



Australasian College  
for Emergency Medicine

# Special Skills Placement - Ultrasound

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V7.1 AC81

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## Document Review

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|--------------------------|---|
| Timeframe for review:    | Every two years, or earlier if required |
| Document authorisation:  | Council of Education                    |
| Document implementation: | Executive Director, Training            |
| Document maintenance:    | Manager, Accreditation                  |

## Revision History

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| Version | Date     | Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision  |
|---------|----------|--|
| V6      | Jul-2015 | Section 7 Changed Learning Portfolio and include LNA information and addition of ITA requirement. Addition of Section 8.   |
| V6.1    | Sep-2017 | Reference to “term” changed to “placement” as per Regulation B.  |
| V7      | Sep-2020 | General two yearly review.<br>Learning Needs Analysis (LNA) has been replaced with Learning and Development Plan (LDP)   |
| V7.1    | Dec-2023 | Routine review<br>Standardising formatting and layout<br>All SSP terms are standardized to six months at 1 FTE<br>LDPs are no longer required but are strongly recommended<br>Include reference to ACEM policy on Ultrasound credentialing |

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## 1. Purpose and Scope

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The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the minimum criteria for accreditation of a special skills placement in Ultrasound.

## 2. Abbreviation

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|---------|--|
| AAA     | Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm  |
| ASUM    | Australasian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine                        |
| CCPU    | Certificate in Clinician Performed Ultrasound                          |
| DDU     | Diploma of Diagnostic Ultrasound                                       |
| DMU     | Diploma of Medical Ultrasound  |
| EFAST   | Extended Focused Assessment with Sonography for Trauma                 |
| FRANZCR | Fellow of The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists |
| FTE     | Full-time equivalent   |
| ITA     | In-Training Assessment   |
| LDP     | Learning Development Plan  |
| SSP     | Special Skills Placement   |

## 3. Supervisor

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The principal supervisor should have significant experience in Emergency Department (ED) Ultrasound. An appropriate post-graduate qualification is required (DDU, DMU, FRANZCR or a minimum of four (4) modules of CCPU or equivalent). It is highly desirable to have at least three (3) years post Fellowship experience; however, if this is not possible, a nominated co-supervisor with a minimum three (3) years post Fellowship experience should be available as a resource.

Involvement of co-supervisors such as sonographers and/or from other imaging provider departments within the hospital is desirable (e.g. radiology and cardiology).

## 4. Placement Structure

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The placement may be undertaken up to the maximum training time equivalent to six (6) months at 1.0 FTE. (Please note the minimum term length is three (3) months at 1.0 FTE or equivalent, as per Regulation G.)

It should be recognised that differing placement lengths may determine differing learning objectives and duties.

## 5. Demographics

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The department should have sufficient casemix and caseload to provide a broad experience in ED Ultrasound. Time in radiology (ultrasound) or cardiology (echocardiography) may be required to gain sufficient experience in subgroups of patients.

## 6. Learning Objectives

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Learning objectives will include, but are not limited to, developing knowledge and skills in the following:

- Understanding of physics and instrumentation of Ultrasound
- Image acquisition and optimisation
- Procedural Ultrasound (e.g. vascular access, nerve blocks, paracentesis, thoracocentesis)
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm scanning
- Extended Focused Abdominal Ultrasound in Trauma
- Echocardiography in life support / rapid cardiac assessment
- Lung Ultrasound.

Other learning objectives include:

- Trainee performs POCUS to aid patient care every week, reviews recorded ultrasound images with expert, and assists in maintenance of departmental ultrasound machines.

Application and adaptation of core ultrasound knowledge and skills to alternate clinical scenarios are assumed.

## 7. Activities/Duties

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### In general

The activities/duties that a trainee undertakes within the placement must reconcile with the set learning objectives of the placement. For each learning objective, there should be documented activities/duties being undertaken in order for the trainee to achieve the objective.

The trainee's primary role during their ultrasound placement should be performing and interpreting ultrasound. It is recognised and encouraged that this will usually occur within the clinical setting, but the trainee should not be considered part of the usual ED workforce.

The trainee must keep a log of their scans, which will include case details, type of scan, provisional diagnosis made by the trainee, confirmed diagnosis, and supervisor's comments.

As a guide, the trainee will be expected to perform at least 200 scans during a three (3) month 1.0 FTE placement. Similarly, the expectation will be for 400 scans during a six (6) month 1.0 FTE placement.

Ultrasound images must be securely stored for the duration of the placement, or longer, in line with hospital guidelines.

### 7.1 Specifically

The trainee will undertake the following activities during the placement:

- a) A distinct project in the use of Ultrasound in the ED. This can include an audit, survey or chart review.
- b) Experience and involvement in at least two additional administrative aspects of focused ultrasound services in their department, e.g. teaching, courses, quality assurance, research funding, IT infrastructure, machine maintenance, intradepartmental meetings.

c) The extended ACEM online modules.

AND

d) For three (3) month FTE placements, it is expected to complete four (4) of the following emergency medicine applications of Ultrasound to ASUM (CCPU) standard or [ACEM policy \(P733\) on credentialing](#):

- o AAA
- o EFAST
- o Procedural guidance
- o Focused Echocardiography in life support (FELS)
- o Lung Ultrasound.

e) For six (6) month FTE placements, it is expected to consolidate skills in core modules (AAA; EFAST; Procedural Guidance, Focused echocardiography in life support, Lung) with a focus on further specialization in one or more of the core modules, and undertake additional modalities in emergency medicine applications of Ultrasound. Learning expectations should be clearly defined in collaboration with the Supervisor at the commencement of the term.

## 8. Supervision and Assessment

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For each activity/duty being undertaken to achieve a certain learning objective, it should be clear as to how it will be assessed that the trainee has successfully met the objective during the placement.

Where the special skills placement is dependent on access to training in external departments or by external providers, a formalised written arrangement for access to training is to be provided.

An initial orientation meeting at the start of the placement is required to ensure the trainee understands the learning objectives, how they will be achieved, and how they will be assessed as being met. A mid-placement assessment is required to review the progress with respect to this.

Regular contact with the placement supervisor is required throughout the placement. This will include weekly sessions to proctor scans and review technique.

The supervisor(s) will proctor the trainee for all cases performed until a predetermined level of expertise is achieved.

### 8.1 Education/Learning Portfolio

The trainee is highly recommended to maintain an Education/Learning Portfolio in which all learning outcomes are documented in the ACEM Learning and Development Plan.

The trainee should describe the activities they will perform to achieve the learning outcomes during their placement. In addition, the following should be included in the LDP:

- a list of educational sessions delivered and/or attended
- a list of supervisor meetings
- any other related activities
- a copy of any research or project(s) performed.

The Portfolio has the following functions:

- It provides trainees with a personal record of the education and training experiences that contribute to the requirements for satisfactory completion of the placement.
- Supervisors will use it to monitor the trainee's experience to ensure it is appropriate for their level of training, and to aid them in providing an informed completion of the trainee's ITA.
- The accreditation inspection team may use the information to determine if the SSP meets accreditation guidelines for ongoing accreditations.
- The learning portfolio can be completed using the Learning Development Plan available in the training portal. Alternatively, a trainee can upload their own document when the ITA is submitted.

At the end of the placement, the primary supervisor will sign off that the trainee's LDP has been reviewed and displayed sufficient evidence that all learning objectives have been attained, as evidence for successful completion of the placement.

## 82 Logbook

The trainee is required to keep a logbook of scans (minimum 200 scans over a three (3) month placement) for their own benefit and reflection and also to facilitate the LDP and ITA discussions. The supervisor must also sign off on the trainee's logbook completion.

## 83 In-Training Assessment

An in-training assessment must be completed every three months.



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