

Gaining Mentorship for Lung Ultrasound: Top tips for taking this skill forward

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Training programmes

Currently there are 5 Lung ultrasound (LUS) or Thoracic ultrasound (TUS) training programmes potentially open to physiotherapists:

Focused Ultrasound Intensive Care (FUSIC) from the Intensive care Society

Focused Acute Medicine Ultrasound (FAMUS) from the Society of Acute Medicine

Children's Acute Ultrasound (CACTUS) from the Paediatric Critical Care Society

Focused Emergency Medicine Ultrasound (FEMUS) from the Royal College of Emergency Medicine (TBC)

Thoracic Ultrasound Level 1 from the Royal College of Radiologists (TBC)

Why do I need a Mentor?

Having attended a LUS introductory course you will need to undertake a certain number of supervised scans to ensure your technique is good enough to scan unsupervised. You will also need a mentor to oversee your final assessment/viva to gain your LUS accreditation.

Registered Mentors

Both the FUSIC and FAMUS webpages have searchable databases to help find a local mentor:

https://www.ics.ac.uk/ICS/ICS/FUSIC/FUSIC_find_mentors.aspx

<https://www.acutemedicine.org.uk/what-we-do/training-and-education/famus/famus-supervisors/>

The FUSIC, FAMUS, CACTUS and FEMUS programmes are almost identical in their structure which allows a person who is a mentor from one of the programmes to very easily apply and gain mentor status in another. So, if you're attempting to complete the FUSIC programme but can only find a local mentor from FAMUS you can ask that person to apply for FUSIC mentor status as well.

As it currently stands CACTUS, FEMUS and RCR Level 1 don't have searchable mentor databases. The best advice is to ask around within your own hospital or local hospitals to identify a mentor.

Potential Mentors

Within your place of work there may well be individuals who already have the skills and experience needed to become a mentor. Some may have years of experience but never formalised this and others may have gained their LUS accreditation in the past and never applied for mentor status. Mentor applications are **free** and the individuals merits are judged on a case by case basis.

Here is a list of clinical specialities and professions where potential LUS mentors may already exist:

Anaesthetics	Intensive Care Medicine	Acute Medicine	Respiratory Medicine
Radiology	Emergency Medicine	ACP's / ACCP's	Physiotherapy

Multiple mentors

If your mentor is only able / willing to complete part of your LUS training you are permitted to have more than one mentor during your training programme.

Unsupervised scans

Once you have completed your supervised scans your unsupervised scans can be reviewed by a mentor remotely if needed. Various platforms have are available to aid the sharing of recorded scans clips but always check with your own employer regarding the sharing of any anonymised patient information.

There include: <https://www.hocuspocus.org.uk/> or <https://www.sonoclipshare.com/>

Another option is gaining access to your employers inter-hospital Image Exchange Portal (IEP) system.

Bide your time

While attempting to secure a mentor it may also be a useful strategy to “bide your time” for two reasons:

1. Staff are constantly moving around the country and your new LUS mentor could be arriving in your hospital while you read this.
2. If someone at your place of work has recently gained their LUS accreditation then most of the above programmes allow them to become a mentor after at least 12 months of “on-going clinical experience”.

The Future

It is hoped that within the next year we will be able to launch an intensive 5 day LUS fellowship at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals which takes an experienced respiratory physiotherapists from LUS enthusiast to accredited within a working week. More information on this option will be released soon so keep an eye on my Twitter or sign up to the Physiotherapy Lung Ultrasound (+PLUS) group on Facebook.

Finally, due to COVID-19 many ultrasound companies and training programmes are looking to create new ways to support learners. As such, the possibility of virtual remote learning within the clinical environment really isn't too far away.

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