="" type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

### TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

#### Institution's strengths

AFMS offers specialist post-graduate and CPD programmes in forensic medical science, which are designed on the basis of long-standing curricular experience. Lecturers teaching on AFMS programmes are drawn from a range of highly qualified senior academics. AFMS has a proven record of success in preparing candidates for assessment by professional awarding bodies. The availability of online versions of the classes and courses is an additional benefit.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
(16.2) AFMS must complete the development of a formally documented system for the administration of examinations and a published appeals policy	<input checked="" type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

### STUDENT WELFARE

#### Institution's strengths

Students experience good communication and within a small but efficient organisation. Tutors are assigned specifically to provide additional academic support, advice and personal contact for students. A valuable number of ancillary study visits are arranged.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

### PREMISES AND FACILITIES

#### Institution's strengths

The availability of the teaching accommodation and learning facilities of the Barts and the London medical school is a key feature of the AFMS programmes.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

## RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

### Standard 3:

It is recommended that AFMS should now produce formal job specifications for its main full and part-time administrative staff. Linked to these job definitions, AFMS should introduce a more formal performance appraisal discussion for its staff on an appropriate periodic basis. An outline of the the relevant procedure should be included in the list of policies and in the Staff Handbook.

### Standard 7:

It is recommended that AFMS informs students in a formally recorded manner (e.g. through the Blackboard online learning platform) of actions taken as a result of student feedback.

## COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This has been confirmed. No evidence of non-compliance was observed.