



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Health Department
Human Resources Directorate

NHS
HDL (2003) 47

Dear Colleague

GRADING OF SONOGRAPHERS

Summary

1. Following recent discussions between NHSScotland employers and staff side representatives, proposals on an NHSScotland-wide approach to the grading of sonographers and the introduction of the grade of Advanced Practitioner in Sonography have been agreed and endorsed by the HR Forum.

2. The National Enabling Agreement outlined in Advance Letter PAM(PTA)3/96 provides the authority for the introduction of the new grading structure as set out at Annex A.

Background

3. It is acknowledged that there is a national shortage of radiographers and the role of the radiographer in the provision of diagnostic imaging services has been subject to growth and development since the profession came into existence. Nowhere is this clearer than in the provision of a medical ultrasound service. This rapid development could not have been foreseen nor reflected in the grading definitions devised in the early 1970s.

4. Medical ultrasound is an extension of the clinical role of a radiographer and was originally both encouraged and rewarded by the promotion of staff to the grade of Senior I radiographer when a formal qualification in this field was achieved.

3rd October 2003

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Trusts,
NHSScotland Boards, Island Health
Boards, and Special Health Boards

Chief Executive, Common Services
Agency, Chief Executive, State
Hospital

For information

Chief Executive, NHS Health
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Members, Scottish Partnership Forum
Members, HR Forum

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BB039SEPT2003



5. The current role of the sonographer has changed dramatically over the last 15 years and technical advances in ultrasound now demand greater expertise and medical knowledge from the sonographer. There is therefore the need for a new grading structure to reflect this and to encourage clinical progress within the profession.



Action

6. Trusts and NHS Boards are required to apply the new grading structure to their own arrangements for sonographers and take any necessary action with effect from 1 April 2003.

7. The arrangements set out at Annex A may be interim arrangements, pending the implementation of new pay and terms and conditions for sonographers as part of the Agenda for Change pay modernisation package.

8. Employers are asked to make their own arrangements for obtaining any additional copies of this letter. This letter can also be viewed on <http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/shed/hdl.asp>.

Yours sincerely



MIKE PALMER
Assistant Director of Human Resources
(Workforce and Policy)

ANNEX A

GRADING OF SONOGRAPHERS

Current postholders who can demonstrate that they have not had the opportunity to obtain the post graduate qualification in sonography should not be precluded from regrading to Clinical Specialist under this agreement, if they meet two or more criteria. All future postholders, however, must meet post-graduate qualification criteria.

Trainee Sonographer

- State registered radiographer
- Enrolled on a recognised post graduate qualification in Medical Ultrasound
- Performs assisted ultrasound examinations
- Issues assisted reports on ultrasound appearances – reports countersigned by a clinician including clinical specialist, sonographer etc.

Pay: £18,970 - £25,255 (Senior II scale as at 1 April 2003 *including discretionary points*)

Sonographer

- Holds relevant post graduate qualification in Medical Ultrasound
- Independently performs examinations
- Issues reports without the requirement of a counter signature
- This grade applies to a period of normally 12 months upon completion of relevant post-graduate course during which time skills are consolidated and enhanced.

Pay: £22,535 - £27,645 (Senior I scale as at 1 April 2003 *including discretionary points*)

Clinical Specialist II

- Core: Minimum of 12 months' experience after achieving relevant post-graduate qualification in Medical Ultrasound

PLUS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Practices unsupervised
- Provides independent diagnostic report
- Provides advice on future patient management to other clinicians including obstetricians, gynaecologists, midwives etc
- Independently communicates scan findings to clinician and/or patient
- Participates in supervision of trainee sonographers
- Participates in training of other sonographers

Pay:	£
Point 1	25,805
Point 2	26,525
Point 3	27,265
Point 4	28,202
Point 5	28,965
Point 6	29,950
Point 7	30,960

Clinical Specialist I

IN ADDITION TO THE CRITERIA OUTLINED FOR CLINICAL SPECIALIST II:

- Additional post-graduate experience – MSc or advanced within modality requiring a period of tuition e.g. foetal echocardiography

OR

- Undertakes management of ultrasound department, including responsibility for audit, budget, finance.

PLUS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Expert clinical practitioner
- Develops strategies for continuing self audit
- Identifies, plans and delivers programmes to meet professional development needs for self and others within department
- Participates in training of medical staff/radiology registrars

Pay:	£
Point 1	30,960
Point 2	31,970
Point 3	33,025
Point 4	34,085
Point 5	35,295
Point 6	36,505
Point 7	37,715

