

College of Radiographers Approval and Accreditation Board

Annual Education Report

1st September 2022 – 31st August 2023.

Foreword

The College of Radiographers (CoR) is pleased to present the Approval and Accreditation Board (AAB) Report for 2022-2023.

This academic year represents a year of growth and development in programmes following the period of adaptation following the pandemic. This is evident in the number of new educational providers requesting programme approval and existing providers requesting additional learning pathways into the profession at pre-registration level.

The AAB has moved to a blended model of approval to deliver strategic oversight. Supporting new educational providers with in-person programme and resource assessment alongside desktop review activity for re-approval of programmes and new programmes at existing educational providers. Major programme changes such as campus relocation are allocated an in-person assessment as decided by the newly established 'Programme change panel' which has governance membership which includes the chair of the AAB and professional officers for education and accreditation.

The Education and Career Framework (4th Edition) was launched in November 2022 and has been used as a seminal document in an updated programme approval process. Mapping to the appropriate level of practice in the ECF has ensured integration into the approval process and assured professional standards.

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 standards.

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 education providers, clinical 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. Providers are now required to map pre-registration programmes to the practitioner level of practice as indicated in the 'College of Radiographers Education and Career Framework (4th Edition) 2022'.

Wherever possible, the College's approval framework works within existing internal approval and quality assurance arrangements of education providers 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 programmes 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

Currently there are 80 pre-registration programmes which hold CoR approval, this includes ongoing re-approvals across all nations of the UK. There are a further four providers currently seeking initial CoR approval (University of Hull, York St. John University, Health Sciences University (formally AECC) & Huddersfield). A pre-registration programme enables learners successfully completing the programme of study to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to work as a diagnostic or therapeutic radiographer. The HCPC programme directory include programmes which may or may not be discontinued and programmes which have regulatory approval but not yet College of Radiographers approval (see Table 1.1.1).

CoR approved programmes must undergo a 5 year approval cycle and are represented in Table 1.1.2. There are currently eleven programmes in the UK which do not hold CoR approval, but do hold HCPC approval. Of these eleven programmes, a proportion are in cessation (no current cohorts and/or closed) (this list is managed by the HCPC). The majority of other un-approved provision belong to education providers who are engaging with the College to begin or resume the approval process. This represents a high compliance with the professional body programme approval scheme, given the rate of programme development, and continues to demonstrate educators willingness to align programmes to the professional body standards.

Education provision is available in all nations of the United Kingdom as evidenced in Table 1.1.3 with learners having the opportunity to access both Diagnostic and Therapeutic radiography programmes in each nation. New education providers have developed programmes in England since the previous reporting period, there is no additional provider growth in the other nations of the UK. There is a single international provider holding CoR programme approval with no additional growth in this space and no new applications from international providers in this reporting period.

Learning pathway or mode of pre-registration learning continues to expand with more applications from education providers seeking programme approval in 'non-traditional' learning modes such as Degree Apprenticeships and Pre-registration accelerated Masters programmes (see table 1.1.4)

1.1.1 Number of HCPC Pre-registration Programmes of Radiography in the UK (as of 26/06/2025)*

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	73
Therapeutic Radiography	29
Total	102

**This number is live figures from June 2025 and therefore will appear higher than the number of CoR approved programmes from the 22/23 academic year*

1.1.2 Number of CoR Pre-registration Programmes of Radiography in the UK as of academic year 22-23

Pre-registration programmes	Number of Educational Providers*	Number of Programmes holding or with ongoing initial CoR approval
Diagnostic Radiography	30	58
Therapeutic Radiography	14	22
Total	30	80

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

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

Pre-registration programmes	England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales	International
Diagnostic Radiography	24	3	1	2	1
Therapeutic Radiography	9	2	1	1	0

1.1.4 Number of CoR Approved Programmes (leading to registration by study mode of Radiography in the UK) that hold current approval as of 11 July 2023.

Programme modes*	Diagnostic Radiography	Therapeutic Radiography
Pre-registration Bachelor's Degree	31	13
Degree Apprenticeship	9	3
Pre-registration Integrated Master's Degree	10	4
Total	50	20

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

1.2 Return of annual monitoring survey

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

- University of Suffolk

It should also be noted that some providers returned incomplete and/or inaccurate data. The annual monitoring 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 via the Annual Monitoring Survey, UCAS entry tariff points for entry onto CoR approved programmes are distributed (range) from a minimum of 96 to a maximum of 136 with a mean of 108. These figures represent a fall in mean admission UCAS tariff entry requirements of 12 points (from 120 to 108) from the previous annual report of 21/22.

1.3.2. Applications to Pre-registration programmes

Overall there was a small increase to the total number of applications to Radiography programmes in this reporting period as understood in Table 1.3.2a comparatively to the last reporting period. However, when further scrutinized this is understood as a moderate increase in Diagnostic Radiography applications of almost 9% (see Table 1.3.2b) and a sizable decrease in Therapeutic applications of 36.2% (see Table 1.3.2c).

The response to questions about the number of applications to programmes was incomplete for previous years and should be treated with caution as table key (*). It is also worth noting that a large educational provider of Therapeutic Radiography did not return data for this reporting period (see item 1.2).

1.3.2a Total number of applications: 13,794 applicants to Radiography (1.2 % increase)

Academic Year	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23**
Applications	10598	10400	10375	13652	13794

**note apprenticeship applications were generally returned as Unknown as they were employer advertised and this should be understood when considering the 2022-23 data.

1.3.2b Diagnostic Radiography Applications: 12194 (8.6 % increase)

Academic Year	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Applications	9178	8728	8703	11145	12194

1.3.2.c Therapeutic Radiography Applications: 1600 (-36.2% increase)

Academic Year	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Applications	1420	1672	1931	2507	1600

*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 a very small increase in applications for the 2022-2023 year of 1.2%. Of a concerning nature applications to Therapeutic Radiography programmes were over a third less than in the prior year.

Four education providers report insufficient applications for Diagnostic Radiography programmes, but six reported increased applications. This somewhat balances the applications in the UK overall for Diagnostic Radiography.

The picture was very different for Therapeutic Radiography programmes. Eight educational providers reported insufficient applications for Therapeutic Radiography programmes. None reported increased applications which explains the reduction of over 30% of applications in Therapeutic Radiography programmes.

Reasons provided for insufficient applications in both Diagnostic and Therapeutic programmes included;

- Fewer applicants achieved necessary grades than expected
- Fewer students expected as they opted for other pathways
- Drop in the offer to entry conversion rate/ didn't accept offer
- Withdrawal due to financial and personal reasons
- Students offered a place but did not enroll/begin the programme

There remains an immediate concern regarding recruitment to Therapeutic Radiography pre-registration programmes. Which appears to have deteriorated following the last report.

Three educational providers reported an over-recruitment to their programmes (all Diagnostic Radiography) 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 2022-2023

Academic Year	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Number of starters into Year 1/Stage 1	1429	1525	1666	2522 (**46)	2384 (**132)

*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

1.3.3b Diagnostic Radiography students starting a pre-registration programme in 2022-2023

Academic Year	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Number of starters into Year 1/Stage 1	1180	1179	1299	1959 (**35)	1980 (**106)

*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

1.3.3c Therapeutic Radiography students starting a pre-registration programme in 2022-2023

Academic Year	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23

Number of starters into Year 1/Stage 1	298	355	422	483 (**11)	404 (**26)
--	-----	-----	-----	------------	------------

*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 decreased this academic year. Table 1.3.4 demonstrates the year on year growth of international students, but then a substantial decrease in this year. International recruitment remains a small proportion of the overall intake of students totaling 3% (77/2384) of the total student pre-registration intake, a 2 percent drop from the previous year.

1.3.4 Number of international students starting a pre-registration programme in 2022-2023

Academic Year	2018-19*	2019-20*	2020-21*	2021-22	2022-23
Total number	24	31	44	137	77
Diagnostic Radiography	14	23	34	93	58
Therapeutic Radiography	10	8	10	44	19

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

1.4 Student Attrition and Retention within Pre-registration programmes

1.4.1 Attrition

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

Only four education providers reported no attrition from their programmes for the academic year 2022-2023. 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:

- Personal circumstances (51% of programmes)
- Students did not meet the required academic standards (48% of programmes)
- Wrong career choice (43% of programmes)
- Health related reasons (41% of programmes)
- Financial reasons (21% of programmes)
- Students did not meet the required clinical standards (16% of programmes)
- Placement experiences (8% of programmes)
- Fitness to practice/disciplinary/professional conduct issues (5% of programmes)

'Personal circumstances' has replaced 'failing to meet the required academic standards' as the primary cause of attrition. Failure to meet the required academic standard remains high for not completing the programme. This data corresponds to the last three years of data collection.

There remains a concern that 'wrong career choice' features as an attrition issue to almost half of education providers 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.

There were free text responses detailing other, more detailed reasons for attrition on programmes. Some examples of these were;

- To transfer to a University closer to their home/relocation
- Feeling lonely/isolated
- The Covid-19 pandemic

1.4.2 Retention

Programme leaders were asked to share their most effective strategies to support student retention. For the purposes of analysis this is broadly delineated into;

- 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 be included. Word cloud presentation was used to display the findings (see Figure 1).

1.4.2a Successful retention strategies on-campus

Despite a challenging environment noted in the Higher Education sector regarding resources and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, it is clear that students receive a high level of personal support from academic teams and from wider university support services. Many programmes noted individual personal tutor support which included both academic and pastoral elements. Some programmes noted a coaching service and/or student buddy initiative to help support learners.

Belonging on programmes remains a key feature of on campus activity and relates to ongoing wider development linked to initiatives to address issues raised by NSS data. Some of the highlights from providers include targeted 'welcome week' or 'fresher' experiences to very individual efforts such as academic members making efforts to get to 'know and value each student'.

More academic elements include giving more extensive assessment feedback and offering more formative learning opportunities in modules and simulated learning experiences. Wider support services are being utilized in the programmes by delivering tailored sessions embedded within programmes to support assessment literacy, writing and general study skills.

Part 2 An overview of the CoR Accreditation Schemes

The CoR runs five accreditation schemes:

- Assistant Practitioner accreditation (relaunched April 2023)
- Mammography Associate accreditation (newly launched in April 2023)
- Practice Educator accreditation
- Advanced Practitioner accreditation (currently paused)
- Consultant Practitioner accreditation (currently paused)

2.1 Support workforce accreditation

The Assistant Practitioner accreditation scheme was relaunched on 3rd April 2023.

A total of nine Assistant Practitioners were accredited/re-accredited in the 2022-23 year. Seven were re-accreditations. Two were new accreditations.

A newly launched accreditation scheme was opened for Mammography Associates. This year will be recorded as a pilot and a review of uptake will be included in the 2023-24 report. Two Mammography Associates were accredited in the 2022-23 year.

The low numbers of accreditations in 2022/23 reflect the Assistant Practitioner scheme pausing for the first half of this period, and the mammography Associate scheme being newly launched during this monitoring period.

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. PEAS accreditation in the 1st September 2022 until August 31st 2023 year is shown below.

A total of eight new practice educators were accredited by PEAS

A total of two practice educators were re-accredited PEAS

2.3 Advanced Practitioner accreditation

This scheme remains paused to enable a review and alignment to relevant organisational and wider frameworks.

2.4 Consultant Practitioner accreditation

This scheme remains paused to enable a review and alignment to relevant organisational and wider frameworks.

Part 3 Acknowledgements

The College Board of Trustees wish to thank the members of the Approval and Accreditation Board and to all the Assessors who have worked on programme approvals on behalf of the College.