

NAYLOR, Sarah (2014). *The expectations and experiences of newly qualified diagnostic radiographers*. Doctoral, Sheffield Hallam University.

Abstract

This study explores the expectations and experiences of newly qualified diagnostic radiographers during their transition into practice. This is a short, but important period in a professional's career as he or she adjusts from being supervised to becoming an autonomous practitioner. It is during this period that they enhance their competence and confidence. This was a longitudinal study using interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology. Data was gathered from four students who participated in a focus group. This informed semi structured interviews with a further eight students who were interviewed prior to starting work and three times over the following twelve months. All the participants had undertaken a BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography at the same higher education institution. Four main themes were generated from the data; experience, fitting in, identity and supporting the transition. A high proportion of clinical education, balanced with theoretical input had developed the participants to be autonomous, reflective practitioners. However, they did find it difficult when required to take responsibility for, and assess students. During the transition process their awareness of departmental culture increased as did their professional identity. The participants wanted tailored support and found that they could ask any colleagues for advice and support and found peer support useful. An excellent practice of organised scaffolding support was identified which can be adapted for use in different areas. This helped the participants build experience and confidence. This study brings to light the experiences of newly qualified diagnostic radiographers. The findings are open to theoretical generalizability and raise issues that may be used by academic staff in the preparation of students and managers who support newly qualified staff members. These include considering how to train and educate student radiographers in supervisory skills, how to build confidence in areas where it is difficult to gain clinical experience, and facilitating peer support in imaging departments.