



ultrasound-guided msk interventions postgraduate certificate

ASA FAQs

Q: What is the purpose of this course?

A: This postgraduate certificate has been tailored for practitioners who have experience in the musculoskeletal field and are seeking accredited learning in the role of performing ultrasound-guided musculoskeletal injections.

The course will enable experienced practitioners to extend their scope of practice to include the use of injection therapy under the delegated authority of a medical practitioner (e.g. radiologist, rheumatologist) responsible for the conduct and reporting of the examination/service.

It has been designed by the Australasian Sonographers Association (ASA) and the University of Essex (UK) to reflect Australian practice.

Q: What are the course dates and fees? [Updated February 2016]

A: This 1-year course starts on 15 February 2016. The course fees are AU\$8250. A non-refundable deposit of \$825 is required upon acceptance into the course. The remainder of fees are due by 29 January 2016.

Q: What are the entry requirements?

A: To be eligible, applicants must:

- have a minimum of 2 years' postgraduate MSK experience
- be employed in a professional environment with access to support in the workplace that enables completion of assessment – a mentor, available legally prescribed medication and suitable ultrasound equipment.
- be accredited/registered with an appropriate professional body.

Q: Does the mentor have to be a radiologist?

A: Access to an appropriately qualified medical practitioner is a requirement of completing this course. In most cases, we'd expect the medical practitioner to be a radiologist or other specialist, e.g. orthopaedic surgeon or rheumatologist.

The ASA acknowledges the difficulty that can be encountered in accessing a radiologist in rural and remote locations. All applicants' proposed mentors will be reviewed during the application process to ensure they have the requisite qualification and experience to provide this role.

Q: Are ultrasound-guided MSK interventions eligible for Medicare rebates? [Updated February 2016]

A: Currently there is a requirement that the medical practitioner responsible for the conduct and reporting of the examination personally attends for Medicare-rebatable MSK ultrasound services provided by a sonographer.

In July 2015, the ASA made a submission to remove this personal attendance requirement, seeking that the supervision requirements for Medicare-funded MSK ultrasound services be the same as other sonographer-provided ultrasound services; that is, that the medical practitioner responsible for the conduct and reporting is available to monitor and influence the service.

This change to the Medicare requirements could be in place as early as July 2016. This would result in sonographer-provided ultrasound-guided MSK interventions being eligible for Medicare rebates without the supervising medical practitioner personally attending.

You can view the full submission on the ASA website. Go to 'the ASA' tab and select 'submissions'.

About the ASA

The ASA is the peak body and leading voice for sonographers. Our purpose is to lead our profession in delivering excellence in sonography for the community.



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Q: Are there restrictions on administering Schedule 4 drugs? [Updated December 2015]

A: Yes. There are jurisdictional restrictions regarding who can administer (PBS) Schedule 4 drugs, such as those used in ultrasound-guided MSK interventions.

Following significant negotiations in 2015, the ASA is pleased to advise that sonographers in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia will be able to administer corticosteroids and anaesthetic medications where they are undertaking this course and practising under the supervision of a named medical practitioner.

Victorian sonographers are unable to participate in the course in 2016 due to the significant legislative changes required to allow sonographers to administer these drugs. The ASA continues to work with the Victorian Government who remain significantly interested in supporting sonographers toward this expanded scope of practice. However the earliest these changes can be achieved is 2017.

The ASA continues to negotiate with the remaining Australian jurisdictions for changed arrangements to recognise/permit sonographers to administer relevant Schedule 4 drugs required for the practise of ultrasound-guided MSK interventions where they are undertaking or have completed this course.

Q: Will I be able to generate my own reports after course completion?

A: No. The purpose of this certificate is to provide a recognised course of education for sonographers to provide ultrasound-guided MSK interventions under the delegated authority of the medical practitioner responsible for the conduct and reporting of the examination/service. Reporting on the service will remain as it is currently for sonographer-provided ultrasound services – preliminary reports will be generated by the sonographer and finalised by the supervising medical practitioner.

Q: To whom will I be able to administer ultrasound-guided interventions?

A: The course is aimed at developing sonographer competency to administer ultrasound-guided interventions to general patients aged 18 and older.

At this stage the course does not credential the sonographer for administering ultrasound-guided interventions to patients under the age of 18 or those with more complex pathologies, e.g. patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Q: Will my ASA insurance cover me for this work?

A: Yes. There is no change to the Medicare claiming arrangements, so there is no need for insurance changes. The liability remains the same, with the added protection that the service is delivered under the delegated authority of a medical practitioner (e.g. radiologist, orthopaedic surgeon) responsible for the conduct and reporting of the examination/service.

This has been confirmed by our insurer.

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