

# C onsortium for the A ccreditation of S onographic E ducation

NEWS  
March 2012

This newsletter aims to provide up to date information regarding CASE activities & requirements regarding validation, annual programme monitoring & other relevant issues.

In this edition of the Newsletter: -

Report from the Chair

Feedback Invited

Public Voluntary Register of Sonographers

CASE Accreditations

Accreditor Training

APMR Report

## Report from the Chair

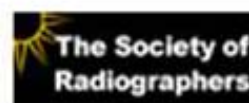
There is little doubt that the past year has been a challenging one for universities, health care providers and professional bodies, particularly in view of the changing financial and political climate. In these difficult times it is important to remember what we collectively stand for as ultrasound practitioners, educators and policy makers and that CASE is acting on behalf of the Member Organisations to maintain a high quality provision of ultrasound education in the UK.

CASE was formed in 1993, set up by the Member Organisations (British Medical Ultrasound Society, British Society of Echocardiography, Society of Vascular Technology of Great Britain and Ireland, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine and the College of Radiographers) to provide a means of standardising and promoting ultrasound education development across all disciplines. This has been a success and CASE accredited programmes in the UK are valued worldwide. The Department of Health acknowledge and support the role of CASE, with an expectation that practitioners in the UK will have completed a CASE accredited programme.

That aside the changing demands on universities and health care providers has meant that CASE is required to evolve to now meet the variability in programmes as well as the problems associated with university autonomy versus external established standards. The Member Organisations have unanimously agreed to maintain CASE and are working on developing, modernising and streamlining CASE activity to improve clarity of roles and functions and its relationship with the Member Organisations. This will require CASE to adapt, allowing universities the flexibility for innovative programme development whilst maintaining quality and standards. This is currently our priority and will take time, but we feel the final CASE will be much improved; in the meantime we ask all universities and healthcare service providers to support this transition. Furthermore normal core activity is on going; the CASE representatives are continuing to approve education programmes and focussed courses as well as providing accreditor training.

This is a challenging time but with the unanimous request from the Member Organisations, CASE will continue to act in its fundamental role in ensuring parity and standards in ultrasound education.

Dr. David Oxborough  
Acting CASE Chair



## Feedback Invited

If you are a student about to embark on an ultrasound programme of study, or a department manager looking for an appropriate course to send your student to, it is important to remember to choose a programme which has been accredited by CASE in order to ensure the qualification you achieve has national recognition. CASE was established in 1993, consisting of representatives from a number of organisations whose members are working as sonographers, to ensure that ultrasound programmes meet certain minimum standards.

To check which courses are currently CASE accredited, you can access the full list on the CASE website in the Course Directory - [www.case-uk.org](http://www.case-uk.org)

The organisation has recently undergone re-organisation in order to adapt to the changing environment we are all working in, but remains committed to ensuring the professional competence of the future sonography workforce.

To help ensure high standards are maintained and good practice encouraged, CASE values genuine feedback about programmes, whether raising concerns or paying compliments. If you would like to comment on any aspects of training programmes or accreditation, please contact the CASE administrator [case@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:case@ipem.ac.uk).

## THE PUBLIC VOLUNTARY REGISTER OF SONOGRAPHERS

The College of Radiographers is pleased to be able to announce that the Public Voluntary Register of Sonographers (PVRS) is going to be upgraded, commencing on 1st March 2012. The voluntary register will now have associated with it a Code of Conduct and Ethics, Standards of Proficiency and a supporting Policies and Procedures document. Voluntary registrants will be asked to confirm that they will follow these good practice guidelines.

All sonographers whose names are currently entered on the register are being asked to renew their registration. We will be asking current voluntary registrants to renew in stages, starting with family names beginning A-B. We expect the process of transferring current voluntary registrants to the upgraded register to take approximately six months and at that point the current register will be closed.

There will be no charge for re-registration for any sonographer whose name is listed on the current register.

All registrants seeking to transfer to the upgraded voluntary register will have their applications reviewed but it is expected that transfer across will be very straightforward. Completion of the on-line re-registration form will also allow us to update your details and provide us with important

information on the range of sonography practice and the qualifications and statutory registration status of sonographers

Registration will then be for a two year period, apart from this first cycle where we are allowing three years. Re-registration will therefore next be requested in March 2015.

New applications to the voluntary register are also welcomed.

If you are already statutorily registered with the HPC or NMC we would expect you to retain your statutory registration. The voluntary register is additional to this and is not intended to be a replacement.

The CoR has previously made an application to the Health Professions Council for sonography to become a regulated profession and 'sonographer' and 'ultrasonographer' to become protected titles. This application was made with the support of the United Kingdom Association of Sonographers which merged with the CoR in January 2009. Despite statutory registration being subsequently recommended by the HPC in October 2009 this application is unfortunately now unlikely to proceed. This follows the publication of a command paper by the coalition government in February 2011 (Ref 1). However, statutory regulation of sonographers remains the policy and ambition of the College of Radiographers and we will continue to support and argue the case for this.

We do very much hope that you will renew your registration or consider registering if you have not done so before. This will help to protect the public in an area of practice where statutory registration is not possible for all; it will also help support the continuing drive to obtain statutory regulation for sonographers and for 'sonographer' and 'ultrasonographer' to become protected titles.

The on-line application form for both new applicants and re-registration, along with the supporting documents can be found at:

<http://www.sor.org/practice/ultrasound/register-sonographers>

Ref 1) Enabling Excellence: Autonomy and accountability for Healthcare Workers, Social Workers and Social Care Workers. Department of Health, February 2011.

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8008/8008.pdf>

Vivien Gibbs  
CASE Council

# Consortium for Sonographic Education (CASE) Accreditations

CASE was formed to ensure a high quality educational experience for students and trainees in ultrasound and to ensure that on completion of a pathway of learning, that they are competent to undertake medical ultrasound examinations.

The present professional body membership of CASE is The British Society of Echocardiography (BSE), The Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (IPEM), the British Medical Ultrasound Society (BMUS), The Society of Radiographers (SCoR) and The Society for Vascular Technology of Great Britain and Ireland (SVT).

Two representatives from each of these societies are nominated to sit on CASE Council to discuss and report on accreditations, interim reports and approve changes to sonographic education courses.

When an ultrasound course requires accreditation CASE Council nominates a lead and co-accreditor, who review the documentation supplied by the university and course leader with respect to the current CASE Validation and Accreditation Handbook. Normally the lead accreditor is from an academic background and the co-accreditor could be from an academic or more likely, a clinical background.

CASE Council regularly reviews and updates the list of current CASE accreditors, together with the history of accreditations undertaken. Training for accreditors is provided by CASE with Accreditation Training Days and opportunities to 'shadow' accredit. New accreditors are welcome to apply either independently or via their professional body and are required to attend an Accreditation Day. It is also required for all accreditors to have a three-yearly refresher course. CASE Council normally meets three times a year and reviews their list of accredited courses and when accreditation, reaccreditation or interim visits are necessary. When a visit is required CASE Council identifies suitable accreditors for the course. The chosen accreditors are not allowed to have any links with the applying university or hospital and they are usually from a different part of the country. This is why it is necessary to have a pool of accreditors from all over the United Kingdom and new accreditors encouraged to apply.

CASE will normally accredit a postgraduate programme for a period of five years, which may be negotiable, but this should not exceed a six years. As a course may develop within the five year accreditation period, the education provider can apply to have these adjustments accredited. Accreditation will only be given to a programme or course that incorporates the assessment of clinical competency skills within its portfolio.

Prior to an accreditation event, the CASE Coordinator, issues appropriate proforma to the university, for completion and informs the course leader of the names of the selected accreditors. At about six weeks prior to the visit the lead and co-accreditor are supplied with the necessary paperwork to be reviewed. This paper based review process can take a number of days to undertake and the accreditors may be in contact with the education facility to clarify points.

At least one week prior to event any issues raised by the accreditors are made available to the course leader.

At the accreditation visit, areas in the documentation are reviewed and the accreditors are able to discuss the course content and delivery with tutors, past and present students and if possible local department managers.

During this validation and accreditation process, the CASE accreditors will expect to see evidence in suitable documentation that supports this learning approach both in the classroom and workplace. Accreditors will look for evidence from the university teams, programme leaders and course organisers for originality of thought and evidence-based practice within the curricula. The mode of delivery and the assessment process is also important and these should comply with national and local legislation as well as professional guidelines to ensure that practitioners meet the required standards of practice.

It is important that the course offers learning, in such a way, as to suit the workforce, whilst ensuring that a competency to practise is paramount. All courses should aim for high standards of education, teaching and course content, with mandatory supervised clinical time and assessments in the workplace with trained internal mentors.

Within one month after an accreditation event a full written report, which includes any issues raised by the CASE accreditors will be issued. At the next CASE Council meeting, following event, the lead accreditor submits this report to CASE, for them to endorse and approve. This year, there are a number of accreditation visits planned, which include ultrasound programmes at Salford, Cumbria and Ulster with future events planned in advance up to 2016. Focussed courses can also apply for accreditation and Glasgow have a visit planned in March 2012.

Applications to become a CASE accreditor are welcome and this can be done by contacting Cathy Brown, CASE Coordinator [case@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:case@ipem.ac.uk) and for more information, through the website at [www.case-uk.org](http://www.case-uk.org).

Rosalind Lea  
SVT Representative on CASE  
March 2012

## ACCREDITOR TRAINING

It is clear that CASE's viability and its ability to function are wholly dependent on the sterling efforts of our accreditors. The actual number of accreditors has risen slightly over the past year adding to an existing portfolio of accreditors with a range of experience. More so, the expertise is pooled from both clinical colleagues and educationalists.

In order to ensure our accreditors are familiar with the processes and actions of CASE there is a requirement for each accreditor to attend a training day which in the past this has occurred twice a year. Following review, it is now feasible to run the training day once per year with the next one to be held in September 2012.

All accreditors who have not received recent updates will be invited to attend this event. We hope this will be an inspiring programme and although currently in development it will focus on highlighting the university processes which are often so challenging to understand for those individuals who are primarily based in clinical departments. It is also important to consider some of the newer tools that are being integrated into Learning and Teaching models such as blended learning, negotiated imaging and the assessment of clinical competence.

We do hope all those who wish to carry out CASE processes and are due to attend a training event, will do so. We will be in touch in the very near future. In the meantime if anybody is interested in developing themselves whilst contributing to the important work CASE undertakes please contact CASE directly for nominations to act as a CASE accreditor.

Dr. David Oxborough  
Acting CASE Chair

## Annual Programme Monitoring Review (APMR)

Firstly, CASE must apologise for the inadvertent release of sensitive information in the last Newsletter. An internal APMR document was put into a draft of the newsletter by mistake, and subsequently published. We revised the newsletter as soon as we realised our mistake, but not before it had been received by some. CASE was probably more embarrassed by this than any programme team was, but nevertheless this should not have happened.

The review for the academic year 2010-11 is nearing completion, having been held up by the late submission of information from some programmes. Late submission prevents all programmes from receiving timely general information about UK ultrasound education. Would programme leaders please remember that participation in APMR is an obligation of CASE accreditation? We believe that our new on-line form is not onerous to complete.

We still receive suggestions about how the form can be improved, and we do our best to act on them. Two improvements in the next round will be earlier release of the form, so that programme leaders can if they wish begin to prepare it immediately after exam boards; and an instruction will be added about how to print the form before submission.

We are also constantly reviewing how we assess the quality of programmes. (Please see the note elsewhere in this newsletter about reporting concerns and praising good practice.) Should we be looking more into the availability and success of clinical placements? If you are aware of problems with clinical placement or anything else, please send your suggestions about what we should be asking. Another current concern is whether the economic climate is having an effect on quality. Again, if you have comments...

Now to some of that general information from the 10-11 APMR that might be of interest. Your returns suggest that there are 282 students enrolled on PgC programmes, 226 on PgD, and 56 on MSc. This is an increase for PgC and PgD, but a slight decrease for MSc. The numbers obtaining an award have also gone up, to 171, 132 and 27 respectively. The following types of professional were enrolled in 2010-11: sonographers, radiographers, radiologists, medical consultants, SPRs, GPs, midwives, nurses, physiotherapists, chiropractors, vascular scientists,

clinical physiologists, vascular and podiatric surgeons, a radiography helper and an acupuncturist. There is much to make of that!

Finally, some leaders have had confirmation that APMR for their programme is complete. If any leaders have not, we may be waiting for clarification from you, or will be in touch soon. Please monitor your email inbox for APMR items.

Andrew Fairhead  
Chairman, APMR sub-group