

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

# NEWS

## April 2008

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

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## CASE @ BMUS 2008

Once again, CASE will be having a session at the BMUS Annual Scientific meeting, this year to be held at the new Arena and Convention Centre, Liverpool, from 9th - 11th December. CASE has a full session planned for this year, which will cover a number of topics related to CASE and its activities. The topics and speakers will be as follows: -

- 'CASE Update' - an update and review of CASE as an organization, including the current work of the short course accreditation working party

**Rosemary Lee**

- 'Sonographer Shortage' - the national shortage of sonographers and funding for training within HEIs and clinical departments

**SHA speaker to be confirmed**

- 'Sonographer Registration' - a report on the current issues surrounding sonographer regulation and registration (HPC & UKAS/SCoR voluntary project)

**Audrey Paterson**

There will be an opportunity for debate and discussion with all speakers in a special slot at the end of the session

**The final date and time for the session will be confirmed shortly**

## CASE Open Forum

This forum will address the crucial issue of **Clinical Competency** – the what, why and how – in medical ultrasound programmes

**Society & College of Radiographers, London**  
**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May**  
**£45.00**

The workshop will be of interest to all practitioners who are associated with the mentorship of students in clinical practice and educationalists responsible for the development and delivery of ultrasound programmes

**For further information, please contact Alice Hepworth in the CASE Office**

## Clinical Competency Part 2

The date for the second of the CASE's 2-part programme of Open Forums for 2008 has been agreed as **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November**.

Plans are for this to take place in **Leeds**.

This day will focus on **Clinical Competency in relation to Mentorship** (and supervision).

Further information will follow after Council in July

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# CASE ANNUAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2008

The meeting of the sub-committee to review the returns relating to the 06-07 Session took place immediately prior to Council.

It was reported that there were 17 returns received from all Programme Leaders. The numbers recruited to all programmes in the 2006-2007 monitoring period are still to be finalised as some Programme Leads were required to re-visit their data.

Full details on student numbers will be provided in due course but it was observed that the provisional student numbers do not reflect the numbers required to counter the national shortage of sonographers. It was also felt that they show that employers are not investing adequately in workforce training. Despite this, recruitment does remain fairly level year on year.

A letter will be sent to all Programme Leaders including all general points about the returns and then specific points as relevant to each HEI.

The general comments on the returns were as follows:-

- 1. The Sub-committee thanked all Programme Leaders for the many comprehensive reports and they were also impressed with the timely fashion in which most of the returns for this session were made.*
- 2. Some Programme Leader reports were very thorough and detailed, whilst some had little content and provided inadequate detail or appraisal of the programme. The APMR team will provide improved guidance for the 07-08 monitoring session in order to assist Programme Leaders in completing this section of the proforma.*
- 3. The APMR sub-group was pleased to see so many External Examiners reports being made available to CASE and now only the minority of Programmes do not provide these reports.*
- 4. It was noted that a number of individuals who are acting as External Examiners for some programmes are no longer particularly involved or active in either academic or clinical ultrasound. HEIs are encouraged to ensure that their External Examiners remain active within ultrasound and best able to contribute to the quality of programmes.*
- 5. With regard to External Examiner reports, on the current APMR, there is only a 'Yes', 'No' option for indicating whether or not these are available to CASE. This will be changed for the future proforma so that if these reports are not included, Programme Leads will need to explain their absence.*
- 6. Some changes in staff had not been reported to CASE and the Sub-committee reminded all Programme Leaders that when a change in core faculty staff has occurred, CASE*

*should immediately be advised and a CV for the new staff member sent to the CASE Office.*

*7. A number of programme leaders reported that students have experienced problems regarding the support of their clinical placements. It is the responsibility of HEIs and programme leads to make certain that they have a robust mechanism in place for checking clinical placements and ensuring adequate clinical support has been arranged for their students.*

*8. It is of concern that there is some evidence that student supervision is not as robust as in the past. In some cases, CASE has been made aware of students in clinical departments being left to scan unsupervised, due to assumptions about competency being made by their clinical supervisors. Despite pressures in the NHS this is not acceptable. The APMR team will re-emphasise to programme leads, the importance of thoroughly checking clinical arrangements for students, and keeping channels of communication open between clinical and academic staff.*

*9. In some cases programme leaders had given module codes, but not the module title. The monitoring team needs to be able to see the full name of the module in order to be able to comment more effectively on the data given in the report. A note will be added to the proforma for the future to remind programme leads about this.*

*10. The Sub-committee will encourage Programme Leaders whose programmes are due for re-accreditation in 2009, to ensure that they advise CASE in a timely fashion about their planned date and timescale. This is in order that CASE can appoint accreditors at an early stage, which will benefit both CASE and the Programme Team.*

*11. Quite a large number of the reports submitted to CASE had not been signed by the Programme Lead. Programme Leaders will be reminded that if submitting electronically, reports will need to include an e-signature and if posting reports to CASE these must be signed.*

If, as a Programme Leader, you have received a letter from CASE regarding your APMR return and if this has an outstanding action for your University, please make sure that you respond to CASE by the date specified.



## CASE Parent Organisations

British Medical Ultrasound Society, British Society of Echocardiography, Society & College of Radiographers, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, Royal College of Midwives, United Kingdom Association of Sonographers, Society for Vascular Technology of Great Britain and Ireland

## CASE fees for HEIs – what they cover...

Andrew Fairhead, Honorary Secretary

CASE has received some correspondence about what its annual fees provide for HEIs, so it seems a good time to clarify this.

The main function of CASE is to accredit UK courses that lead to a post-graduate qualification in sonography although readers will be aware that CASE is currently considering extending this role to other courses. CASE performs this task on behalf of its seven parent professional bodies, all of which have an interest in the competent practice of diagnostic ultrasound in the UK. Most sonographers taking up positions in the NHS are expected to have a CASE-accredited qualification, so the benefits to HEIs of accreditation are clear.

It might seem that once accreditation is achieved, the HEIs pay the annual fee just to keep their name on CASE's published list of accredited courses, and so that they can publicise the status of their course. However, this is far from correct. The accreditation process itself, which involves considerable work by two CASE accreditors, is carried out at no extra cost to the HEIs apart from expenses. In fact, none of the CASE Council members' expenses (or those of the accreditors while they are training) is paid for from the registration fees, but by the parent bodies.

HEI fees are effectively CASE's only source of income, and the understanding that these must be kept to a

minimum forces CASE to operate with minimum expenditure. It does not make a profit. However, it has certain essential requirements, chiefly the employment of a Coordinator (who, you will be aware, is a particular asset to CASE, its clients, and parent bodies). In addition, administrative facilities are rented from BMUS at sympathetic and reasonable rates.

CASE's obligation to improve the practice of ultrasound in the UK also leads it to organise regular open forums on topical issues, and this is another way in which HEIs and their faculty can benefit.

CASE also, from its fees, publishes an Accreditation Handbook. This is not just of use to accreditors, but is a guide for HEIs as to what aspects of their ultrasound education will be scrutinised, and which therefore should be properly implemented. An imminent new revision of the handbook will emphasise this aspect even more.

We hope that this summary of the way in which CASE balances its income against its obligations will reassure HEIs that their fees are being put to good use. We hope that the importance of our role will be recognised and supported by everyone involved in the provision of high-quality diagnostic-ultrasound practice.

## HPC & Sonographer Registration : UPDATE



The Society and College of Radiographers has, together with the United Kingdom Association of Sonographers been addressing the need for sonographers to be regulated for some time and, in January 2008, the Council of the Society of Radiographers approved the submission of an application to go to the HPC. This was duly considered on a preliminary



basis by the HPC at its meeting on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2008. As a result, the Society has been asked to give a detailed presentation at a future meeting of the HPC (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2008 is the intended date at this point in time), and to submit additional evidence on:

- *The number of sonographers thought to be outside of any regulatory framework at present, and the evidence on which this is based*
- *Further detail as to why regulation of sonographers is important and the potential dangers unregulated sonographers pose to the public*
- *More explanation of the potential for harm that might be experienced from sonographic investigations, and the role of sonographers in causing such harm*
- *Whether there are differences across the four countries of the UK, and detail on these*
- *The status of the draft 'benchmark statement' submitted as an appendix to the application*
- *Any issues in relation to the timescale for regulation, should HPC approval be granted*

Individuals interested in reading the HPC's preliminary assessment of the application, and the application itself can find this by following the following link:

[www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002188council\\_meeting\\_20080327\\_enclosure08.pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002188council_meeting_20080327_enclosure08.pdf)