

How to learning modules

These guidelines are designed to help you submit suitable How to learning modules to RCNi Learning

How to learning modules are a series of short, practically focused modules. They should be concise and engaging.

The series is intended to demonstrate best practice and briefly discuss current evidence, providing the working nurse with targeted, topical and practically useful resources.

The procedures are short and concise for ease of reference. The evidence base follows the procedure. How to modules have no introduction or conclusion, but they do include a rationale and key points. We encourage the use of images, figures, podcasts and videos.

Structure and content

The best way to create a How to learning module is to look at an example online to see how it is structured.

You should start the module with a short rationale and key points, inserting keywords. Then state clearly the learning objectives; between three and five are usually sufficient.

To test users' knowledge, write three questions about the clinical skill. Users will be asked these three questions again once they have completed the module.

Identify the preparatory steps and list the equipment required to perform the procedure. Explain the procedure clearly, numbering each point. Include all types of content, such as text, tables, figures, graphics, pictures and multimedia.

Provide between three and five learning points after the procedure and evidence base sections. Add useful resources and a reflective activity. Encourage the user to reflect on how the module has helped them to update their practice.

The module should end with a self-assessment questionnaire comprising five questions, as well as the answers and rationales for these.

Style and tone

A module requires a tone that is consistent and user friendly. The style should be professional, but does not need to be overly 'academic' to impart information of a sufficiently high level and quality. Aim to make it concise, clear, directive, factual and evidence based; you should seek to teach users, rather than suggest a particular course of action.

Think about the best way to present detailed information. It may be more clearly understood as a graph, table or pie chart, or as a list of bullet points. It is important to ensure that the information you provide is available, accessible, accurate and unambiguous.

References

All written material should be referenced using current literature and primary sources. You may also wish to include a list of resources for further reading. Please adhere to the Harvard style for writing references (see below) and ensure

that all the information required is included. It is the author's responsibility to ensure that references are accurate. Overuse of online internet references is not advisable because these may be unreliable; links can break easily and information may be withdrawn at any time.

References in the text

Please ensure that you use the Harvard (name and year) system for references in the text. For example, 'It has been suggested that nurses should examine their relationship with patients (Brown 2015)'. For three or more authors, print the first author's name followed by 'et al', for example 'White et al (2016) argued.'

Note that White et al is acceptable for White, Red and Blue but not for White and Red, which should be written as 'White and Red (2016)'.

When several references are cited simultaneously, the order should be chronological, from earliest to most recent. If there are two or more references to the same author, the order should also be chronological, for example '(NICE 2016, 2017)'.

References in the reference list

Each journal reference should include (in this order):

1. The author's surname and initial(s): write the surname and initial(s) of all authors for references with three authors or fewer. For four or more authors, write the first three and add 'et al'.
2. The year of publication in brackets.
3. The title of the article in full.
4. The name of the journal in full.
5. The volume, issue number and first and last page numbers, separated by a hyphen.
6. Use alphabetical order for references. If there are two or more references to the same author, use chronological order.

Each book reference should include (in this order):

1. The author's surname and initial(s). Please indicate if the people cited are editors.
2. The year of publication in brackets.
3. The title of the book in full.
4. The edition (if not the first).
5. The publisher.
6. The city of publication (and the state if in the US, province or territory in Canada, and territory in Australia).
7. If you are citing a chapter in a book, supply the author's name, chapter title and page numbers.
8. Use alphabetical order for references. If there are two or more references to the same author, use chronological order.

Examples

Department of Health (2012) *Liberating the NHS: No Decision About Me, Without Me*. The Stationery Office, London.

Smith B, Wright K (2017) Pressure ulcers. In Jones P, Don T (Eds) Care of the Patient. Second edition. Guild Publishers, London.

Simpson E (2016) How to manage a choking adult. Nursing Standard. 31, 3, 42-46.

Acknowledgements

If you wish to acknowledge a person(s) or organisation(s), please contact the relevant person(s) or organisation(s) and ensure that they are happy to be named in your module and confirm this in writing.

Conflict of interest

Authors should declare any conflict of interest, financial or otherwise. If this applies to you, please provide a statement acknowledging this at the end of the module.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unreferenced use of others' published work or unpublished ideas or opinions that are represented as your own work: for example, copying or paraphrasing text, a sentence, paragraph, table or figure from another's work and not referencing it. Plagiarism also applies to work that you have published previously.

The module must be your own work and should be written in your own words. All mention of others' work must be attributed to the originating author(s) and referenced in full. Any direct quotations must be included in single quotation marks.

If substantial sections of text or illustrative material are used in the module, you must obtain written permission from the copyright holder before submitting the module for publication. All learning modules submitted to RCNi are checked for plagiarism using an automated software package.

Deadlines

Editorial deadlines are set to allow time for the modules to be peer reviewed and edited. How to learning modules are subject to peer review. It is imperative that authors keep to the deadlines agreed with the commissioning editor so production schedules can be maintained and the high-quality of the modules ensured.

You will be sent PDF proofs for checking in advance of printing. If for any reason you are unable to meet the agreed deadline, please inform the commissioning editor as soon as possible.

Length

The module should be about 1,500 words in length, excluding the learning points and references.

Diagrams and illustrations

Any diagrams, figures or tables required to illustrate the text should be supplied at the same time as the module. They may

be redrawn in-house to ensure a consistent style and design but should be clear and easy to read and understand. Please supply an appropriate title and annotations with each diagram.

Illustrations from books and other journals can be used but, because of copyright restrictions, permission must be sought by the author in advance from the publishers and acknowledgement given in the text. Please allow sufficient time to gain permission since this can take up to 12 weeks.

Diagrams should be clearly numbered and referenced in the text. Suggestions on other pictures or illustrations are always welcome.

Pictures

When supplying pictures with your module, your smartphone or computer may ask what size image you want to send. If so, please select 'Large' or 'Original'.

If you are not given size options, the photo will, most likely, be sent at the largest size available. Please do not make the photo you are sending us smaller than it is as this often makes it unusable.

Submitting your How to learning module

All contributions should be submitted to senior nurse editor Richard Hatchett, at richard.hatchett@rcni.com, and RCNi Learning editor Yvonne Byron Nour, at yvonne.byronnour@rcni.com

What happens next

When we receive your module, it will be assessed internally before being sent simultaneously to two external expert referees for peer review. Once their comments have been received, you will be contacted by a member of the RCNi Learning team about any suggested amendments.

If your How to learning module is accepted, you will be asked to sign and return a publisher's agreement for the purposes of copyright.

Once your module is published online, it will be allocated a review date, when content may need to be updated if there have been changes to policy or practice. If this is required, you will be offered the opportunity to update the text and the references as necessary.

Fee

An honorarium of £100 is payable following publication of the How to learning module.

Contacts

If you experience any difficulties, please contact a member of the RCNi Learning team at any time to discuss your work.

Complaints

RCNi is a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which will investigate complaints that members have not followed the COPE code of conduct for journal editors. www.publicationethics.org.uk