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SCHOOL OF
Social Sciences & Law

University Certificate in Professional Development
Fundamental Medicine for the Coroner Service
Coroners' Law and the Bereaved
Medico-Legal Death Investigation



The School of Social Sciences & Law at the University of Teesside is the only higher education centre designing and delivering courses specifically for staff working within or in close association with the Coroner Service.

The University has been delivering part-time courses for coroner's officers since 2000 providing a theoretical and practical insight into the role of the coroner's officer, who investigates sudden or unexplained death on behalf of Her Majesty's Coroner in England and Wales.

The University in partnership with the Coroner's Officers Association has three part-time University Certificate in Professional Development (UCPD) courses. Each is designed to develop the reflective and professional practice of Coroner Service staff in order to manage the interpersonal processes, such that the judicial process is satisfied, and the needs of the bereaved and society are met.

The courses have recently been revised and incorporate the training needs identified by the Home Office Report of 2002 (The Provision of Coroner's Officers). The courses have been designed in consultation with the NHS, the Coroner's Officers Association and coroners.

There is an emphasis on independent learning and students will complete pre-course reading before attending the University for two-weeks full-time tuition. Students will complete a written assignment after finishing the course.

Each course is limited to 16 students and the teaching strategies are appropriate for small group learning, most of which involve active student participation, and include lectures, seminars, whole group discussions and small group exercises. Specialist speakers and experienced practitioners are involved, as appropriate.

The course also includes the core academic skills required in higher education in order to plan and prepare confidently and effectively the assignments for the courses.

Extensive course materials and tutorial support are provided and a range of assessment methods are used.

Each UCPD attracts 40 CATS credits (Credit Accumulation Transfer Scheme). These may be transferred into a lifelong learning scheme, or after accumulation of 120 credits a Certificate of Higher Education may be awarded.

Entry Requirements

Staff working within or in close association with the Coroner Service.

Applicants should normally be: coroner's officers, coroner's clerks or administrative staff, police family liaison officers, hospital bereavement officers or pathology liaison staff, or registrars of births and deaths.

Others working within public, private or voluntary sector organisations in association with the Coroner Service will be considered on an individual basis.



Fundamental Medicine for the Coroner Service

Duration

Two weeks full-time tuition

Course Aims

This course provides staff from non-medical backgrounds with the fundamental medical knowledge necessary to enable discussion of the principal aspects of causes of death with medical and non-medical professionals and with next of kin.

The course aims to enhance professional working practice of coroner's staff or staff working in close association with the Coroner Service by enabling staff to evaluate, integrate and contextualise medical information within the context of sudden death.

On successful completion, participants will be able to:

- define and construct common medical terminology and understand the structure of hospital notes
- describe and explain anatomy and physiology of the main body systems and common diseases and disorders causing death
- justify conclusions in the context of the medical certificate of cause of death, death certification, registration and referral to the coroner
- discuss principal aspects of causes of death with doctors, HM Coroner, pathologists and next of kin.

Coroners' Law and the Bereaved

Duration

Two weeks full-time tuition

Course Aims

This course provides a theoretical and practical insight into dealing with those bereaved by sudden death in the context of the Coroner Service in England and Wales.

The course aims to develop the reflective and professional practice of coroner's officers and other staff working in association with the Coroner Service, in order to manage the legal and interpersonal processes, such that the judicial process is satisfied while meeting the needs of the bereaved and society.

On successful completion, participants will be able to:

- identify relevant legislative and procedural aspects of death certification, registration and the coronial process
- apply basic coroners' law to practice
- describe the role of the coroner and coroner's officer
- describe and explain key concepts of grief and bereavement
- employ effective communication strategies for working with bereaved people
- describe differing religious and cultural perspectives of death
- identify the role of ethics when working with bereaved people.

Medico-Legal Death Investigation

Duration

Two weeks full-time tuition

Course Aims

This course is designed to explore the role and functions of staff working in the area of medico-legal death investigation on behalf of Her Majesty's Coroner in England and Wales.

The integration of theory and practice will enable the development of reflective investigative skills, essential for effective death investigation, such that the judicial process is met.

On successful completion, participants will be able to:

- describe the role of the coroner's officer in death investigation on behalf of HM Coroner
- employ balanced and logical enquiry and evidence based approaches to medico-legal death investigation
- demonstrate understanding of forensic pathology and changes after death
- demonstrate understanding of investigative, evidential and forensic procedures
- operate ethically in a professional situation.

