

Approval and Accreditation Board. Annual Report 1st September 2021 – 31st August 2022

Foreword

The College of Radiographers (CoR) is pleased to present the Approval and Accreditation Board (AAB) Report for 2021-2022. This academic year represents a year of recovery and ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Educators have adapted and embedded innovations and new practices as a result of changes to delivery of programmes. This is evident in the enhancements submitted to the CoR.

The AAB continues to operate in an online virtual capacity to deliver strategic oversight of the approval and accreditation work of the College. Work is continuing on several key projects within the CoR including project SMART as per the 20-21 annual report. Work on the revised fourth edition of Education and Career Framework continues, with a planned launch date in Autumn 2022.

The AAB has worked to ensure a high standard of consistency when reviewing programmes that lead to eligibility to apply for professional registration as a radiographer, and when reviewing individual learning modules, CPD courses and short education courses. The involvement of the CoR in the programme approval space ensures a consistency of standards across a wide variety of programmes and education providers as well as a benchmark of quality and consistency of radiographic standard.

Part 1: The position of pre-registration CoR Approved radiographic education within the UK

What is College of Radiographers Approval

The CoR works in partnership with clinical and academic departments, external organisations and individuals to ensure that programmes of education and training related to the clinical imaging and oncology radiographic workforce, maintain, and continue to develop the highest standards of clinical imaging and oncology practice and conduct.

Wherever possible, the College's approval framework works within existing internal approval and quality assurance arrangements of education institutions and clinical departments. It also aims to work collaboratively with external bodies to provide a streamlined and integrated process.

Through the approval framework the College:

- Secures consistency of standards of clinical imaging and oncology education.
- Aligns standards of clinical practice with the profession's Education and Career Framework (2022).
- Supports and encourages the development of courses that are at, and remain at, the forefront of education and developing clinical imaging and oncology practice;
- Promotes and supports flexibility in the design and delivery of education and new roles in practice.
- Disseminates guidance on best practice in clinical imaging and oncology education and practice.

1.1 Number and distribution of Approved Pre-registration Programmes

The College of Radiographers currently has 77 pre-registration programmes which hold CoR approval, this includes ongoing re-approvals across all nations of the UK. There are a further 9 programmes currently seeking initial CoR approval. A pre-registration programme of study leads to be able to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to work as a diagnostic or therapeutic radiographer. The HCPC figures include programmes which may or may not be discontinued.

CoR approved programmes must undergo a 5 year approval cycle and are represented in the figures below. There are currently 3 programmes in the UK which do not hold, or that are actively applying for CoR approval, but do hold HCPC approval. This includes 2 diagnostic radiography degree apprenticeships and 1 BSc(Hons) combined diagnostic radiography studies programme. This represents a high compliance with the professional body programme approval

scheme and continues to demonstrate educators willingness to align programmes to the professional body standards.

1.1.1 Number of HCPC Pre-registration Programmes of Radiography in the UK

Pre-registration programmes	Number of available programmes (From HCPC data including PT programmes) The HCPC figures include programmes which may or may not be discontinued.
Diagnostic Radiography	65
Therapeutic Radiography	26
Total	91

1.1.2 Number of CoR Pre-registration Programmes of Radiography in the UK

Pre-registration programmes	Number of Educational Providers*	Number of Programmes holding or with ongoing initial COR approval
Diagnostic Radiography	35	62
Therapeutic Radiography	14	24
Total	35	86

*Higher Education Institutions, Further Education Providers, other educational providers. UK and International

1.1.3 Number of Approved Pre-registration Programmes of Radiography in each nation of the UK and Internationally

Pre-registration programmes	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales	International
Diagnostic Radiography	51	7	1	2	1
Therapeutic Radiography	18	4	1	1	0

1.1.4 Number of CoR Approved Programmes (including those seeking re-approval and new initial approval) leading to registration by study mode of Radiography in the UK.

Programme modes*	Diagnostic Radiography	Therapeutic Radiography
Pre-registration Bachelors Degree	39	17
Degree Apprenticeship	9	2
Pre-registration Integrated Masters Degree	14	5
	62	24

*all programmes are full-time study or work-based

1.2 Return of annual monitoring survey

All but 2 educational providers with CoR approved provision returned the survey to the College of Radiographers. The following provider/s did not return a response:

- Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

- Bradford University

It should also be noted that the some providers returned incomplete and/or inaccurate data. The survey will be revised over the next academic year to streamline and simplify information return.

1.3 Admissions and Recruitment

1.3.1 UCAS Tariff

From the responses returned to us UCAS entry tariff points for entry onto the programmes are distributed from a minimum of 112 to a maximum of 128 with a mean of 120. These figures remain the same from the previous report.

1.3.2. Applications to Pre-registration programmes

Response of information from this questions was incomplete for previous years and should be treated with caution.

1.3.2a Total number of applications: 13,652 applicants to Radiography (24% increase)

Academic Year	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22
Applications	12171	10598	10400	10375	13652

1.3.2b Diagnostic Radiography Applications: 11,145 (22% increase)

Academic Year	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22
Applications	10314	9178	8728	8703	11145

1.3.2c Therapeutic Radiography Applications: 2507 (23% increase)

Academic Year	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22
Applications	1857	1420	1672	1931	2507

*noted as incomplete data - figures likely to be higher due to non-submission of approved providers

1.3.3. Student intake

Applications to Radiography programmes have been variable but the data reflects an increase in applications for the 2021-2022 year. Response of information from this questions was incomplete for previous years and should however be treated with caution regarding comparison.

Five educational providers reported insufficient applications, 90% of these were Therapeutic Radiography programmes. Reasons provided included;

- failure to enrol/register at the start of the programme despite accepting a place
- not achieving the necessary grades
- lack of work based placement for apprenticeship applicants
- new programme with limited marketing time to recruit
- withdrawal of sponsorship

There remains a concern regarding recruitment to Therapeutic Radiography pre-registration programmes.

Ten educational providers reported an over-recruitment to their programmes with all citing that more applicants achieved the necessary grades than expected. The majority of programmes recruited to target however, this suggests that a calibration of conversion rate is not required at this time.

1.3.3a Total number of students starting a pre-registration programme in 2021-2022

Academic Year	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22 (repeating)**
Number of starters into Year 1/Stage 1	969	1429	1525	1666	2522 (46)

1.3.3b Diagnostic Radiography students starting a pre-registration programme in 2021-2022

Academic Year	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22
Number of starters into Year 1/Stage 1	749	1180	1179	1299	1959 (35)**

1.3.3c Therapeutic Radiography students starting a pre-registration programme in 2021-2022

Academic Year	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22
Number of starters into Year 1/Stage 1	369	298	355	422	483 (11)**

*noted as incomplete data - figures likely to be higher due to non-submission by approved providers

**Students undertaking a repeat of the Year 1/stage 1

1.3.4 International recruitment

International recruitment to pre-registration programmes has increased over the last five years. The table below demonstrates the continued growth of international recruits that started in the academic year shown. International recruitment remains a small proportion of the overall intake of students totaling 5% (137/2522) of the total student pre-registration intake.

Academic Year	2017-18*	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22
Total number	17	24	31	44	137
Diagnostic Radiography	10	14	23	34	93
Therapeutic Radiography	7	10	8	10	44

1.4 Student Attrition and Retention within Pre-registration programmes

1.4.1 Attrition

Attrition is understood in our report as; unsuccessful completion of the programme where an exit award/credits have been provided but student is not eligible to professionally register to work as a Radiographer.

Only seven Radiography programmes reported no attrition from their programmes for the academic year 2021-2022. The vast majority reported attrition from the programme.

Common factors noted for student attrition are listed as below ordered from most common to least common:

- Students did not meet the required academic standards (54% of programmes)
- Personal circumstances (50% of programmes)

- Wrong career choice (43% of programmes)
- Health related reasons (41% of programmes)
- Students did not meet the required clinical standards (36% of programmes)
- Financial reasons (21% of programmes)
- Fitness to practice/disciplinary/professional conduct issues (10% of programmes)
- Campus experiences (1% of programmes)
- Placement experiences (1% of programmes)

Failure to meet the required academic standard remains the primary reason for not completing the programme this corresponds to the last three years of data collection. Personal circumstances and health related reasons also correspond to previous years findings remaining as a common factor for student attrition.

There remains a concern that 'wrong career choice' features as an attrition issue to almost half of programmes delivering Radiography programmes. This factor appears to be distributed equally through both Diagnostic and Therapeutic programmes highlighting the ongoing need for career guidance and information prior to enrolling and at open days and information events.

1.4.2 Retention

Programme course leaders are requested to discuss the most effective strategies to support student retention on the programme. For the purposes of analysis this is broadly delineated into;

- Three most successful retention strategies overall
- Successful retention strategies on-campus
- Successful retention strategies on practice placement
- Impact of retention activity within the programme

For each category a content frequency analysis was conducted to provide some thematic analysis of the data responses. The frequency limit was extended to include a minimum of four occurrences (three for overall most successful) to be included. Word cloud presentation was used to display the findings.

1.4.2a Three most successful retention strategies overall

The most recurring themes in effective strategies included initiatives around holistic and pastoral support as well as belonging within the learning community. Personal tutor systems and signposting to the wider university services, particularly mental health services appear to be key to a more rounded and personalised experience for students. Several course leaders reported on the success of peer support systems. Belonging also featured thematically with course leaders highlighting the importance of getting to know the students individually, the importance of the learning community and small cohorts allowing for a more tailored approach to teaching and learning.



Figure 1: Word cloud of frequently recurring content of most successful retention strategies

1.4.2b Successful retention strategies on-campus

Despite this academic year being heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemic course leaders highlighted the innovative approaches to maintaining on-campus and in person sessions to support learners during this challenging time. An emphasis on personal tutorial services and wider university service signposting was evident as a successful retention strategy by programme teams. There was again an emphasis on the learner as an individual with one-to-one coaching and pastoral meetings to support belonging and build relationships in the community of learning.

Some course leaders discussed the pedagogies which resulted in the highest satisfaction amongst learners. They included small group teaching, active 'hands on' sessions, enhanced feedback and feedforward, problem-based learning and utilising learning technology.

Part 2 An overview of the CoR Accreditation Schemes

The CoR runs five accreditation schemes:

- Assistant Practitioner accreditation
- Practice Educator accreditation
- Advanced Practitioner accreditation
- Consultant Practitioner accreditation

Following a review of the CPD Now online platform the 'Continuing Professional Development accreditation' (CPD Now accreditation) has been paused.

2.1 Assistant Practitioner accreditation

Since 1st January 2014, all assistant practitioners who are members of the SCoR have been eligible to apply for accreditation through CPD Now. Assistant practitioners can apply for accreditation of their scope of practice based on having completed a COR approved education and training course, or by submission of CPD evidence via CPD Now. In 2021, these application routes were paused due to the refresh of CPD Now and the accreditation schemes. They will be re-opened in 2023.

2.2 Practice Educator accreditation scheme (PEAS)

The scheme was revised to align with the publication of the Education and Career Framework 4th Edition. The revised PEAS scheme launched in July 2022. Figures and data related to the new scheme will be presented in the 22-23 report.

2.3 Advanced Practitioner accreditation

This scheme was paused in 21-22 to enable a review and alignment to relevant organisational and wider frameworks.

2.4 Consultant Practitioner accreditation

This scheme was paused in 21-22 to enable a review and alignment to relevant organisational and wider frameworks.