



# Promoting Excellence In Ultrasound

## **Policies and Statements**

### **B8**

Statement on the Use of Ultrasound by Medical Practitioners

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*July 2008*

This is a new and evolving statement that sets out the theoretical and practical training requirements for medical practitioners who use ultrasound. The statement outlines the credentials available through the Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) for medical practitioners, the eligibility criteria and the training requirements.

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. All medical practitioners who provide an ultrasound service should be specifically trained and hold an appropriate credential.
- 1.2. In Australia and New Zealand diagnostic ultrasound has historically been largely provided through radiology services with scans being performed by sonographers and medical practitioners, and reported by sonologists with radiology or DDU equivalent qualifications.
- 1.3. The increasing portability and affordability of ultrasound has seen an increasing demand from a number of clinical specialties which have recognised an increasing utility for the use of diagnostic ultrasound in the clinical environment in the treatment of their patients.
- 1.4. Medical specialists other than radiologists and sonologists are increasingly wishing to undertake ultrasound examinations on patients as a direct extension of the clinical examination.
- 1.5. There is a demand by a number of the Australian and New Zealand Medical Colleges to incorporate ultrasound experience into clinical training and accreditation where appropriate.
- 1.6. The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) supports the devolution of diagnostic ultrasound to the clinical specialties only where the necessary regulatory environment and infrastructure exist for the supervision of training in the medical and surgical specialties.
- 1.7. Training of clinicians in medical ultrasound should be adequately funded and planned with a defined curriculum, standards and scope of practice that appropriately reflects the role of clinical diagnostic ultrasound within a defined specialty with access to nationally recognised qualifications that are recognised for credentialing purposes.

- 1.8. The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) has the necessary infrastructure and experience to provide guidelines for the training of the medical and surgical specialties in consultation with the Medical Colleges and Societies.

## **2. Aims and Principles**

- 2.1. The medical use and interpretation of ultrasound is highly operator-dependent requiring both training and experience.
- 2.2. All medical practitioners who provide an ultrasound service should be adequately trained with access to appropriate qualification and credentialing pathways. The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) provides the necessary qualifying and credentialing pathways for clinicians wishing to use ultrasound in their clinical practice through the Diploma in Diagnostic Ultrasound (DDU) and Certificate in Clinician Performed Ultrasound (CCPU).
- 2.3. The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM), in consultation with the Australian and New Zealand Medical Colleges, provides definitions of the appropriate Level of training and the scope of practice appropriate to meet the requirements of the various medical and surgical specialties.

## **3. Credentialing**

- 3.1. The Diploma in Diagnostic Ultrasound (DDU) is provided by the Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) as an appropriate qualification for Sonologists, who accept referrals from other medical practitioners. The training required to attain these levels is defined in the syllabus of the DDU
- 3.2. The Certificate in Clinician Performed Ultrasound (CCPU) provides credentialing for medical practitioners who have met the minimum training requirements for the use of diagnostic ultrasound as a direct extension of their clinical examination in the course of their normal clinical practice.
  - 3.2.1. The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) recognises two Levels of training corresponding to the CCPU Level 1 and the CCPU Level 2.
  - 3.2.2. Trainees require supervision to provide the highest possible standard of ultrasound examinations and to fulfil their educational requirements. The standard of supervision is defined in the CCPU Regulations.
  - 3.2.3. Medical practitioners who have completed Level 1 (Level 1 medical practitioners) will display the following abilities:
    - Practice in accordance with the Policies and Statements of The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM).
    - Perform a range of examinations, defined in the CCPU curriculum as common or core to the specific specialty, safely and accurately.
    - Recognise and differentiate normal anatomy and pathology as they relate to the range of studies defined in the CCPU curriculum.
    - Diagnose common abnormalities as defined in the CCPU curriculum.
    - Recognise when a referral to an imaging specialist is indicated.
    - Understand the relationship between ultrasound imaging and other diagnostic imaging techniques.
    - Train, supervise and assist Level 1 trainees in the appropriate use of ultrasound in their clinical practice.

3.2.4. Medical practitioners who have completed Level 2 and have been awarded the CCPU will display the following abilities:

- Practice in accordance with the Policies and Statements of the Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM).
- Use ultrasound within their normal clinical practice.
- Perform a broader extended range of studies as defined by the specialty.
- Perform common non-complex ultrasound guided invasive procedures.
- Train, supervise and assist Level 1 trainees, Level 1 medical practitioners and Level 2 trainees in the appropriate use of ultrasound in their clinical practice.
- Conduct some research in ultrasound.

#### **4. Eligibility**

4.1. Enrolment in the DDU is available to medical practitioners who have:

- permanent resident status in Australia or New Zealand; and
- unrestricted registration to practice in Australia or New Zealand; and
- held approved resident medical officer posts in related subjects for a period of not less than two years and enrolled in (or graduated from) a course of study leading to Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the Royal Australasian College of Radiologists, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists;
- applied to and been accepted by the ASUM DDU Board of Examiners for admission to the DDU.

4.2. Enrolment in the CCPU is available to medical practitioners who:

- have a visa to work in Australia or New Zealand and
- have registration to practice in Australia or New Zealand and
- will be practicing in Australia or New Zealand for sufficient time to substantially complete the requirements of the CCPU and
- are practicing in an approved specialty area or clinical discipline as prescribed by the ASUM Council and listed in the CCPU Curriculum.

#### **5. Training**

5.1.1. Training programs should be designed to meet the practice needs of medical practitioners in order to ensure the highest possible standards of ultrasound practice.

5.1.2. ASUM supports and encourages the involvement of sonologists, radiologists and sonographers in the training of clinicians in diagnostic and procedural ultrasound.

5.1.3. A system for recording the results of any ultrasound examination in patients' records is mandatory. The permanent recording of images, where appropriate,

is desirable for the purposes of correlative imaging, future comparison and audit.

- 5.1.4. Knowledge of the appropriate use and integration of other imaging techniques, as well as the clinical and economic impact of ultrasound on the demand for other imaging, should be required.
- 5.1.5. The requirement to deliver training for clinicians must acknowledge the time commitment of the trainer and trainee, the provision of funding, the content and practicability of the syllabus and the availability of trainers and training courses. It must be recognised that training requires additional time, space and equipment. Training should be properly costed and funded.
- 5.1.6. Training should be related to the specialist requirements of the trainee. Within any one level of training it may be appropriate for a trainee to become proficient in some but not all of the individual modules and only undertake ultrasound practice in this /these areas.
- 5.1.7. Training should be given in departments which have a multidisciplinary (medical, surgical, radiological etc.) philosophy, an adequate throughput of work, a suitable supervisor/trainer with experience and an interest in training in the module required, appropriate equipment and an active audit process.
- 5.1.8. Training should be structured with regular appraisals during the training period. At the end of the training period a recommendation from the trainee's training supervisor shall be required to determine eligibility to be awarded the CCPU. The responsibility to be adequately trained and to maintain skills lies with the individual practising ultrasound. An assessment of competence is a reflection only of the position at the time the assessment is undertaken.
- 5.1.9. Following training, regular and relevant continuing professional development (CPD) should be undertaken and documented. It is the responsibility of the trainee to ensure that their practical skills are maintained by ensuring that regular ultrasound sessions are undertaken and that there is an adequate range of pathology seen in their ultrasound practice

5.2. Training should consist of both theoretical and practical syllabi.

5.2.1. Theoretical training

- Preliminary theoretical training should cover physics and instrumentation including levels and sophistication of equipment, image recording, reporting, artefacts and the relevance of other imaging modalities to ultrasound. The content for this physics and instrumentation component is defined in the CCPU syllabi.
- The clinical theoretical content is defined for each subspecialty in the CCPU syllabus.

5.2.2. Practical training

- The practical content is defined for each subspecialty in the CCPU syllabus, listing conditions which should be included in the experience of the trainee.
- Practical experience should be gained under the guidance of a supervisor appropriately trained in ultrasound practice.

5.3. Training Requirements

- 5.3.1. Different trainees will acquire the necessary skills at different rates and the end-point of the training program should be judged by an assessment of practical competence.

- 5.3.2. Examinations should encompass the full range of pathological conditions listed in the syllabi.
- 5.3.3. A logbook listing the number and type of examinations undertaken by the trainee themselves should be kept. An illustrated logbook of specific normal and abnormal findings may be appropriate for some syllabi.
- 5.3.4. Level 2 training usually requires at least 1 year of experience at Level 1, with regular use of ultrasound in the clinical environment. A significant further number of examinations should have been undertaken in order to encompass the full range of conditions and procedures encountered in each module.
- 5.4. Supervision of Training:
- 5.4.1. Supervision of training may be undertaken by a person who holds one of the following qualifications and is registered to practice as a medical practitioner or sonographer:
- Diploma in Diagnostic Ultrasound (DDU)
  - Sonographer accredited by the Australasian Sonographer Accreditation Registry(ASAR) to practice in Australia
  - Sonographer accredited to practice in New Zealand by the New Zealand Medical Radiation Technologists Board to practice in New Zealand (NZMRTB).
  - Diploma in Medical Ultrasound (DMU)
  - Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (FRANZCR)
  - Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (FRANZCOG) with Certificate in Obstetrical and Gynaecological Ultrasound (COGU)
  - Vascular Fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (FRACS(Vasc))
  - CCPU (as defined for each specialty) plus two years experience at that level
- 5.4.2. In the event that the training supervisor is a sonographer there should also be a medical supervisor who must hold one of these qualifications. This medical supervisor may practice at a different location.
- 5.4.3. The Council of The Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) may, at its discretion, allow other persons to supervise training, or disqualify a qualified person from acting as a training supervisor.

## **6. Maintenance of Certification**

- 6.1. It is necessary for each practitioner to maintain competence through study and practice.
- 6.2. The minimum amount of on-going experience in ultrasound as outlined in each syllabus should be maintained.
- 6.3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should be undertaken which incorporates elements of ultrasound practice.

- 6.4. Regular audit of the individual's ultrasound practice should be undertaken to demonstrate that the indications, performance and diagnostic quality of the service are all satisfactory.
- 6.5. Recertification requirements prescribed in the regulations for the CCPU must be met.



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