



Consortium for the  
Accreditation of  
Sonographic Education

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019 - 2020

*(1<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020)*



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## Introduction from the CASE Member Organisation's Chair



**Richard Evans, CoR CEO**

Welcome to the CASE Annual Report for 2019-2020 and thank you for your support for high standards in sonography education. The Consortium is an extraordinary collaboration between very diverse organisations united by the common purpose to ensure that all practitioners that use ultrasound in clinical practice are trained to the highest standards. It has been a privilege for me to chair the Member Organisations group this year.

As the period for this report commenced, no one could have foreseen the seismic changes that would affect every citizen as the Covid-19 pandemic struck in early 2020. We had of course been expecting changes associated with Brexit but in the event these have been overshadowed almost totally.

I say “almost” because the withdrawal from the European Union did provide an opportunity for CASE to take part in a consultation about professional regulation. There are more details in the report. At the time of writing, this issue remains unresolved, indicating that at government level the lack of appreciation persists over the clinical value of ultrasound.

This is not, thankfully, the case within the statutory policy bodies in the four countries of the UK where the scientific and allied health leaders are fully aware of the service and workforce pressures that lie ahead. This was confirmed during the year when Health Education England recognised the value of the work of CASE through the provision of funding to support the fixed term appointment of our education officer. This part time post will allow CASE to improve our operating methods and become more efficient. The role generated a lot of interest and I am pleased that Gill Dolbear was appointed.

The impact of Covid-19 on the work of CASE is described in detail in the report. It is good to read that our work continued despite the inevitable pressures. As the country begins to emerge towards the much heralded “new normal”, clinical services in all specialities are bracing themselves to deal with a surge of demand. It is essential that “normal” continues to be characterised by highly trained expert practitioners providing ultrasound services.

This is why CASE exists and we are very aware that the operation of our CASE committee and the accreditation process itself relies entirely on volunteer effort provided by clinical sonographers and educators. The enthusiasm and generosity of these individuals making up the committee and team of accreditors is outstanding. We owe all of them our gratitude. The work depicted in this report is a tribute to each of them and the impact in terms of quality of service to the public is enormous.

I am also grateful to our member organisations that so enthusiastically commit to CASE. The representatives that have attended and contributed to our meetings this year have made my job as chair a real pleasure. We have been brilliantly supported by Sally Hawking of IPEM, who has worked very hard to provide administrative support and guidance to the Committee and the Member Organisations group.

I hope that you will enjoy reading more in the pages that follow and that you will keep in touch with the work of CASE in future.



Richard Evans  
CASE MO Chair 2019 – 2020



*BMUS Annual Scientific Meeting, December 2019*

## About CASE

CASE was established in 1993 to allow organisations with a shared interest to come together to provide appropriate and relevant oversight of all aspects of sonographic education.

It is operated on a not-for-profit basis and is not formally incorporated as a company or a charity.

It relies on volunteers to commit their time to ensure that students who graduate from its accredited courses do so with the best in education, mentor support and clinical competency; thus preparing the sonographic workforce of the future.

## About the Member Organisations of CASE

Member Organisations (MOs) are normally those which have direct responsibilities and interest in the practice of sonography and its education and training. They are independent bodies with their own professional concerns in relation to the research, education and practice of medical ultrasound.

Member Organisations share in common the concern that education must continue to develop to meet changing technology, clinical practice and service requirements. They recognise the need to collaborate to set and maintain standards, optimise education and training development and provision, and make validation and accreditation procedures as robust as possible. They understand the need to do this in conjunction with the relevant external bodies, including statutory bodies.

In 2019/20, the MOs of CASE were:



The British Medical Ultrasound Society



The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy



The College of Podiatry



The College of Radiographers



The Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine



The Society for Vascular Technology of Great Britain and Ireland

## How CASE works

The primary role of the Consortium is to accredit high quality training programmes and focused courses that promote best ultrasound practice and ensure that ultrasound practitioners are safe and competent to practise, whilst taking into account informed views of service needs.

The strategic direction and policy of CASE are decided by the Member Organisations which make up the Consortium. The MOs meet twice a year (minimum) and set a financial and business plan for the Consortium.

Each MO nominates three appropriately qualified representatives from amongst its own membership to serve on the CASE Committee, with two out of the three (usually) attending each meeting.

The CASE Committee is responsible for implementing CASE policy. In addition to virtual meetings, the Committee normally (although not in 2020) meet in person three times a year to:

- ensure, via a co-ordinated programme of validation and monitoring, that standards of education and training in sonography are being set, maintained and enhanced
- establish a co-ordinated approach to setting, maintaining and enhancing standards of education and training in sonography, ensuring that the standards are and remain approved by the Consortium
- undertake validation and periodic review of individual education and training programmes and focused courses in sonography, and to accredit programmes and focused courses in the name of the Consortium.

A comprehensive CASE Handbook guides the CASE Committee in its work, and regular CASE training days help to keep assessors' skills up to date.

Support services are provided by an MO (currently IPEM) who is responsible, under contract, for allocating staff to the roles of CASE Co-ordinator and CASE Finance Officer.



## Mission Statement and Aims



*To be the provider of choice for advice on the development and delivery of ultrasound education and training and to be the only recognised accreditor for ultrasound courses.*

### Our Aims:

1. To accredit high quality clinical\* ultrasound education and training programmes (including focused courses, stand-alone modules and CPD) that promote best ultrasound practice and provide assurance that ultrasound practitioners are safe and competent to practice.
2. To identify the current and future needs of service providers with respect to clinical\* ultrasound education and training and advise on education and training to meet the changing service and workforce needs.
3. To evaluate new and innovative training and education pathways at all academic levels and to accredit when appropriate to do so.
4. To monitor CASE accredited programmes of ultrasound education and training to ensure they continue to meet appropriate standards.
5. To assist with the development of ultrasound education and training programmes.

*\*The term 'clinical' recognises the multi-disciplinary nature of the workforce; in other circumstances the word 'medical' may be used.*



## CASE Submit Evidence to a Consultation on Professional Regulation

CASE responded to a consultation from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy entitled 'the Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions'. The consultation was linked to the withdrawal from the European Union and the need to ensure that the UK can continue to attract professionals to work here. As part of the consultation included a review of current UK arrangements for professional regulation the CASE member organisations and wider stakeholders agreed to submit feedback on sonographer regulation, in an attempt to raise the issues at a national level again. Two responses were submitted:

The first was a position statement from CASE recognising the lack of clarity around the equivalence of overseas qualifications compared with CASE accredited programme standards. It included the statement "As the UK's current domestic arrangements for regulation have evolved organically over a number of years, CASE believes that professional regulation in the UK would benefit from being evaluated and rationalised in order to maximise cost-effectiveness and efficiency. CASE would also like to see much greater emphasis placed on the mitigation of risk when deciding which professions require statutory regulation."

The position statement acknowledges that once someone has completed a CASE accredited programme, CASE has "no control over the quality and standard of the sonographers work beyond the point of qualification". Additionally, admission to the Public Voluntary Register of Sonographers (PVRS) does not authenticate competence or fitness to practise.

The second was from the chair of the CASE member organisations in a joint consultation response with the presidents of the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR), the British Medical Ultrasound Society (BMUS) and the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR). The response referred to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) report<sup>1</sup> from 2019 on sonography regulation, the potential risks associated with the lack of statutory regulation for sonographers in the UK and the barriers this creates to the development of the sonography career framework. The response was an ideal opportunity to revisit key arguments for sonographer regulation including:

- the need to grow the workforce by further developing and supporting direct entry educational programmes into ultrasound;
- the challenges non-statutory regulated sonographers face gaining employment in the UK, given that in the [2019 SoR consensus](#),<sup>2</sup> 65% of respondents reported that statutory regulation was a prerequisite for sonographers;
- non-regulated health care professionals are unable to perform some of the advanced practice roles within sonography, such as referring for additional imaging which uses ionising radiation, prescribe medicines or train to be supplementary or independent prescribers.
- entry onto the Health Education England (HEE) [Advanced Clinical Practice apprenticeship](#) programme is restricted for those without statutory regulation. The key entry requirement is to "hold current registration with one of the statutory regulator of health and care professions"<sup>3</sup>.

- approval of education programmes and assessment of overseas applicants against the regulator's published Standards of Proficiency, as well as confirmation of English language proficiency, is not compulsory. A voluntary register is just that, there is no requirement to be registered to practise in the UK as a sonographer.

The College of Radiographers currently administer the Public Voluntary Register of Sonographers (PVRS). The register will cease from 28 February 2021. Work is ongoing to seek approval from the PSA for the transfer to the [Register of Clinical Technologists](#)<sup>4</sup>. At present there are 258 registrants on the PVRS who have no statutory regulation. As it is not mandatory to join a voluntary register there are many sonographers working in the UK in the NHS and private sector who are not on the PVRS or statutorily registered.

[Sir Mike Richards](#)<sup>5</sup> in the report commissioned by NHS England (October 2020) recommends 'recognition of sonographers as a regulated profession'. The report also recommends 'new models of delivery' for imaging services and an increase in staffing levels to meet the demands on imaging services. It highlights shortages of radiographers and the need to train an additional 4,000. The new educational models of direct entry into sonography would help reduce the depletion of radiographer numbers, by providing an additional source of sonography recruitment. Community diagnostic hubs will rely on the advanced and consultant practice roles of sonographers expanding, to ensure effective, safe, efficient services for patients. Without statutory regulation many experienced and skilled sonographers will be unable to develop their careers and enhance the ultrasound service, as needed to fulfil the requirements of the Richard's report<sup>5</sup>.

The SCoR, BMUS, RCR and CASE all strongly believe that sonographers should be regulated to the same standards as medical practitioners undertaking ultrasound examinations. There should not be various 'levels' of regulation when the examinations must be performed to the same standard whatever the professional background of the sonographer and the risks to the patient are the same. This should apply across the whole of the UK and all groups continue to lobby for sonographer regulation at every opportunity.

#### References:

1. Professional Standards Authority Right touch assurance for sonographers based on the risk of harm arising from practice. Report to Health Education England. (February, 2019). [https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/right-touch-assurance-for-sonographers---a-report-for-health-education-england.pdf?sfvrsn=b2fd7420\\_0](https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/docs/default-source/publications/right-touch-assurance-for-sonographers---a-report-for-health-education-england.pdf?sfvrsn=b2fd7420_0) (Accessed 21 October 2020).
2. [Society and College of Radiographers \(2019\)](#) Ultrasound Workforce UK Census 2019. [https://www.sor.org/sites/default/files/document-versions/ultrasound\\_workforce\\_uk\\_census\\_2019.pdf](https://www.sor.org/sites/default/files/document-versions/ultrasound_workforce_uk_census_2019.pdf) (Accessed 5 November 2020).
3. Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (2019) Advanced Clinical Practitioner (Degree). <https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019.03.07-Advanced-clinical-practitioner-degree-ST0564-Standard.pdf> (Accessed 5 November 2020)
4. [Society of Radiographers \(2020\)](#) Proposal to transfer the Public Voluntary Register of Sonographers to the Voluntary Register of Clinical Technologists. <https://www.sor.org/news/proposal-transfer-public-voluntary-register-sonographers-voluntary-register-clinical-technologists> (Accessed 5 November 2020).
5. NHS England. Diagnostics: Recovery and renewal. (2020). <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/BM2025Pu-item-5-diagnostics-recovery-and-renewal.pdf> (Accessed 15 October 2020)

## Achievements in 2019 – 2020

During this year:

- We secured funding from HEE to recruit a CASE Education Officer (temporary role) whose primary remit is to review all aspects of how CASE operates and provide recommendations for improvement and time/cost saving, and to implement where possible.
- We responded swiftly to the Covid-19 pandemic by:
  - informing Course Leaders that they would be supported in introducing any changes necessary to deliver their courses and support students remotely without having to wait for CASE approval;
  - allowing any courses due for re-accreditation before August 2021 to defer accreditation for up to 12 months;
  - allowing virtual accreditation events to go ahead.
- Understandably it was a quiet year for accreditations with many being postponed, however:
  - One new MSc programme achieved CASE accreditation;
  - One Pg Certificate was re-accredited;
  - Eight focus courses were re-accredited;
  - Addition of new modules were approved for two universities.
- Assessment continued on the first non-UK course for accreditation.
- One new member joined the CASE Committee.
- A team of experts (both internal and external to CASE) began a review of all the accredited MSK courses.
- Secured resources to work on the Handbook revision.
- Appointed IPEM employee Anna Glavocih to the role of Accreditor Liaison Officer with responsibility for accreditor assignments and training.
- All 16 universities submitted a satisfactory return to the CASE annual programme monitoring review (APMR).
- 62 requests for help and information via the website were dealt with.
- 40,135 visits were made to the CASE website which represents an increase of 27% on the previous year.

## CASE Finances

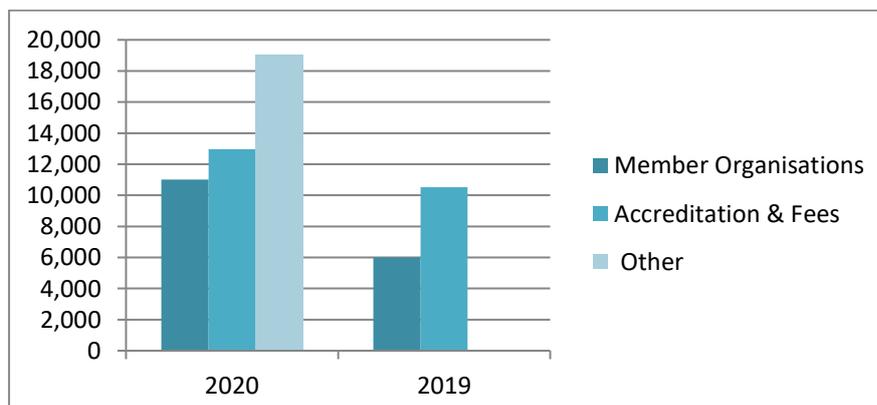
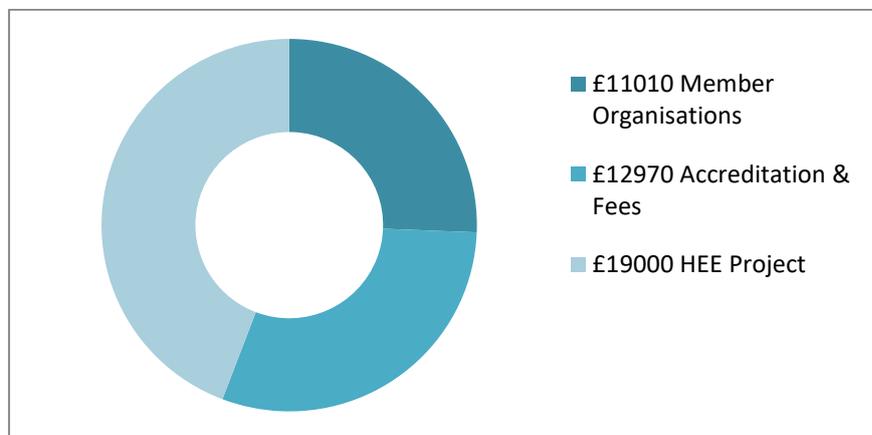
Total income for the year is £42,980 (£16,520 in 2019) which has increased compared to previous years due to increased contributions from Member Organisations and additional project monies received from HEE. In 2020 work continued on the HEE project with a payment made to IPEM for administrative support. Therefore, funds of £8,082 remain restricted for the purposes of the HEE Sonography project, to ensure CASE deliverables can be completed, and were further added to (an amount of £19,000 received from HEE) for additional HEE projects in 2020-21. HEE project restricted funds therefore total £27,082.

Total expenditure has reduced at £19,345, (£25,005 in 2019). This includes HEE project expenses of £307. The decrease in expenditure is due to the impact of COVID reducing face to face meeting costs and training expenses in the second half of the period. While the remaining expenditure of £18,801 is slightly increased from previous years, due to increased administrative costs as per the contract.

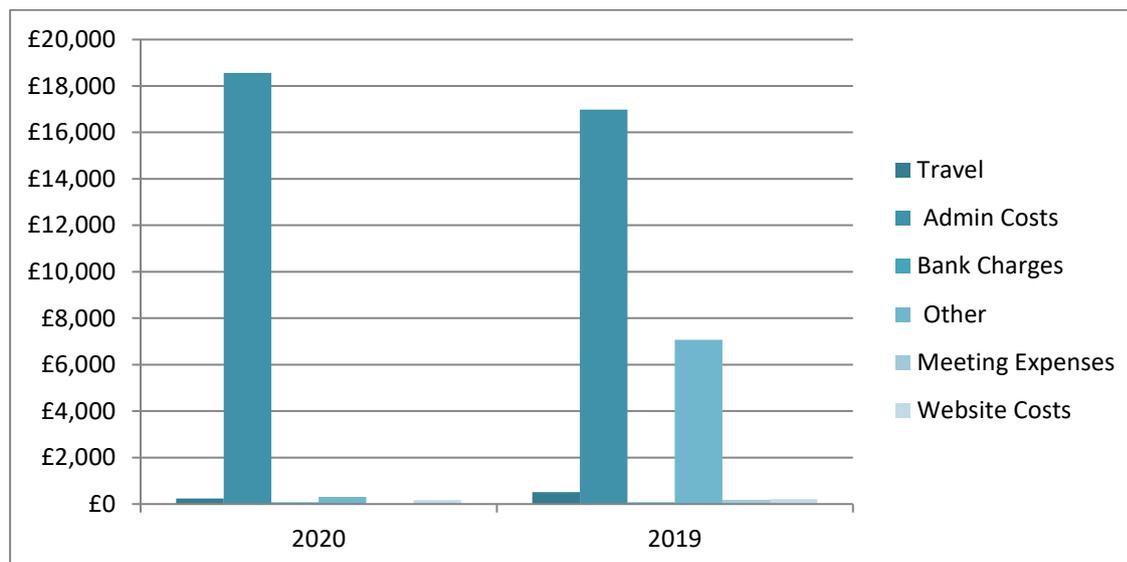
This has led to a surplus for the year of £23,635 (deficit of £8,485 in 2019), receipt of HEE project monies amounting to £19,000 of this.

The Balance Sheet shows reserves increasing to £37,756.

### CASE Income 2020



## CASE Expenditure 2020



## Looking Forward

Plans for 2020-21 include:

- Submit a business case to HEE to request funding for an exploration of the interface between the multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice and sonographic education.
- Continue work on a complete revision of the CASE Handbook to reflect the decision to accredit undergraduate courses and to align with the new processes.
- Complete the full review of the MSK courses which are currently accredited and make recommendations for good practice.
- Introduce training webinars for the Accreditors, to be held every two months and on a specific topic each time - presentations and Q&A's to be hosted on the website.
- New Committee Chair and Vice-Chair to take up their roles.
- Continue engagement with other organisations in the work of CASE and encourage new members to join the Consortium.

## CASE Accredited Courses 2019-2020

### *MSc Programmes*

AECC/University of Bournemouth	MSc Medical Ultrasound
Birmingham City University	MSc Medical Ultrasound
City, University London	MSc Medical Ultrasound
Glasgow Caledonian University	MSc Medical Ultrasound
King's College London	MSc Medical Ultrasound/ MSc Vascular Ultrasound
Sheffield Hallam University	MSc Medical Ultrasound
Teesside University	MSc Medical Ultrasound
University of Cumbria	MSc Medical Imaging (Ultrasound)
University of Derby	MSc Medical Ultrasound
University of Essex	MSc Musculoskeletal Ultrasound Imaging
University of Hertfordshire	MSc Medical Imaging & Radiations Sciences (Diagnostic Ultrasound)
University of Leeds	MSc Diagnostic Imaging
University of Salford	MSc Ultrasound Imaging
University of the West of England	MSc Medical Ultrasound
University of Ulster	MSc Advancing Practice in Medical Ultrasound

### *Postgraduate Certificate*

Brunel University/The Ultrasound Site	PgC Musculoskeletal Ultrasound
Canterbury Christ Church University	PgC Musculoskeletal Ultrasound
University of East London	PgC Musculoskeletal Ultrasound

### *Focused Courses*

AECC/Bournemouth University	Basic Gynaecology & Early Pregnancy Ultrasound 2nd Trimester Pregnancy Dating & Placenta Position Third Trimester Pregnancy Growth Podiatry Musculoskeletal Ultrasound
Birmingham City University	1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester Screening 3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester Fetal Surveillance Early Pregnancy Ultrasound Obstetric Ultrasound Dating for Family Planning Transvaginal Ultrasound for Infertility
Canterbury Christ Church University	3 <sup>rd</sup> Trimester Ultrasound Scanning Hands, Wrists & Feet in Rheumatology
Glasgow Caledonian University	Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
Public Health England	Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
Sheffield Hallam University	Ultrasound Scanning: 1st Trimester Ultrasound Scanning: 3rd Trimester

## CASE Committee 2019-2020

<b>Chair:</b>	Simon Richards	BMUS		
<b>Vice-Chair:</b>	Heather Venables	BMUS		
<b>Members:</b>	Gareth Bolton	BMUS	Vincent Pelling	IPEM
	Mike Smith	CSP	Gill Dolbear	SCoR
	Stuart Wildman	CSP	Dr Vivien Gibbs	SCoR
	Lisa Newcombe	COP	Gill Harrison	SCoR
	Jai Saxelby	COP	Dr Valda Gazzard	SVT
	Dr Adam Lovick	IPEM	Joanne Walker	SVT
	Crispian Oates	IPEM	Mary-Ellen Williams	SVT

## CASE Accreditors 2019-2020 (in addition to the Committee Members listed above)

*Thank you to all our accreditors for volunteering their time in support of CASE*

Jane Arezina	University of Leeds
Mike Bryant	Backpool Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust
Dr Mhairi Brandon	Glasgow Royal Infirmary
Peter Cantin	Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust
Gillian Coleman	University of Derby
Diane Dickson	Glasgow Caledonian University
Jane Dixon	Independent Consultant Physiotherapist
Theresa Fail	Health Education West Midlands
Elaine Gardiner	Glasgow Caledonian University
Sue Halson-Brown	Kings College London
Allison Harris	City, University of London
Dr Bob Jarman	Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Gateshead
Gerry Johnson	University of Salford
Alison McBride	University of South Wales
Dr Pauline Mitchell	Sheffield Hallam University
Dr David Oxborough	Liverpool John Moores University
Lorelei Waring	University of Cumbria
Catherine Williams	Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust
Rachel Wilson	Hull & East Yorkshire NHS Hospital Trust



## Consortium for the Accreditation of Sonographic Education

CASE March 2021

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CASE Coordinator

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