

Guideline for Patient Volunteers

For Patient Volunteers, Parents and guardians Providing Support Completion of ASUM Teaching Ultrasound Consent Forms

Approved by ASUM Board, October 2026

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What is this guide for?

You have been asked to sign a consent form for an ultrasound examination to be used for teaching purposes. Its purpose is not to diagnose medical conditions. This guide explains what that means, your rights, and what to do if you feel uncomfortable about proceeding with the examination or if something does not feel right.

This document was developed by the Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine (ASUM) and may be provided to you by another organisation — the information and your rights are the same regardless of who gives it to you.

The Qualified Professional conducting the scan

The scan will be conducted by a qualified sonographer or healthcare professional working within their scope of practice or a medical practitioner who is specifically trained to perform the ultrasound examination. For this document and the consent form, they will be referred to as the **Qualified Professional**.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any point. The **Qualified Professional** is required to:

- Sit with you and explain, in plain language, what will happen during the ultrasound examination before you sign the consent.
- Answer any questions you have, honestly and without trying to rush you.
- Give you time to think about your decision— you do not have to sign immediately, or you can decline to sign if you wish
- Offer you a copy of the consent form to take with you and read in your own time
- Arrange an interpreter if English is not your first language.

Questions to ask the Qualified Professional

Not sure what to ask? Here are some examples:

"What exactly will happen during the scan?"

"How many people will be in the room?"

"Will the scan be recorded — and who will see it?"

"What happens if I want to stop?"

"Is this different from a scan my doctor ordered?"

If you feel that the **Qualified Professional** is not explaining things clearly, is rushing you, or is not answering your questions, you are entitled to ask to speak to another person, or to take more time before making any decision. Section 8 of this guide tells you what to do if things. If you have concerns before, during or after the examination has commenced or if something has gone wrong during your time as a volunteer patient.

1. What is a teaching event?

A teaching event is an ultrasound examination performed during a training event, workshop, or conference. Its purpose is to help sonographers, doctors, and other health professionals (e.g., physiotherapists) learn to perform ultrasound examinations; it is not intended to assess your health or provide medical results.

During a teaching scan:

- A **Qualified Professional** will be responsible for and supervise the examination.
- One or more health professionals may also take part in performing or observing the scan.
- There may be other observers in the room; you will be told approximately how many.
- Your images may be displayed on a screen in the room for teaching purposes.
- The scan may be recorded. If so, your identity will be protected, and your name and identifying features will not be shared.

Important

A teaching scan is not a substitute for a clinical scan ordered by your doctor. If you have been referred for a diagnostic ultrasound, you still need to attend that appointment separately.

2. Which consent form applies to you?

There are three different consent forms for teaching scans. The form you are being asked to sign depends on your situation:

Form	When it applies
Consent to Intrusive (Internal) Ultrasound Scanning for Teaching Purposes	You are an adult being asked to participate in an internal (intimate) scan, for example, a transvaginal (inside the vagina) or transrectal (inside the rectum) ultrasound.
Consent to General and Pregnancy Ultrasound Scanning for Teaching Purposes	You are being asked to participate in an external scan during a teaching event. This could also include individuals who are pregnant.
Consent to External Ultrasound Scanning of Minors for Teaching Purposes	You are a parent or guardian and are being asked to consent for an individual under 18 years of age in Australia and 16 years of age in New Zealand to participate in an external (over-the-skin-only) ultrasound scan during a teaching event.

3. Your rights and what to expect

Whether you are an adult participant, a pregnant person, or a parent or guardian signing on behalf of a child, you have the following rights. The person asking you to sign must make sure you understand all of these before you sign the consent

You have the right to say no or to stop at any time

Taking part is completely voluntary. You do not have to agree to the scan. If you change your mind before or during the scan, you can say so out loud at any time, and the scan will stop immediately. You do not need to give a reason, and there will be no negative consequences for you.

How to stop the scan

You just need to say clearly that you want to stop, for example, "Please stop" or "I want to stop now." The **Qualified Professional** must stop immediately. You do not need to physically resist or explain yourself.

You have the right to be told exactly what will happen

Before you sign, the **Qualified Professional** must explain the examination in plain language:

- What type of scan will be done (external over the skin, internal/intimate, or both).
- How the scan works, including how the ultrasound probe will be used and where gel will be applied.
- Who will be in the room, how many people will be present, and whether they are trainees or observers.
- Whether images will be shown on a screen or recorded, and how your identity will be protected.
- That the scan is for teaching only and will not give you or your doctor any medical results.

If anything is unclear, ask questions. The practitioner must answer all your questions before you sign.

You have the right to bring a support person

You can bring someone you trust to be with you during the scan (a friend or family member). If you are the parent or guardian of a child having a scan, you must be present during the scan. You do not need to attend alone.

You have the right to privacy

The practitioner must provide appropriate privacy screens or curtains. You can ask for additional privacy measures at any time. If images are recorded, your face and identifying features must not be included or shared.

You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect

The practitioner must treat you or your child, if applicable, with dignity and respect at all times. If you feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or that your dignity is not being respected, you can stop the scan immediately.

If something unexpected is found

Teaching scans are not meant to check for medical problems. However, if the practitioner notices something unexpected during the scan, they will tell you to see the appropriate medical professional.

4. If you are being asked to consent to an intrusive (intimate) scan

An intrusive scan means the ultrasound probe is placed inside your body, either inside the vagina (transvaginal) or inside the rectum (transrectal). This is more intimate than an external scan and requires your explicit, specific consent.

You should expect the **Qualified Professional** to:

- Tell you clearly which type of internal scan will occur
- Explain the process, including the use of a probe cover and gel.
- Ensure a private setting before the examination begins.
- Confirm that a chaperone or support person is available.

You must be told in advance

You should be told about the internal nature of the scan before the day of the teaching event not just when you arrive. If this was not explained to you beforehand, you are entitled to ask for more time to consider before signing.

5. If you are pregnant

The pregnancy consent form covers both external scans (over your abdomen) and, where applicable, internal (transvaginal) scans. The form uses separate tick boxes for each type. Make sure you only tick what you are actually agreeing to.

Some things to know:

- Ultrasound is widely considered safe during pregnancy. The sonographer or doctor will use the lowest level of sound energy needed and will shorten or stop the scan if there is any concern for you or your baby.
- The teaching scan is completely separate from any clinical scan ordered by your midwife or doctor. Do not use this as a substitute for a medical appointment.

- If anything, unexpected is noticed about your pregnancy during the teaching scan, you will be told and referred for proper clinical follow-up.
- You can stop the scan at any time.

6. If you are a parent or guardian consenting for a child

Only external scans (over the skin) are permitted for individuals under 18 years of age in Australia or 16 years of age in New Zealand in a teaching context. No internal or intimate scans of children are ever allowed for teaching purposes.

What you need to know before signing

- Your child must be present when the information is explained and must understand what will happen in an age-appropriate way.
- Your child must agree to participate — your consent as a parent or guardian is not enough. If your child objects, seems upset, or does not want to continue, then their consent is withdrawn.
- A support person (yourself or someone known and trusted by your child and approved by you) must be with your child throughout the scan.
- Your child's face and identity must be protected in any recorded images.
- The scan will stop immediately if your child or you ask for it to stop at any time.

Your child's right to say no

Even if you have signed the consent form, your child can choose not to continue. If your child objects, appears distressed, resists, or does not want to continue, the scan must stop. A child's refusal must be respected immediately and without question.

If your child seems distressed

If at any point your child seems upset or uncomfortable, even if they are not saying the words, the scan will be stopped. At any time, you or your child can ask for the scan to stop. You do not need to wait for your child to say something explicitly.

Who can give consent for a child?

Only the child's legal parent or guardian can sign the consent form. The practitioner should ask you to confirm your relationship to the child and your authority to consent. If there is any doubt about this, the scan should not proceed until it is confirmed.

7. Before you sign the form

Take a moment to go through these questions. You should be able to answer yes to all of them before you sign.

- ☐ I understand why this scan is being done (for teaching, not to check my health).
- ☐ I have been told exactly what type of scan will happen — external, internal, or both.
- ☐ I have been told who will be in the room and approximately how many people.
- ☐ I understand that images may be shown on a screen or recorded, and that my identity will be protected.
- ☐ I know I can bring a support person.
- ☐ I know I can stop the scan at any time just by saying so.
- ☐ I have had all my questions answered.
- ☐ I have not been pressured or rushed into signing.
- ☐ If I am a parent or guardian, my child has been told what will happen and has agreed.

If you are unsure about anything, ask the practitioner before signing. You can also take the form away and read it before coming back to sign, you do not have to sign on the. immediately

8. If something goes wrong, how to raise a concern or make a complaint

You have the right to raise a concern or make a complaint if:

- You felt pressured or were not given enough information before signing.
- The scan continued after you or your child asked it to stop.
- You felt your dignity or privacy was not respected.
- Something unexpected happened during or after the scan.
- Your child appeared distressed, and the scan was not stopped.
- Any other aspect of the experience was not as described or did not feel right.

You can raise concerns at any level: to the **Qualified Professional**, the **Event Manager** (of the **Event Organiser**), or the Registration board of the **Qualified Professional**. You can contact any one of these, or more than one at the same time.

Step 1 — Speak to the Qualified Professional conducting the scan

In many cases, the quickest and most direct way to resolve a concern is to speak with the **Qualified Professional** who performed or supervised the scan. They should be willing to listen, explain what happened, and address your concern.

You are not obliged to resolve your concern informally, and going to the **Qualified Professional** first is not a requirement. If you do not feel comfortable doing this, or if you have already tried and it has not helped, move to the steps below.

Step 2 — Speak to the Event Manager

The **Event Manager** is your key contact from the **Event Organiser** that arranged the teaching event is responsible for how it was run. You can raise your concern on the day or contact them afterwards. You can contact the event organisation either by phone or in writing.

If this guide was given to you by an organisation other than ASUM, for example, a hospital, university, or professional association, that organisation may also have its own complaints or feedback process. Ask them about it.

Step 3 — Report to the qualified Professional's registration body

If you believe the **Qualified Professional** behaved improperly, you can make a formal complaint to the relevant registration authority:

Australia	Contact/website
AHPRA (doctors, nurses, and other registered practitioners)	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency Phone: 1300 419 495 Web: www.ahpra.gov.au Online complaints: www.ahpra.gov.au/Notifications
State/Territory Health Complaints Bodies	Each state and territory have a Health Complaints Commissioner or equivalent. NSW: Health Care Complaints Commission — www.hccc.nsw.gov.au — 1800 043 159 VIC: Health Complaints Commissioner — www.hcc.vic.gov.au — 1300 582 113 QLD: Office of the Health Ombudsman — www.oho.qld.gov.au — 133 OHO (133 646) WA: Health and Disability Services Complaints Office — www.hadsco.wa.gov.au — 1800 813 583 SA: Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner — www.hcsc.sa.gov.au — 8226 8666 TAS: Health Complaints Commissioner — www.healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au — 1800 001 170 ACT: Health Services Commissioner — www.hrc.act.gov.au — 6205 2222

NT: Health and Community Services Complaints Commission —
www.hcsc.com.au — 1800 004 474

Aotearoa New Zealand	Contact/website
Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC)	For complaints about any health or disability service provider in New Zealand. Phone: 0800 11 22 33 Web: www.hdc.org.nz Online complaints form: www.hdc.org.nz/making-a-complaint
Medical Radiation Technologists Board (MRTB)	For complaints specifically about a registered medical radiation technologist (including sonographers). Web: www.mrtboard.org.nz Email: info@mrtboard.org.nz
Medical Council of New Zealand	For complaints about a registered doctor performing ultrasound. Phone: 0800 286 801 Web: www.mcnz.org.nz
Health and Disability Advocacy Service	Free, independent advocacy for people who want help making a complaint. Available throughout New Zealand. Phone: 0800 555 050 Web: www.advocacy.org.nz

If a child may have been harmed

If you believe a child has been harmed or was put at risk during a teaching event, or at any other time, please report this to the relevant child protection authority as soon as possible.

Jurisdiction	Who to contact
Australia — all states and territories	Contact your state/territory child protection authority. In an emergency, call Police on 000. National Child Abuse Reporting: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) Child Protection Helpline (NSW): 132 111
Aotearoa New Zealand	Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children Phone: 0508 326 459 (0508 FAMILY) Web: www.orangatamariki.govt.nz In an emergency, call Police on 111.

9. Need help understanding the consent form.

If you need support to understand the consent form, you are entitled to ask for:

- A support person or advocate to be with you during the consent discussion.
- More time to read the form and think about your decision before signing.
- A copy of the form to take away.

In New Zealand, you can also contact the free Health and Disability Advocacy Service for support: 0800 555 050 | www.advocacy.org.nz

Remember — your participation is always voluntary.

You can say no. You can stop at any time. You can ask questions.

If you have questions about this guide, speak to the **Qualified Professional** or the **Event Manager**

Key Definitions

Reference	Details
Event Manager	• The designated representative of the Event Organisation who has primary responsibility for the planning, coordination, and operational management of the ultrasound education or training activity. The Event Manager serves as the principal contact for Patient Volunteers, Qualified Professionals, and other stakeholders, and is responsible for ensuring the event is conducted in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, and regulatory requirements.
Event Organiser	• The organisation responsible for planning, coordinating, managing, and delivering the Teaching Event, including appropriate administration, supervision, and compliance with applicable policies and procedures.
Minor	• An individual who is under the age of 18 years in Australia or 16 years in New Zealand, being the age at which a young person may independently consent to a medical, surgical, or dental procedure under section 36 of the Care of Children Act 2004 (NZ).

Patient Volunteer	An individual who voluntarily undergoes an ultrasound examination, performed under the supervision of or by a Qualified Professional, for the purpose of education, training, or demonstration.
Qualified Professional	Means a qualified sonographer or healthcare professional working within their scope of practice or a medical practitioner who is specifically trained to perform the ultrasound examination.
Teaching Event	A structured educational activity, such as a conference, workshop, course, seminar, or other organised training session, in which ultrasound scanning is taught, demonstrated, or practised. A Teaching Event is facilitated by Qualified Professionals and is conducted for the purpose of developing knowledge, skills, and competency in ultrasound practice