

Resuscitation Council UK position statement – alternative resuscitation courses

Revised June 2025

Executive Summary

Resuscitation Council UK is the UK's authoritative body for resuscitation standards and training and publication of the national Resuscitation Guidelines. RCUK's courses are aligned with these guidelines to ensure they are up to date with the best evidence-based clinical and teaching practices.

Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) recognises the current challenges faced by the NHS and course centres with increasing workforce pressures and challenging budgets.

RCUK accredited courses provide assurance that:

- All course resources and manuals have been expertly written by national and international experts and quality assured.
- Course content is mapped to the training curriculum for speciality trainees.
- Qualifications are recognisable, transferable, and valid for four years (ILS/PILS for one year).
- RCUK's instructors are specially trained and qualified to equip staff with the essential skills to care for deteriorating patients or those having a cardiac arrest.
- There is continued investment in developing new courses and updated course materials to deliver training more efficiently and cost-effectively.

We cannot offer similar quality control guarantees for other resuscitation courses; this would be a matter for employers to validate and may result in a potential increase in local training.

More information on how RCUK's courses, guidelines and quality standards can support your resuscitation service can be found within our **supporting your delivery of a high-quality and safe resuscitation services** document.

The benefit of RCUK Courses

Resuscitation Council UK is the UK's authoritative body for resuscitation standards, training and publishes the national Resuscitation Guidelines. RCUK's courses and course resources are aligned to these guidelines and continually reviewed by national and international subject matter experts to ensure they are up to date with best evidence-based practice.

RCUK's qualifications are recognised and transferable throughout the UK and Europe and are valid for four years (ILS and PILS for one year). The holder of any RCUK certificate has achieved a standard defined by RCUK. The tight quality control applied to the course programmes, teaching materials, instructors, and assessments assures this standard.

All our course centres are subject to quality assurance assessment by RCUK regional representatives/course assessors. Our regional representatives provide additional local support and knowledge for course centres and foster strong networks for instructors within their regions, allowing best practices to be shared.

RCUK courses involve a subject-specific manual written by national and international experts; additionally, some courses have access to high-quality online learning resources. These course resources provide all the essential knowledge so that time can be devoted to essential skills training. The course manual and content are mapped to the training curriculum for speciality trainees who would be expected to be involved in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. All the course materials and assessment tools have been robustly tested, and this material is copyrighted and cannot be used outside of RCUK courses. The Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health (RCPCH) also endorses our EPALS course.

High-quality training in resuscitation requires experienced and trained instructors who are available to teach and assess the practical training necessary to equip staff with the skills essential to care for patients who are deteriorating or have a cardiac arrest. Their skills and experience benefit both their employers and patients. Qualified RCUK instructors are committed to delivering our courses and are less likely to teach on local resuscitation courses when there is no standardisation or recognition for this training. All RCUK instructors have access to RCUK instructor days and CPD, which focuses on delivering up-to-date, evidence-based best teaching practices. It also allows instructors to learn from each other and provides networking opportunities.

RCUK is continuing to invest considerable resources in developing new course materials to enable training to be delivered more efficiently and cost-effectively, e.g., the updated ALS recertification course. This will reduce the time staff need to be away from their workplace.

RCUK only receives £30.65 for each candidate registration on our advanced courses (e.g. ALS, EPALS, NLS), and the manual cost is £34.18 (NLS £18.86). Any additional cost charged to candidates is retained by the Trust/training provider or those administering the course and reflects the additional local costs of providing the training.

RCUK encourages any Trust/organisation to contact us if any local support is needed to deliver our courses. More information on how RCUK's courses, guidelines and quality standards can support your resuscitation service can be found within our **supporting your delivery of a high-quality and safe resuscitation services** document.

Alternative courses

Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) recognises the current challenges faced by the NHS and course centres with increasing workforce pressures and challenging budgets.

In response to these challenges, some NHS Trusts/training providers may consider developing their own alternative resuscitation courses. This may help centres with their compliance in the short term, but in the long term, non-standardised training and assessment may not be cost-effective for the reasons outlined below.

RCUK's course qualifications are recognised and transferable, whereas local organisations' certificates are not; therefore, Trusts will need to ensure an individual's training aligns with the current

Resuscitation Guidelines and meets the needs of their patients. The holder of any RCUK certificate provides reassurance that an individual has achieved a standard defined by RCUK, and this process is governed by tight quality controls. All RCUK course materials and assessment tools have been robustly tested and are written by national and international experts; additionally, our course materials are mapped to the training curriculum for speciality trainees who would be expected to be involved in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. To avoid breaking copyright, Trusts/training providers cannot use RCUK training materials for their courses.

Since we have no such information or quality control over local training standards, we cannot offer similar guarantees. This would be a matter for individual employers to validate, agree and recognise; this may result in a potential duplication in local training as each organisation will need to ensure high-quality standards are maintained.

NHS England

Within England, NHS England (NHSE) (formerly HEE) has published guidance (updated 1 April 2023) for training of adult resuscitation skills specifically for **postgraduate doctors in training**. The rationale for producing this guidance is that the General Medical Council has instructed that named courses are removed from all curricula for postgraduate medical training. NHSE recommends that a blended learning approach should generally be used for initial training in adult advanced life support to help minimise the amount of face-to-face training and assessment to save on faculty time and costs. The RCUK eALS course fully matches this criterion.

RCUK welcomes the updated guidance which clarifies the position around the funding of ALS courses.

From August 2024 the amount reimbursed is usually capped at £300.

RCUK also welcomes the guidance within the document for funding instructor course places for those participants who have been recommended to attend and where it is specifically documented in their Professional Development Plan (PDP).

Whilst RCUK cannot mandate how much course centres charge for their courses, centres should be mindful of charging a reasonable fee to cover the cost of the course. As per the course regulations, any profit made from RCUK provider courses should only be used for purposes directly related to resuscitation.

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