



EXPERT REPORT WRITING COURSE

24 JULY 2026 - VIRTUAL (ONLINE VIA ZOOM)

Course Overview

Aim

Participants will appreciate the essence and content of a good legal medicine report, and will evaluate and improve their skills to establish a high standard of report writing.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- Understand the expert's role and the requirements for one to be considered an expert.
- Understand the essential elements of a solicitor's letter of instruction and appreciate when further material should be requested.
- Know the essential elements required in an expert report, common to all Codes of Conduct.
- Understand the difference between assumed facts, facts and opinion.
- Understand how an opinion is properly constructed showing how any conclusions were derived.
- Appreciate the proper use of language and understand common pitfalls in an expert's report.

Who should attend?

The Expert Report Writing course will benefit any health care professionals who may be called upon to prepare expert reports. This includes medical, dental and allied health care professionals. If you are unsure about whether this course is right for you, simply call or email us to confirm.

Further Training

This is a standalone course addressing the requirements of preparing an expert report. This Expert Report Writing course is a pre-requisite to the [ACLM Expert Witness Training Program](#).

For those wishing to further their training in being an expert, we encourage participants to extend their training by attending the ACLM Expert Witness Training Program which focuses on presenting an expert report in court and includes critique of participants' submitted reports.

Location/Venue

Virtual- online via Zoom. Instructions are sent to attendees after registration, closer to the date.

Fees

AUD \$500 ACLM members | AUD \$650 Non-members (inc. GST)

Optional: Additional AUD \$100 (inc. GST) for post-course submitted report marking

Cancellation Policy

A refund less \$50 administration fee will be provided for all cancellations received at least 30 days prior to the course start date. Any cancellations after this point will be non-refundable.



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Teaching Faculty

Please note, ACLM reserves the right to change the teaching faculty if required due to availability.

Professor John Devereux – *Professor of Law, University of Queensland;
ACLM Honorary Fellow and Joint Head of Teaching Faculty*

John Devereux teaches and researches the law of torts at the UQ Law School. He has a special interest in medical law, most notably in the areas of competency to consent to medical treatment and in epilepsy and the law. A Rhodes Scholar, John has worked as a lawyer in a variety of contexts including as a Barrister, as a consultant to a multi-national law firm, a Law Reform Commissioner for Queensland, a legal member of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and as a Defence Force Magistrate. John was formerly Lecturer in Law at Keble College, Oxford University and Assistant Dean of Magdalen College, Oxford University. He is a former Associate Vice Chancellor of A.C.U. John is an Honorary Fellow of the Australasian College of Legal Medicine and joint Head of Teaching Faculty.



Harry McCay – *Special Counsel, Avant Law*

Harry has practised as a solicitor since 1988 and almost exclusively in Health Law areas involving medical and dental negligence claims, disciplinary and criminal proceedings against doctors and dentists, inquests and related proceedings since the beginning of 1989. Harry is admitted to practise in the Supreme Court of ACT, the Federal Court of Australia and the High Court of Australia. He was a Senior Associate with Flower & Hart and Tresscox before joining the former UNITED Medical Protection. He has lectured on various Health Law subjects to medical students of Griffith University. In his role as a special counsel, he acts on behalf of members and Avant in civil claims, disciplinary matters, coronial matters, Medicare matters, criminal matters and administrative law cases. He was named a leading practitioner in the Australian Capital Territory Leading Medical Negligence and Malpractice Lawyers (Defendant) category in the Doyles Guide Insurance Law ranking for 2023.



Dr Phoebe-Anne Mainland – *Consultant Anaesthesiologist; ACLM Fellow and
Vice-President Academic*

Dr Phoebe Mainland is a consultant anaesthesiologist, a Fellow of both Australian & New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) & Hong Kong College of Anaesthesiologists (HKCA). She continues to hold appointment as Honorary Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Anaesthesia and Intensive Care, Chinese University of Hong Kong. Phoebe read for MA (Medical Ethics & Law) from King's College, London and has sat on various committees related to these interests including health ethics committees and a medical defence organization advisory committee. Phoebe was admitted as a Fellow of Australian College of Legal Medicine in 2008 and appointed as a Council Member as of 2019 and is currently the Vice-President Academic. She is also a Member of the Academy of Experts (UK). Phoebe was 2017/18 President of the Medico-Legal Society of Victoria. In 2015, Phoebe was awarded a Churchill Fellowship for her project related to patient safety.





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Dr Mike O'Connor AM – Obstetrician & Gynaecologist; ACLM Fellow & President

Mike O'Connor is Visiting Obstetrician & Gynaecologist at The St George Hospital, Kogarah, and St George Private Hospital, where he is Chairman of the Patient Care and Clinical Review Committee since 2010. He is a Conjoint Senior Lecturer at UNSW in the Division of Women's and Children's Health and Lecturer at Sydney University. He is currently President of the Australasian College of Legal Medicine. He is a section editor for the Journal of Legal Medicine. He established the Chapter of Military O&G in the RANZCOG and is its Chairman. Mike O'Connor was awarded the Gold Medal of the RCOG at the MRCOG exams in 1975 and in 1982 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine (Sydney University). He holds Diplomas in Diagnostic Ultrasound & Child Health. He is an active member of the ACLM, the ASCCP and the ASUM. He has a Master's degree in Health Law from Sydney University and a Master's degree in Forensic Medicine from Monash University. In 2009 he was created a Member of the Order of Australia in recognition of his longstanding work in Indigenous Health.





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Program

The program times below are listed in **Australian Eastern Standard Time (QLD)**.
Please check and ensure you join at the correct time for your location.

WA Start - 6:30am (AWST)

QLD/NSW/VIC Start - 8:30am (AEST)

NZ Start - 10:30am (NZST)

Friday - 24 July 2026		
Time	Session	Speaker
8:20 am	<i>Participants enter Zoom Meeting from Zoom waiting room</i>	
8:30 am	Welcome – 10 minutes	Dr Phoebe-Anne Mainland
8:40 am	Legal Brief – Part 1 – 40 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of the role of the expert, opinion etc• Legal considerations for being an expert• Key concepts of expert evidence: Relevance, Reliability, Probative value, Weight	Professor John Devereux
9:20 am	Legal Brief – Part 2 – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with solicitors• Various types of litigation and reports• Confidentiality• Consent• Solicitor-client privilege	Harry McCay
10:05 am	<i>Morning Tea – 25 minutes</i>	
10:30 am	Legal Brief – Part 3 – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essential elements of a Letter of Instruction• Accepting instructions• Proofing a witness• Expectations of counsel• Codes of conduct & compliance• Necessary inclusion (resume)• Confirming expert status	Harry McCay
11:15 am	Breakout Groups – 20 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solicitor example Letter of Instruction to be critically reviewed by participants (10 mins)• Report back to main group (10 mins)	All tutors
11:35 am	Morning Mini Q&A – 10 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barrister & Lawyer extra Q&A time	Professor John Devereux & Harry McCay
11:45 am	<i>Lunch – 45 minutes</i>	



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Friday - 24 July 2026		
Time	Session	Speaker
12:30 pm	The Expert Report – Part 1: Preparation – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">How your report is usedCommissioning and the letter of instructionAccepting the briefDiscussing terms and conditionsMaterials required	Dr Phoebe-Anne Mainland
1:15 pm	The Expert Report – Part 2: Content & Structure – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Essential requirementsContent & Structure	Dr Mike O'Connor AM
2:00 pm	<i>Afternoon tea – 15 minutes</i>	
2:15 pm	The Expert Report – Part 3: Format, Language & Common Pitfalls – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Format, Language & Common PitfallsGroup discussion to critique a sample report, highlighting common pitfalls	Dr Mike O'Connor AM
3:00 pm	Break Out Groups – 45 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">Participants break into 4 groups with one tutor assigned per group.Participants self-critique a report using the Report Checklist, focusing on how they came to their opinion	All tutors
3:45 pm	Open Q&A session – 15 minutes	All tutors
4:00 pm	<i>Program close</i>	



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Pre- and Post-course Activities

As part of this Activity, participants are expected to complete reading and activities as described below. A recommendation of time required is provided as a guide. CPD hours are allocated in accordance with these times.

Mandatory Pre-reading – 1 hour recommended

- Beran RG. Preparing a Legal Medicine Expert Witness Report in Australia, J Forensic Leg Investig Sci 2025, 11: 104 DOI: 10.24966/FLIS-733X/100104 (Emailed to participants)
- (Psychiatrists relevant) Guthell TG, Hilliard JT. The treating psychiatrist thrust into the role of expert witness, Psychiatric Services 2001; 52 (11): 1526 – 1527 (Emailed to participants)

Additional reading resources:

- Codes of Conduct for Expert Witnesses – <https://legalmedicine.com.au/resources/expert-witness-code-of-conduct/>
- Using the "Hot Tub": How Concurrent Expert Evidence Aids Understanding Issues – <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/digital-law-library/judges-speeches/speeches-former-judges/justice-raises/raises-j-20131012>
- Freckelton I. Expert Evidence: Law Practice, Procedure & Advocacy, Thomson Reuters, 7th Edition, 2023

Optional Post-course Activity – 1 hour recommended

Each participant is asked to submit a reflective statement outlining what they have learned from the course and what they intend to apply to their future report writing. A template will be emailed to you following the course. If you choose not to complete the activity, your CPD hours will be adjusted accordingly on your certificate of completion.

Optional Post-course Submitted Report (additional \$100) – 8 hours preparation + 1 hour reflection recommended

Each participant is invited to submit a de-identified expert report/statement within two weeks following the course. Reports are critically marked to provide feedback as to how they can be improved. If you have not previously written a report/statement, you may create one based on your own clinical experience by creating a mock scenario.

This optional activity provides an opportunity for participants to apply their skills learned on the Expert Report Writing course, receive feedback and review their performance. We highly recommend that participants consider taking advantage of this opportunity for feedback.

Any who go on to attend the Expert Witness Training Program will be expected to demonstrate the ability to prepare a good quality court-ready report. Reports submitted for the Expert Witness Training program which are deemed below an acceptable standard by the Teaching Faculty may be asked to repeat the course to attain a Certificate of Completion.

Note: Any report submitted for this Expert Report Writing post-course activity cannot be reused if a person attends the Expert Witness Training Program in the future.



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CPD Information

ACLM CPD Program recognition:

8.5 hours, Relevant to Legal or Forensic Medicine

CPD home submissions:

The following allocations are suggested by ACLM and will be shown on the attendance certificate. It is up to the attendee to check that the activity meets their own CPD home's requirements and to allocate the activity type according to their CPD home's guidelines.

Educational Activity: 6.5 hours

Reviewing Performance: 2 hours (-1 hour if post-course reflective statement not submitted)

Total: 8.5 hours (adjusted as per above depending on pre/post-course activities)

Program Level Requirements met:

- Maintaining and developing professionalism

Osler CPD home recognition:

This activity is an Osler Approved Activity for the Osler CPD Home.

ACLM does not upload activities to CPD homes on behalf of participants. You must self-submit to your CPD home to claim points.



Adjustments to allocated hours:

The post-course activity (reflective statement) is optional for all attendees, however your Certificate of Completion will show adjusted CPD hours if you did not submit the activity.

CPD allocation for optional post-course submitted report:

Additional CPD hours can be claimed for those who complete the optional post-course submitted report activity. This will be shown on a separate Certificate of Completion issued by ACLM.

Educational Activity: 2 hours

Reviewing Performance: 4 hours (+ 1 hour reflection on report feedback)

Measuring Outcomes: 2 hours

Total: 9 hours