



Basic Surgical Skills (BSS)

Course Delivery Guide

This guide is for Course Coordinators. It leads you, step by step, through what you need to do to run the Intercollegiate Basic Surgical Skills (BSS) course. We recommend that you also read the Course Handbook, which details more general regulations for running Royal College of Surgeons courses.

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4-6 months before the course

Book appropriate facilities and audio-visual equipment

- A well-lit teaching room with space for participants to sit in pairs at large tables.
- A nearby room suitable for the preparation of instruments and animal tissue, including:
 - Refrigeration at 4°C for storing tissue.
 - Facilities for the disposal of tissue, sharps and other materials.
- A suitable area for laparoscopic stations, ideally separate from the main room.
- Nearby washing facilities.
- A separate area for refreshments.
- A separate room for faculty meetings.
- Audio-visual equipment including a large monitor and DVD player on which to play the course DVD.

See Faculty Handbook and Technical Guide for detailed information on equipment and room set-up.

Recruit Faculty

- **Faculty who have not taught on or directed BSS before must meet the eligibility requirements on the Faculty Eligibility Sheet (see Appendix 2).**
- Minimum ratio of one faculty to every four participants – this includes the Course Director, although we strongly recommend the Course Director is supernumerary.
- Minimum ratio of one consultant to every six participants, *not* including the Course Director.
- The Course Director must attend the entire course. Faculty should also attend the entire course.
- When booking faculty on non-training grades, ensure they have an equivalent level of experience as doctors in eligible training grades.
- We will not approve your course if you don't have enough eligible faculty.
- Faculty should not receive payment but the Regional Centre is expected to cover the cost of travel and subsistence.
- Faculty that have sanctions imposed on them by a medical regulatory body may not be eligible to teach on RCS courses. Please contact us for advice.

3 months before the course

Gain course approval and advertise on our website

- Submit a Course Approval Form.
- Submit a Provisional Faculty List:
 - Only include eligible faculty who have confirmed they are available to teach.
 - Record new faculty in the appropriate section of the form.
 - Record any observers intending to become faculty in the appropriate section of the form.
- Once we have received both a Course Approval Form and an acceptable Provisional Faculty List, we will send you a letter of approval with a course serial number: please quote this number on all correspondence.

Order materials

- Request a Purchase Order (PO):
 - The PO amount must exactly match the materials order form, including postage but not including VAT.
- Submit a Materials Order Form:
 - We cannot send materials until we receive the actual PO (a number is not sufficient).
 - Order the number of packs you require for participants: if you have any packs left over from previous courses you can use these before you order more.
 - Order a Faculty Handbook and DVD for any observers intending to become faculty.
 - You can order for more than one course at a time: up to approximately 50 books will only incur one postage charge.
 - Materials usually take up to five working days to arrive. If they haven't arrived within ten working days, contact us and we will investigate.
- When the materials arrive, check that the order is complete.

Recruit participants

- The course is most suitable for Foundation doctors although it is open to any FY1 – CT2 trainees or equivalent SAS grades.
- Medical students are not eligible to attend.
- Number of participants: maximum 24.
- Take participant bookings:
 - Collect the following information: Title / First name / Last name / Post & Grade / Specialty / Workplace / GMC number (or date of birth for applicants from overseas) / email address.
- When your course is full, let us know and we will show it as 'fully booked' on our website.

Create a draft course programme

- Use the template provided.
- Add course date and rooms.

4-6 weeks before the course

Send participants a welcome pack

Include:

- Participant Handbook and DVD
- Welcome letter, giving details of venue and registration
- Provisional programme

Send faculty / observers a welcome pack

Include:

- Welcome letter, giving details of venue
- Provisional programme
- Faculty handbook and DVD for observers intending to become faculty

Organise glove supplies

- Check required glove size with participants.
- Order appropriate quantities or pass to Technician to order.

Finalise the programme with the Course Director

- Add faculty names to list on p2 and initials next to the sessions they will be teaching.
- If requested by Course Director, inform faculty which sessions they will be teaching.

Arrange catering

- Organise for refreshments and lunch at appropriate times (see course programme).

1-2 weeks before the course

Prepare Assessment forms

- Print one Assessment and Feedback form per participant plus some spare copies.
- Print one OSAT mark sheet per participant (keep these separate from the Assessment and Feedback forms).

Prepare participant and faculty course packs

- Name badge
- Final course programme
- SCOPE online evaluation guide
- List of participants (faculty pack only)
- How to claim expenses (faculty pack only)

Email participants to ensure they have received the materials

- Remind them to read the handbook and watch the DVD.
- Remind them to bring a pen and their handbook with them to the course.

On the day of the course

Day 1

- Load the DVD and check the AV is working.
- Put one Assessment and Feedback form on each participant's seat (have some spare pens available). You may wish to attach each form to a clipboard for ease of use.
- Do NOT give out the OSAT mark sheets.
- Register participants: ask them to sign against their name.
- Give out course packs to participants and faculty.
- Ensure the Course Director provides health and safety information.

Day 2

- Register participants: ask them to sign against their name.
- Check the DVD is set to continue from the previous day.
- Pass the OSAT mark sheets to the Course Director. Note that the OSAT is a summative assessment and participants should not be allowed to see the mark sheet either before or after the test.
- At approximately 15:00hrs, deal with Assessment forms:
 - Check all the Assessment and Feedback forms have been completed
 - Pass to the Course Director to assign an overall score
 - Photocopy each Assessment and Feedback form – give the original back to the participant and keep the photocopy in-house for future reference
 - Collect the OSAT forms: do NOT copy and do NOT give back to participants

Within one week of the course

Deal with post-course paperwork

- Submit a Final Faculty List.
- Submit a Final Participant List:
 - Include the OSAT scores (/17) and Assessment and Feedback overall score (/5)
- If a participant has not reached a satisfactory standard, ask the Course Director to complete an Unsatisfactory Completion of BSS form. Submit:
 - The Unsatisfactory Completion form
 - A copy of the OSAT mark sheet
 - A copy of the Assessment and Feedback form
- Store the following course paperwork for a minimum of five years:
 - Signed registration lists
 - Final faculty List
 - Participant List
 - Programme
 - Assessment and Feedback forms
 - OSAT mark sheets
 - Unsatisfactory Completion forms

Email faculty

- Thank them for their time.
- Encourage them to complete the SCOPE online evaluation.

Email participants

- Send the SCOPE online evaluation guide. Remind them to complete it within four weeks in order to obtain their certificates.
- As a general rule, the course will be listed on SCOPE under the name of the venue (e.g. the hospital). However, on occasion it may be listed under the name of the Regional Centre (e.g. the Trust).

Deal with certificates

- RCS Education will send certificates to you 5-6 weeks after you submit the post-course paperwork.
- If you submit the paperwork late, the certificates will be delayed.
- Tell us within 10 days of receiving the certificates if there are any errors or omissions and we will reprint them free of charge (if you tell us after 10 days, we will charge you £50).
- Send certificates to participants or arrange for them to be collected. If sending, we recommend using a Do Not Bend envelope.
- Participants who did not complete the SCOPE online evaluation will not receive a certificate. They can apply for one through the RCS website at a cost of £10.
- RCS Education is unable to provide confirmation of attendance other than the certificate. If a participant requires evidence of attendance prior to the certificate being issued, the regional centre should provide an appropriate letter or email.

Appendix 1 – Fact Sheet

Basic Surgical Skills (BSS) is a two day course designed to introduce surgical trainees to safe surgical practice within a controlled workshop environment. It aims to teach, assess and certify the ability of trainees to use safe and sound surgical techniques that are common to all forms of surgery.

Course Content

This course covers three main areas:

- Open surgery
- Electrosurgery
- Endoscopic surgery

Learning Outcomes

Open surgery:

- Understand and practise safe operating techniques, gowning and gloving
- Understand the characteristics and handling of surgical instruments
- Understand and practise the correct techniques for laying safe surgical knots
- Understand that careful and sound aspects of technique are more important than simple manual dexterity or speed
- Understand the principles of handling tissues and recognise differing requirements for differing sites (e.g. skin, bowel, abdominal wall, vessels and tendons)
- Understand the principles of assessment and primary surgical management of infected and contaminated soft tissues

Electrosurgery:

- Understand the principles behind the practical and safe use of electrosurgery devices

Endoscopic surgery:

- Understand the differences between open and endoscopic surgery, including the manipulation of instruments in a three-dimensional surgical environment while viewing a remote two-dimensional image
- Practise visuospatial awareness involved in depth cueing and the 'fulcrum' effect of instrument manipulation

Course Format

- Short introductory presentations for each topic, including step-by-step demonstrations with an emphasis on the '4 stage' technique of teaching a practical skill
- Small group workstations to focus on basic skills and techniques
- Hands-on practice with review sessions to consolidate skills
- Continuous formative feedback and close work with faculty

Assessment

- Formative assessment: participants complete an Assessment and Feedback form, which is reviewed and scored by faculty. Faculty assist with identifying participants' strengths and weaknesses and give guidance on individual performance.
- Summative assessment: Faculty conduct a formal Objective Structural Assessment of Technical skill (OSAT).

Pre-course work

- Read the handbook and watch the DVD.

Appendix 2 – Faculty Eligibility

Criteria	New Course Director	New Faculty
Post and Grade	Consultant surgeon	Consultant surgeon, surgical trainee ST3 and above or SAS equivalent
Essential	Be an experienced member of BSS faculty ¹	Have observed all sessions of an RCS approved BSS course ¹
	Have attended the Training the Trainers: Developing Teaching Skills course, or equivalent	
	Have a real commitment to the BSS course and its role in the early training of a surgeon	
	Take responsibility for running the course and be present throughout the course	
	Have been given approval by RCS to act as a BSS Course Director	
	Be able to commit to teaching at least once per year	Be able to commit to teaching at least once per year
Desirable	n/a	Have attended the RCS Training the Trainers: Developing Teaching Skills course, or equivalent

¹ Taught/observed courses must be approved RCS courses not local courses with the same name.