

Advanced Life Support Course

Fact sheet



Background

The Resuscitation Council (UK) Advanced Life Support (ALS) course is a standardised national course teaching evidence-based resuscitation guidelines and skills to healthcare professionals in the United Kingdom. The ALS course has also been adopted by the European Resuscitation Council (ERC) and the Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC).

Learning outcomes

The ALS course teaches the knowledge and skills required to:

- recognise and treat the deteriorating patient using a structured ABCDE approach
- treat cardiac and/or respiratory arrest, including starting CPR, manual defibrillation, life-threatening arrhythmias, and post resuscitation care
- care for the deteriorating patient or patient in cardiac and/or respiratory arrest in special circumstances such as anaphylaxis, and pregnancy
- lead a team, work as a team member, and use structured communication skills including giving an effective handover.

Who should attend?

The ALS provider course is designed for healthcare professionals who would be expected to apply the skills taught as part of their clinical duties, or to teach them on a regular basis. Appropriate participants include doctors, and nurses working in critical care areas (e.g. ED, CCU, ICU, HDU, operating theatres, acute medical admissions units) or in the resuscitation / medical emergency team, and paramedics.

All applicants must hold a current clinical appointment and professional healthcare qualification or be in training for a professional healthcare qualification.

Medical students, nurses and other healthcare providers not covered in the groups above should be encouraged to complete the Immediate Life Support (ILS) course. Those with a particular interest in resuscitation should then consider attending an ALS provider course, where appropriate. Medical students in their final year of training can be accepted as candidates on an ALS course if this is an established local arrangement.

Prior competence in CPR is an essential prerequisite to attending the course.

Organisation

ALS courses are held at centres throughout the UK and are approved and certified by the Resuscitation Council (UK). This ensures a uniformity of content and standard regardless of the centre.

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Organisation (continued)

The course is very intensive and candidates are sent the ALS manual one month prior to the course. Candidates are required to complete a pre-course multiple choice question paper to guide preparation.

The course can be delivered over 2 days or in a modular format. In the UK, an e-learning option is also available. e-learning candidates are given access to the online resources from one month prior to the course. This allows them to study approximately 7 hours of on-line course material at their own pace before attending a 1-day face-to-face course. These candidates also benefit from accessing the e-learning materials for a total of 5 months.

Curriculum

The ALS course has a high ratio of instructors to candidates. The course includes core lectures and interactive workshops. The face-to-face teaching is mainly delivered in small groups with hands-on practical skill stations and clinically-based simulations. The simulations are designed to develop team and communication skills using the resuscitation skills and knowledge acquired during the course

	2-day face-to-face course	e-learning with 1-day face-to-face course (e-ALS)
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALS in perspective • Causes and prevention of cardiac arrest • Acute coronary syndromes • ALS algorithm • Post resuscitation care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALS in perspective • ALS algorithm • Causes and prevention of cardiac arrest • Acute coronary syndromes • Post resuscitation care <p>Also includes 10-minute video to demonstrate Cardiac Arrest Simulation.</p>
Discussion / Demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions relating to resuscitation • Cardiac Arrest Simulation Demonstration 	
Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring, rhythm recognition and 12-lead ECG • Tachycardia, cardioversion and drugs • Bradycardia, pacing and drugs • Special circumstances • Arterial blood gas analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring, rhythm recognition and 12-lead ECG • Tachycardia, cardioversion and drugs • Bradycardia, pacing and drugs • Special circumstances • Decisions relating to resuscitation • Arterial blood gas analysis
Practical skill stations and simulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airway management • Initial assessment and resuscitation • Cardiac arrest management (simulations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airway management • Initial assessment and resuscitation • Cardioversion and pacing workshop • Cardiac arrest management (simulations)

A sample of the e-learning material is available at www.resus.org.uk/pages/ealsdemo.htm

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Assessment and certification

Continuous assessment occurs throughout the ALS course, which is based on clinical simulations that allow candidates to demonstrate the core competencies that have been taught on the course. These include airway management, initial assessment and resuscitation and cardiac arrest management. A final assessment of candidates at the end of the course takes the form of management of a cardiac arrest simulation and a multiple choice questionnaire.

Successful candidates receive a Resuscitation Council (UK) ALS Provider certificate, which is valid for 4 years.

The ALS course is recognised for continuing professional development. As the systems vary between organisations, candidates should check with their respective professional bodies for the latest requirements.

ALS instructors

Those who perform outstandingly well on an ALS course and, in the view of the course faculty, show potential as future instructors, may be offered the opportunity of attending a Generic Instructor Course (GIC).

How to apply

ALS courses are held throughout the year at centres across the UK. To apply, candidates should access the current ALS, e-ALS or modular course lists on the Resuscitation Council (UK) website www.resus.org.uk and contact individual course centres for application details. Course fees are decided locally by the course centre; the Resuscitation Council (UK) charges the course centre £22 per candidate registration and £28 per ALS manual.

For further information on any aspect of the course, please contact the ALS Co-ordinators at the Resuscitation Council (UK) at the address below.



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