

Kim Ngú

Consultant Sonographer

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital



Duties

- Performing high-quality diagnostic ultrasound scans on patients, including obstetrical, gynaecological, abdominal, small parts, musculoskeletal and ultrasound-guided injection scans.
- Interpreting images and providing accurate, detailed, and timely reports to referring physicians.
- Maintaining and updating knowledge of new technologies and techniques in ultrasound imaging.
- Ensuring that equipment is properly maintained and in good working order.
- Communicating with patients to explain the scanning process and answer any questions they may have.
- Working collaboratively with other members of the healthcare team, including physicians, nurses, and physiotherapists.
- Maintaining patient confidentiality and adhering to all relevant privacy laws.
- Ensuring that the work environment is safe and meets all health and safety requirements.
- Participating in continuing education and professional development programs to stay current with industry standards and best practices.
- Promoting professional development and training opportunities for sonographers, both within your organization and in the wider industry.
- Ensuring that all imaging is performed in accordance with established protocols and guidelines. Being responsible for supervising and mentoring junior sonographers in the department

Career history

- Diagnostic radiographer
- Sonographer
- Senior Sonographer
- Consultant Sonographer

Setting up the role

What was the need for the role?

- There was a need for a establishing a senior MSK sonographer that would lead, guide and train the current MSK sonographers to perform more than just shoulder injections

Was it an established opportunity?

- The role was not established until I approached my line manager about applying for self-funded courses to be certified in musculoskeletal injections as a locum sonographer. My line manager then offered the opportunity for a permanent position within the department.

Did you apply for the role?

- The role was offered to me as an opportunity for a permanent position within the department; however it was still advertised to allow for fair and equal opportunities for other sonographers to apply. I still applied with the internal and external applications.

Were you the 1st in your department and develop the role

- I was the first in my department to have the position as Consultant Sonographer.

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Training for the role

Any post graduate study you have completed?

- I already had my Bachelor in Medical Radiation (Diagnostic Radiography) and my Graduate Diploma in Medical Sonography degrees from Australia when I applied.
- I have also completed my Masters in Medical Sonography (General) during my time as Consultant Sonographer, all with the University of South Australia.
- I also attended a certified course with The Ultrasound Site and received a Certificate in MSK Ultrasound Guided Injections.

What did the training involve?

- My training involved scanning with our MSK consultant radiologists as well as having concurrent clinics.
- During the consultant lists, I would observe and learn their techniques and had opportunities to ask questions.
- During our concurrent clinics, I would have more autonomy to scan and perform injections that I was confident with. If I had a trickier case, I was encouraged to ask for assistance from the consultant running the adjacent list, or any MSK consultant radiologist in the department.
- We developed a training protocol which stated how many procedures I had to observe, perform under supervision and perform yearly to remain competent.

Did you have a mentor?

- I was very fortunate to have many mentors during my role development. All the MSK consultant radiologist were supportive and encouraged my continuing professional development. In turn, i would mentor the specialist registrars that would begin their rotation in MSK ultrasound

How long did it take to develop the skills for this role?

- I already had a substantial amount of clinical experience in MSK ultrasound from my time in Australia. It did not take long for the MSK consultant radiologists to recognize my abilities in MSK ultrasound. After I obtained my Certificate in MSK Ultrasound-Guided Injections, it did not take long to gain clinical experience, because I was allocated 2 clinical lists to run concurrently with a MSK consultant, and I had at least 1 list rostered with a MSK consultant every fortnight. As I was having consistent clinical exposure, my training only took a few months, before the consultants signed my competency.

Role challenges

The consultant sonographer role comes with several challenges, including:

- **Technical expertise:** Keeping up with the latest advancements and techniques in ultrasound imaging, and ensuring that we remain current with their knowledge and skills.
- **Patient care:** Balancing technical expertise with patient care, ensuring that patients receive the highest level of care and comfort during ultrasound procedures.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Building and maintaining positive relationships with patients, colleagues, and medical professionals.
- **Leadership:** Managing and leading a team of MSK sonographers, ensuring that all staff are trained and competent in the use of ultrasound equipment and injection techniques.
- **Time management:** Juggling a heavy workload and managing our time effectively to meet the demands of the role.
- **Regulation compliance:** Ensuring that all procedures comply with regulatory standards and requirements, including PGDs, patient privacy, quality control, and data management.
- **Communication:** Effectively communicating complex medical information to patients and their families, as well as collaborating with other medical professionals to ensure the best outcomes for patients.





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Advice

- Pursue higher education: Consider pursuing a postgraduate degree in ultrasound or a related field to deepen your knowledge and skills.
- Gain clinical experience: Work in ultrasound imaging and seek opportunities to take on leadership roles, such as a lead or supervisor in your field.
- Stay current: Participate in ongoing professional development and training programs to stay up-to-date with the latest advancements and techniques in ultrasound imaging.
- Develop strong leadership skills: Focus on developing strong communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills to be an effective leader.
- Network with other professionals: Build relationships with other medical professionals, including other sonographers, radiologists, and physicians.
- Be patient: This is a challenging role that requires dedication, hard work, and perseverance. Be prepared to work hard and stay committed to your goal.

