

Public release date: 18-Aug-2005

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International move to train more forensic medicine and science experts

A new degree designed to equip doctors and scientists with the expertise needed to investigate deaths resulting from acts of genocide, terrorism, natural disasters such as Tsunami, transport accidents and drug abuse will be launched next week at an international Forensic Science conference in Hong Kong. The post-graduate qualification will help counter a world-wide shortage of forensic medicine experts by equipping graduates with the range of interdisciplinary skills needed to counter changing world threats.

The University of Edinburgh has linked with the Universities of Florida, Gainesville and Canberra in this first such on-line global collaboration, to share expertise and deliver courses via the internet. Topics including forensic science, human identification, chemical and trace evidence and the legal aspects of forensic practice. The degree course will also train its graduates to investigate and report on cases of physical and sexual abuse of children and on sudden unexpected death in infancy cases. Training in autopsy science will be run from Edinburgh, which is a world-renowned forensic centre.

The Masters Degree in Legal Medicine, only open to qualified doctors and dentists, will involve three years of part-time study and the first group of students will begin the course in January.

Another Masters degree, in Forensic Science, will also come on stream in January. Students on this course, which is designed for those who currently hold science degrees, will study a range of subjects including drugs of misuse, genetics and crime scene management supported by laboratory workshops.

David Harrison, Professor of Pathology at the University of Edinburgh said: "Few Universities can provide the complete range of skills and expertise needed for comprehensive forensic education. This partnership adds value to our strengths in Edinburgh in an exciting new virtual department. Students will access the expertise

they require in courses from across the globe. We hope this will be a stimulating and beneficial programme."

The Masters Degrees programmes have evolved from an earlier collaboration between the Universities of Edinburgh and Florida, where experts from Edinburgh delivered course material for students of forensic medicine and scientific evidence at the US University.

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The University of Edinburgh, internationally recognised as one of the leading centres for forensic medicine, has been running a course for seven years, leading to the certificate in Forensic Medicine and Science. This course attracts students from many disciplines including solicitors, police, doctors, dentists and scientists.

Further information on the new Masters Degrees is available from www.globalforensic.org
