

Launch Of Post-Graduate Certificate Courses (PgC) in Point-of-Care Ultrasound for Specialties

At **Ultrasound Academy** we are pleased and excited to announce an initiative that has been years in development. **We are launching Postgraduate Certificate courses (MQF7) in Ultrasound for various specialties** and are inviting an **expression of interest** from interested clinicians (link below). First, however, we want to provide some background.

We work in a world of increasing expectations from doctors. The evidence base indicates that clinical exam alone is not accurate enough to diagnose or rule out several important pathologies. Directed by the history and examination, **medical imaging has allowed us to make much more precise diagnoses.** This has resulted in **doctors feeling increasing pressure to perform imaging** to manage patients safely and effectively, motivated both by a desire to deliver the best care and by a fear of medicolegal consequences. As a consequence **there is often an excessive demand on imaging services and a delay to provide optimal patient care.**

Point of care ultrasound has been practised both locally and internationally for more than a decade by a limited number of practitioners in a few specialties. This has led to an **early improved diagnostic capability, expedited diagnosis, a decrease in unnecessary investigations and more targeted treatment.** So why have the majority of doctors and specialties not incorporated this amazing tool in their practice? Some might argue that the reason is an unavailability of machines but we have observed that **where there is expertise, there will be machines** and this is driven by the practitioners themselves.

At **Ultrasound Academy**, we have long recognised **the limitations of both standard forms of Point of care ultrasound Education** to empower doctors to practise.

- There is the **short course format.** This is an attendance course that is valuable as an introduction to the subject. However acquisition of any skill requires a period of mentored and independent practice followed by assessment. This means that with a short course, doctors will not confidently acquire the skill or gain the accreditation to practise independently.
- Then there is **University based education.** Whilst the number of Universities that offer such programs directed at doctors are limited, the educational program is more robust. However, for most specialties the choice of modules are not specific, meaning that there are critically important modalities which are absent and others that are irrelevant. In addition, apart from being pricey, the candidates are expected to source their own mentors to guide them as well as machines to train on and in our experience there is an imbalance between the academic and practical emphasis.

With 15 years of experience in ultrasound education we have long recognised the lacunae in ultrasound education, and have designed programs intended to address them to make ultrasound practice more accessible to busy clinicians.

We are excited and pleased to launch accredited **Postgraduate Certificate Courses (MQF7) in US** for the following specialties.

- **Family Medicine (PgC US Fam Med.)**
- **General Surgery (PgC US Surg.)**
- **Internal Medicine (PgC US Int Med)**
- **Anaesthesia and Critical Care (PgC US Anesth & Crit Care)**
- **Paediatrics (PgC US Paed)**
- **Emergency Medicine (PgC and PgD US Emerg Med)**

More courses are planned for launch in the near future.

The principles that underpin the educational ethos of the institution, guided the development of these courses. We are convinced that excellent POCUS education should encompass the following 6 characteristics:

1. It should be **specialty specific**. The modalities learned must be completely relevant to the specialty of the candidate.
2. **Guided by assigned mentors** to accompany, empower and encourage the candidates
3. **Facilitate access to machines** for practice. Ideally, these should be available in the workplace so that the pathology encountered is relevant to the specialty.
4. Aim for **standards of excellence** in 3 areas: Scan technique, Recognition of pathology and Clinical integration of findings to provide the best care for patients.
5. Have a **practical emphasis** in preference to an academic one (although both are necessary). The goal is to empower specialists to add an essential skill to their clinical repertoire.
6. Have a **solid educational governance** that empowers and accredits successful candidates to practise independently.

Practical information:

1. Courses will be **small**, up to a maximum of 10 candidates

2. The course duration will be **9 to 10 months**
3. Each course will cover around **7 modalities** with full details on the website
4. The course is taught through **blended learning** with online lectures and in person practice.
5. The proprietary **online lectures** for each modality are broken up into small segments to facilitate the integration of information by candidates who can **learn at their own pace and according to their schedule**
6. All online resources will be accessible on an **online portal** which will serve as a one stop shop for interaction with mentors and submission of material.
7. Each candidate will be **assigned an experienced mentor** to accompany them throughout the year
8. We will **facilitate access to machines** through different approaches
9. Each course will have around **6-8 in person intensive practice days**
10. The candidates must build up a practical logbook with a minimum number of scans per modality and specific pathologies
11. To pass the course, candidates must successfully pass a final exam with practical and theoretical components

During the initial courses we are also seeking to **recruit future faculty** who will be given training opportunities after the course.

For more detailed information about specific courses and to register your interest kindly go to the website <https://ultrasoundacademy.org/> and select the post graduate course of your interest.

N.B. An expression of interest does not signify or imply a commitment either from the Academy or the potential candidate but serves to give us an indication of the level of interest in a particular course. Doctors on the registration list for a particular course will be informed about the launch of the course and given the right of first refusal.