

Using the *National Undergraduate Curriculum in Surgery* – a summary

How to use this summary document

This document is intended to support students to identify and pursue their own learning needs, and to help those who train students with planning. It is summarised from the *National Undergraduate Curriculum in Surgery* and should be read in conjunction with this. This document summarises the recommended topics (with learning objectives for each) and key skills. These are relevant to all students, irrespective of their subsequent career path.

For students

Before starting in a placement, you should identify which areas to focus on. Remember the topics common to all surgical specialties. You will need to refer to the curriculum for the learning objectives of each topic. There are some topics that you will not cover easily because your placements, so you should find a way to cover these too.

For those teaching students

Please familiarise yourself with the topics that all future doctors are expected to know pertaining to your specialty and those common to all specialties. You should also consider the list of procedures and skills that are expected. You may need to run separate skills or clinical examination teaching sessions to address these. You may wish to consider where particular learning opportunities are needed for the topics that are unlikely to be covered. The conditions listed are the minimum for any future doctor. The curriculum has additional resources for those aiming to be surgeons.

For all

The RCS guide *Learning in Operating Theatres* and the section of the *National Undergraduate Curriculum in Surgery* entitled *Ways of teaching and learning in surgery* may be helpful. All are available on the website: www.rcseng.ac.uk.

Please also refer to:	www.rcseng.ac.uk section	Link
<i>National Undergraduate Curriculum in Surgery</i>	Careers	www.rcseng.ac.uk/national-undergraduate-curriculum-in-surgery
<i>Learning in Operating Theatres</i>	Publications	www.rcseng.ac.uk/learning-in-operating-theatres
<i>Avoiding Unconscious Bias - a guide for surgeons.</i> How to welcome people and focus on the task not the individual	Publications	www.rcseng.ac.uk/avoiding-unconscious-bias
<i>Mentoring guide</i> Simple practical guide – support outside the training structures.	Publications	https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/library-and-publications/college-publications/docs/gsp-mentoring/
<i>Careers in Surgery</i>	Careers	https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/careers-in-surgery/careers-support/careers-events-and-resources/resources-and-links/

Interventional procedures and practical skills

The section on interventional procedures and practical skills lists the key skills and interventional procedures that should be covered. You should review this list at every placement as most can be addressed in any specialty.

Essential interventional procedures, as mandated by the GMC (learning objectives 24-31 from *Tomorrow's Doctors*):

1	24. Use of local anaesthetics
2	25. Skin suturing
3	26. Wound care and basic wound dressing
4	28. Giving information about the procedure, obtaining and recording consent, and ensuring appropriate aftercare procedure.
5	29. Hand washing (including surgical 'scrubbing up')
6	30. Use of personal protective equipment (gloves, gowns, masks)
7	31. Infection control in relation to procedures
8	32. Safe disposal of clinical waste, needles and other 'sharps'

Examinations and other essential practical skills:

9	Removal of stitches and staples
10	Applications of dressings and bandages
11	Examination of a lump (e.g. its size, consistency, location, mobility and whether it is tender, pulsatile or transilluminates)
12	Assessment of a wound
13	Examination for fitness for surgery (chest, heart, neck and mouth opening)
14	Examination of the abdomen
15	P.R. examination
16	Examination of the groin
17	Examination of the scrotum
18	Examination of the soft tissues of the neck
19	Examination of pulses
20	Examination of the breast
21	Examination of the hip
22	Examination of the knee
23	Examination of the back
24	Examination of the ear
25	Examination of the nose
26	Examination of the throat

The key surgical conditions

		Usual surgical specialty	Also seen in	
1	Abdominal pain	Gen		
2	Abdominal swelling	Gen		
3	Change in bowel habit / rectal bleeding	Gen		
4	Vomiting blood	Gen		
5	Difficulty swallowing / dyspepsia /dysphagia	Gen		
6	Jaundice	Gen		
7	Lumps in groin	Gen		
8	Lumps in scrotum / scrotal pain	Urol		
9	Pain in loin	Urol		
10	Urinary retention or flow obstruction	Urol		
11	Haematuria (including stones and tumours)	Urol		
12	Leg ulceration	Vasc	Neuro	T&O
13	Painful and/or paralysed limb	Vasc	Neuro	T&O
14	Breast lumps and nipple discharge	Gen (Breast)	Plast	
15	Lumps in the neck	ENT	MaxF	
16	Nose bleeds (epistaxis)	ENT	MaxF	
17	Ear discharge / pain	ENT	MaxF	
18	Deafness	ENT	MaxF	
19	Acute airway obstruction in adults and children	ENT	MaxF	
20	Upper airway infection and rhino-sinusitis	ENT	MaxF	
21	Fractures or dislocations with displacement or wound	T&O	Plast	
22	Fractures without displacement	T&O		
23	Swollen painful joint	T&O		
24	Back pain and/or sciatica (including cauda equina)	Neuro	T&O	
25	Peripheral nerve injuries / palsies	Neuro	Plast	T&O
26	Raised intracranial pressure / Intracranial blood clots and intracranial mass lesions	Neuro	Gen	
27	Limping child	PaedS	T&O	
28	Groin lump in child	PaedS		
29	Consent for surgery including mental capacity	ALL		
30	Caring for the post-operative patient, including nutrition, enhanced recovery and the critically ill patient; advice re return to activities	ALL		
31	Understanding wound healing	ALL	Plast	
32	Trauma including head injury	ALL		
33	Sepsis and infection	ALL		
34	Surgical safety (WHO checklist, minimising complications, errors, communication and team-working)	ALL		
35	Caring for the patient before and after surgery including fitness	ALL	Cardio	

Paediatric surgery: printable one-page summary of key conditions

1. Common to all specialties

29	Consent for surgery including mental capacity
30	Caring for the post-operative patient, including nutrition, enhanced recovery and the critically ill patient; advice re return to activities
31	Understanding wound healing
32	Trauma including head injury
33	Sepsis and infection
34	Surgical safety (WHO checklist, minimising complications, errors, communication and team-working)
35	Caring for the patient before and after surgery including fitness

2. Paediatric surgery

27	Limping child
28	Groin lump in child

Additional points to note

- No student will do a placement in every specialty, yet all 35 essential conditions need to be covered. It may be that this placement is their best opportunity to come across other essential conditions, or their timetable could be adapted to allow them to focus on a patient with a key condition, or to have teaching about this.
- A number of basic surgical principles can be taught, for example: [from main curriculum]
 - Concepts of surgery: The practicalities of operations include removing tissue, releasing collections of fluid, unblocking vessels or other tubes, repairing tissue and rearranging anatomy.
 - Every doctor must be able to discuss in general terms the risks and benefits of different courses of action and understand complications.
- There is overlap with other interventional specialties, and surgery is linked with anaesthesia, interventional radiology and emergency medicine.

If you have any comments about this document or the *National Undergraduate Curriculum in Surgery*, please contact the College via careers@rcseng.ac.uk