Similarities and Differences between current CASE accredited

BSc (Hons) Medical Ultrasound programmes:

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Working together with Innovation

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Background

Innovative new BSc (Hons) undergraduate level education can benefit the sonography workforce. There are currently two CASE accredited BSc programmes in the UK (one apprenticeship and one direct entry route). There are similarities and differences between these educational routes, however both aim to produce a graduate sonographer, who will be a safe ultrasound practitioner prepared to undertake preceptorship and postgraduate education.

Methods and Results

A collaborative comparative study of UK BSc (Hons) Medical Ultrasound programmes was undertaken. Thematic analysis of the courses' definitive documents identified two overarching themes of similarities and differences with associated sub-themes (See Table 1 and 2).

Table 1		Differences							
Theme		BSc (Hons) Medical Ultrasound (Direct Entry)		BSc (Hons) Medical Ultrasound (Degree apprenticeship)					
Admissions		UCAS Interview	Employer led Joint employer and university interviews						
Admission criteria		5 GCSE -C/4 or above to include maths, English and science. 3 A levels BBB to include one science Equivalents accepted excluding T levels	Physics	96 UCAS points from three A levels (including at least 40 points from either Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Mathematics) Equivalent or other qualifications (including T levels) may be considered by the University					
Funding		Not eligible for NHS bursary Not eligible for Student finance if second degree	Employed for duration of study Course feet funded by Apprenticeship Lovy						
Standard		CASE Standards of proficiency for a sonographer (2022)	Course fees funded by Apprenticeship Levy Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education – Sonography Apprenticeship Standard (2019) CASE Standards of proficiency for a sonographer (2022)						
Quality Assurance		Institute for Students UoL quality processes CASE	OfSTED SHU Quality processes CASE						
Attendance pattern		3 years – full time Block release: 60% university, 40% clinical	3 years – Full time Block delivery: 80% on the job learning – 20% University						
Assessment and credits		Varied approaches Clinical competence 360 credits (120 each year)	Varied approaches Clinical competencies 363 credits (121 each year)						
Table 2		Similarities		Outline Career and Progression Entry routes All entry routes should be CASE accredited from academic level 6	n Framework – V2. Upda Professional title (SfH)		<u>Career level</u>	Suggested band (*subject to local job evaluation	
Standards and Mapping	National (m for Sonographic Education (CASE) Standards for Ultrasound Education (2022, Level 6 Occupational Standards (sonographer) (Skills for Health, 2019)		Expert practitioner with experience & ideally doctoral level qualification or equivalent *registration upon qualification from approved course	Consultant Sonographer	Consultant Practitioners Progression: Master's degree. Woking towards relevant doctorate or equivalent	8	8a- 8d	
Curriculum Spiral cu		apher career framework (BMUS 2022) urriculum. Modular delivery.		Practitioner with relevant Master's level equivalent ultrasound/ sonography qualification Existing routes to be maintained	Advanced Practice Sonographer Enhanced Practice	Advanced Practitioners Progression: Working to develop skills to match Advanced Clinical Practice Framework Postgraduate, M-level education	7	7/8a	
	Content: e.g. Ultrasound Science & Technology, Anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology, Gener Medical, Gynaecological and Obstetric ultrasound, Communication and professional issues, Resea project.			*registration upon qualification from approved course Relevant BSc (Hons) in	Practice Sonographer	Progression: Further education and training which meets CASE academic level 7 standards Structured preceptorship and skills development under capability framework essential	6	6/7	
Exit award	BSc (Hons) Medical Ultrasound			Relevant postgraduate certificate, diploma or master's in sonography / medical ultrasound	→ Sonographer	Progression: Apprenticeship	5	5	
Clinical		clinical competences all align with National Occupational Standards (CASE Level 6) t standards and the requirements of the Sonographer Career Framework.		May not be CASE accredited Relevant qualification or	Assistant	Accredited level 6 study Assistant Practitioners			

Conclusion

Whilst there are operational differences between the two training models, the key similarities of learned content and clinical competence assessment are evident in both. Each programme aligns with the Sonographer Career Framework (2022), and the NHS priorities for workforce capability development (NHS England, 2024) (See Figure 1).

CASE accreditation of both programmes ensures that competent graduate sonographers wil enter the workforce with the equitable knowledge, behaviours and clinical skills.

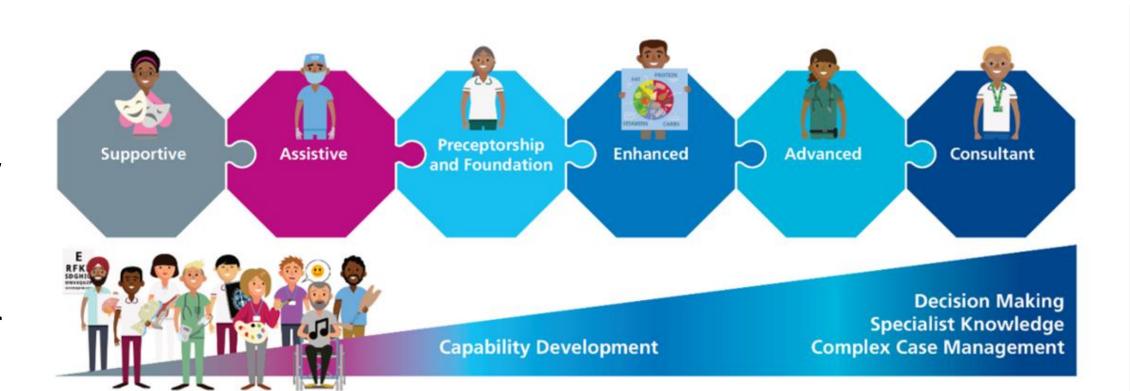


Figure 2: AHP capability development (NHS England, 2024)



References

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