

HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA  
PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR RADIOGRAPHY AND  
CLINICAL TECHNOLOGY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) RELATING TO  
APPLICATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL BOARD ULTRASOUND  
EXAMINATION

**FOREWORD:**

It is very important to read **ALL** the documents available on the RCT website (click on “Announcements” and “Examinations”) relating the special Board ultrasound examination. Full details are contained in the following documents:

1. Urgent notice regarding the applications for the special Board examination: ultrasound (Supervised Practice) - please check the website for the RCT Board. (Please note that some details contained in this notice may no longer be applicable).
2. FORM: 301 A, ***“Guidelines for the special board examination of qualified diagnostic radiographers to obtain approval to continue performing limited ultrasound practice areas, under supervision without being registered in the category: ultrasound”***
3. Form 184 (Ultrasound) - Application for once-off temporary accreditation of an ultrasound clinical training facility in radiography.
4. FORM 301 B, Application for the special Board ultrasound examination.
5. Logbook.

**N.B: PLEASE NOTE:** If you are not eligible, **DO NOT APPLY** as your application will not be considered and you will forfeit the application fee.

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

According to the *Health Professions Act, 1974*, and *Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practitioners registered under the Health Professions Act, 1974* the following words and expressions are defined as follows:

<sup>1</sup> **“Supervision”** - means the acceptance of liability by a supervising practitioner for the acts of another practitioner.

<sup>2</sup> **“To be “supervised”** - means to perform professional acts that are overseen by a supervising practitioner who by supervising, accepts liability for the acts of the supervised practitioner and ensures the required standard of care of the patient.

**Supervision in the context of the category of diagnostic radiographers who will be permitted by the Board to continue practicing in limited ultrasound practice areas under supervision** – means performing under the supervision of a practitioner who:

- is physically on site in the department at the time of the clinical encounter to oversee and accept liability for the professional acts of the radiographer, **OR**
- is available via telephone or Picture Archiving Communication Systems (PACS) to oversee and accepts liability for the professional acts of the radiographer.

Such radiographers may not perform Ultrasound acts, while preparing for the special Board ultrasound examination **and** after obtaining approval by the Board to continue performing in limited ultrasound practice areas, **without being supervised** (as defined above) by a practitioner with the

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appropriate qualification that is approved by the Board – in this case the supervisor should be a qualified, registered sonographer or a radiologist.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The questions and answers that follow, are based on the various queries that the Board has received regarding the special Board examination. They do not cover all aspects. For FULL details please consult ALL the documents and forms on the website. Applicants must fulfil ALL the criteria for eligibility.

## **THE EXAMINATION**

### **1. What is the special Board ultrasound examination?**

a) The special Board ultrasound examination:

- is a **once-off** amnesty for a **SPECIFIC** group of diagnostic radiographers (see 2. below) to enable them to obtain written approval from the Board to continue performing in limited ultrasound practice areas under supervision; and
- is a strategy to regulate the practice of Ultrasound, thereby allowing this specific group of radiographers to practice legally with the written approval of the Board; and
- will only allow **restricted** practice under supervision, in limited areas within the field of ultrasound under specific conditions. Such radiographers will not be permitted to practice ultrasound independently, nor will they be able to open a private ultrasound practice, nor may they be employed in a diagnostic private practice owned by a diagnostic radiographer or an ultrasound private practice owned by a sonographer.

b) Further, the special Board ultrasound examination is:

- NOT** a qualification – it is an examination only for the purpose of obtaining Board approval to practice.
- NOT** open to all radiographers – only a specific group (see 2 below) may apply.
- NOT** a course/ bridging course – it is a **once-off** examination (theory, clinical, image evaluation and a logbook) to assess, evaluate and verify knowledge and clinical competency.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

### **2. Who may apply for the Special Board Ultrasound Examination?**

a) **ONLY** Diagnostic radiographers who qualified **AFTER** 31 December 1993; **AND**

- are **still currently performing ultrasound acts** as part of their employment contract/ job description, without having obtained the RCT Board approved formal US qualification; **and**
- commenced** practicing US during the period 1 January 1994 and 31 December 2019; **and**
- are not deemed to be registered with HPCSA in the category or field of practice of US; **and**
- have received some type of informal training (includes- short course training obtained at a higher education institution, workshops, CPD activities) or in-house training or have attended an Ultrasound short course (locally or in another country).

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Current employment must be in a state hospital or private radiologist owned practice. Employment **may not** be in a diagnostic private practice owned by a diagnostic radiographer or an ultrasound private practice owned by a sonographer.

### **EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

#### **3. Who does the special Board ultrasound examination NOT apply to?**

a) Diagnostic radiographers who:

- have already obtained an RCT Board approved US qualification at an accredited Higher Education Institution (e.g. ND; Rad (US) / BTech: Rad (US); **and**
- are already registered with the HPCSA in the category of US.

b) Diagnostic radiographers who failed or de-registered from an RCT Board approved US qualification offered at Higher Education Institution (e.g. ND; Rad (US) / BTech: Rad (US) and are not currently performing ultrasound acts as part of their employment contract or job description.

c) Diagnostic radiographers who:

- qualified before 1 January 1994; and
- are **currently employed and currently practicing** Ultrasound.

These radiographers are “deemed to be registered in the category of Diagnostic, or Diagnostic and Ultrasound” according to Regulation 2(1)(e) of the *Regulations relating to qualifications for the registration of radiographers* and may therefore continue this current practice.

d) Diagnostic radiographers who **commenced** practicing Ultrasound after 31 December 2019 – such radiographers must cease this practice with immediate effect.

e) Diagnostic radiographers who are **not currently** practicing US as part of the employment contract or job description.

f) Diagnostic radiographers who qualified after 1 January 1994 and who previously performed US but are **not currently** employed. Current employment must be in a state hospital or private radiologist owned practice. Employment may not be in a diagnostic private practice owned by a diagnostic radiographer or an ultrasound private practice owned by a sonographer.

g) A diagnostic radiographer who is performing breast ultrasound but who has not obtained a Board approved Mammography Certificate from an approved higher education institution and registered such with the HPCSA i.e., a diagnostic radiographer who is not a qualified mammographer.

h) Any radiographers trained in Diagnostic, Radiation Therapy and Nuclear Medicine who may be aspiring to perform ultrasound acts without having obtained the RCT Board approved formal US qualification.

Note: Only diagnostic radiographers in a) and c) above may perform ultrasound.

## **GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **What procedure should I follow to apply for the special Board ultrasound examination for supervised practice?**

1. Access the Professional Board for Radiography and Clinical Technology (RCT Board) website, click on “Announcements” and download: FORM: 301 A (Guidelines), FORM: 301 B (Application) and FORM: 184 (Accreditation of clinical facility).
2. Complete FORM: 301 B and attach ALL relevant supporting documents.
3. Forward FORM: 184 to your current employer who must apply for temporary accreditation of the clinical facility where you are **currently employed**, confirm your employment details, and attach all supporting documents.
4. Pay the administration of R3000 (three thousand rand) into the banking details provided on the application form – FORM: 301 B.
5. Email the completed FORM: 301 B and completed FORM: 184 together with proof of payment of the administration fee and all supporting documentation for both forms to [rtctexams@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:rtctexams@hpcsa.co.za). Please note – it is critical that you provide ALL the required documentation with your application.
6. Wait for the outcome of the special Board ultrasound examination Committee regarding confirmation of your eligibility to undertake the Special Board examination that will be communicated to you via email by the Deputy Company Secretary of the Board.

### **How long will it take the Deputy Company Secretary of the Board to provide feedback regarding my application status?**

At least six weeks after the successful submission of your application.

### **How many special Board ultrasound examinations will be offered by the Board?**

Practitioners will only have this once-off opportunity to undertake the special Board ultrasound examination (See the Guidelines for more details).

### **In the case that my application status was successful, what are other timelines that would be involved before I can undertake the special Board ultrasound examination?**

It will take approximately six weeks from the day your application was successfully submitted to the Deputy Secretary of the Board for you to receive confirmation of acceptance for the examination. However, you need to adhere to the closing dates for applications stipulated by the Board.

1. Please note that applications for special Board ultrasound examination will close on 28 February 2021.
2. The Deputy Secretary of the Board will send you an email with your application status within six weeks of receipt on condition that both were completed correctly, proof of payment of administration fee and that, all supporting documentation were attached. Please note, the administration fee is non-refundable regardless of the status of your application, so do not apply if you do not meet ALL the eligibility criteria.

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3. If your application to undertake the special Board ultrasound examination is approved you will, be expected to pay the Board Examination fee of **R2860** (two thousand, eight hundred and sixty rand) and email proof of payment to [rtctexams@hpcsa.co.za](mailto:rtctexams@hpcsa.co.za) within two weeks.
4. The Deputy Secretary of the Board will send you an email confirmation of the exam booking and details of the exam date, venues, and time within two weeks of receipt of proof of payment of the Board Examination fee.

### **How will I know what to study in preparation for the examination?**

Detailed information regarding the exit level, learning areas, plus a list of recommended reading material is included in the ***“Guidelines for the special board examination of qualified diagnostic radiographers to obtain approval to continue performing limited ultrasound practice areas, under supervision without being registered in the category: ultrasound”***

### **What does it mean to work under supervision? (See definitions above)**

While you are preparing for the examination and once you have passed the exam and been granted written approval by the Board to continue performing ultrasound in limited practice areas under supervision, you will not be permitted to perform ultrasound acts independently or without supervision, nor will you be allowed to open your own private ultrasound practice or perform ultrasound in a private diagnostic practice owned by a diagnostic radiographer even if you are that diagnostic radiographer. This means that you must be supervised by a registered sonographer or a radiologist for the entire time that you practice ultrasound in your working career – regardless of whether you change your place of employment or remain where you are now.

You will need to be supervised by either a qualified sonographer registered under the category Ultrasound or under the supervision of the radiologist. The name of your supervisor must be submitted to the Board.

### **How will I be registered after I pass the special Board ultrasound examination?**

You will continue to be registered as Diagnostic: Independent Practice. Once the Board provides you with written approval to continue performing in your selected limited ultrasound practice areas, you will be able to perform only in such practice areas under supervision. You will not be registered in the category: Ultrasound and you may therefore not be called a sonographer.

### **Will the board monitor supervision of diagnostic radiographers who are granted Board approval to continue performing in limited ultrasound practice areas under supervision after they have passed the Special Board Examination?**

Yes. The Board will have a list of practitioners and their limited practice area/s plus their designated supervisors and will, where needed, use all available resources, including the office of the inspectorate, to perform on site audits. If your supervisor changes you must inform the Board Deputy Company Secretary in writing immediately so that your records remain up to date. Your current listed supervisor will remain liable for your work until the Board is notified of a new supervisor.

**What will happen to me if I am caught practicing Ultrasound without having the required supervision?**

You will be deemed to be working outside your scope for limited ultrasound practice under supervision and the board will take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with Chapter IV of the Act.

**What areas of practice will be covered in the Special Board Ultrasound Examination?**

Please consult the Guidelines and Logbook.

**If I am performing breast ultrasound can I apply for the Special Exam?**

You may only apply if you meet all the eligibility criteria and you are a qualified Mammographer, registered as a Diagnostic radiographer: Independent Practice and, you do not own a diagnostic private practice.

**If I fail the Special Board Examination in the Category Ultrasound, will I be given a supplementary opportunity?**

Yes, but you only have one chance provided you qualify for the supplementary examination.

**What will happen to me if I fail the special Board ultrasound examination twice?**

It means you will then not be allowed to practice in the category of Ultrasound, and you will have to cease practicing Ultrasound immediately. You will then continue practising as a Diagnostic radiographer under the category of Diagnostic radiography as per your registration status.

**How long will it take the Board to communicate the results of the special Board ultrasound examination?**

The Deputy Secretary will send you an email with your results at least eight weeks after undertaking the last component of the special Board ultrasound examination.

**Can I appeal my results and request a remark where indicated?**

Yes, the procedure to request a remark for the theory is included in the *“Guidelines for the special board examination of qualified diagnostic radiographers to obtain approval to continue performing limited ultrasound practice areas, under supervision without being registered in the category: ultrasound”*

**Will the Board consider administering the special Board ultrasound examination again in 2022?**

No, this is a once-off amnesty that will not be repeated. After this any radiographer who wishes to practice Ultrasound will need to obtain a formal Board approved Ultrasound qualification from one of the accredited higher education institutions offering Ultrasound in South Africa.

**If I used to perform, ultrasound acts without having obtained the RCT Board approved formal ultrasound qualification but later stopped, can I approach any sonographer, radiologist, medical practitioner or specialist practitioner in their respective practices to supervise me for the Special Board Examination?**

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NO. Employment history will be checked and verified by the Board. You must have been practicing ultrasound since before 31 December 2019 and still be currently performing ultrasound.

**What will happen to me if I apply using false information to gain entry into the Special Board ultrasound examination?**

Your application will be rejected, you will forfeit your application fee and the Board will take the appropriate disciplinary action against you.

**What if a desperate applicant pays me to supervise them for the special Board ultrasound examination?**

All practitioners have the responsibility to report fraud. If you agree to this act of fraud, then the Board can act against you for unethical conduct.

**I have a formal Ultrasound qualification approved by professional regulating bodies overseas and I am looking to practice in South Africa, can I apply for the special Board ultrasound examination?**

No, This Board Exam will only allow you to perform limited ultrasound under supervision. Please follow the procedure for the Board's Foreign Qualification examinations.

**What is meant by informal training?**

This includes training that did not result in the obtaining of a formal, Board approved qualification that is registerable with the Board. Some examples include: Workshops, CPD activities, in-house training, short courses (including those obtained internationally and at local universities) etc.

**Does the age of my training matter – if I did my informal training long ago?**

No, (provided you are still practicing ultrasound) not for the purposes of this exam as you will be thoroughly assessed and evaluated for knowledge and competency. It will, however, be your responsibility to ensure that you continuously develop yourself professionally within your fields of practice. In this case it will be both diagnostic and ultrasound if you practice both.

**If I did a short course offered at an accredited Higher Education Institution but the course was not approved for registration by the RCT Board, do I still need to apply for the special Board ultrasound examination?**

Yes. If you do not write this Special Board examination, you will need to cease practicing Ultrasound immediately. (See criteria for eligibility)

**If I did a short course with a reputable institution overseas that had a clinical component that was done in SA would this count in my favour, meaning will it allow me to be exempt from taking this special Board ultrasound examination?**

No, if you wish to continue practicing Ultrasound you will need to write the special Board ultrasound examination – provided you meet all the other eligibility criteria. If you do not write this examination, you will need to cease practicing Ultrasound immediately.

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**NOTE:**

**It is important that Diagnostic radiographers who wish to pursue a profession in ultrasound and register with the RCT Board in the category Ultrasound: Independent Practice, must obtain an RCT Board approved US qualification at an accredited Higher Education Institution.**

Dated: 09 February 2021