

# Working as a Radiographer



**Radiographers care for patients using a range of fascinating technology to diagnose, investigate or treat patients with illness, conditions, and injuries. They work with people through all stages of their life from before birth, including fertility support and specialist prenatal imaging, right the way through to end-of-life care and occasionally beyond.**

Everyday radiographers see the difference they make to people's lives. Providing compassionate respectful care towards patients, their families, friends, or carers, is essential in this career.

**Diagnostic (DR)** and **Therapeutic (TR)** are two separately regulated types of professionally qualified radiography roles. There are also support worker roles working alongside radiographers.

Most diagnostic radiographers work within hospital settings although some imaging takes place in community facilities. Therapeutic radiographers usually work within a radiotherapy department in a hospital setting.

**There are many benefits of being a radiographer, these include:**



Fascinating and rewarding work



The skills and experience to earn a good salary on qualification and registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)



High employability



Opportunities to specialise, advance and explore in chosen areas of interest



High quality transferable skills, e.g. specialist technology skills, leadership, management and research skills



Opportunity to work overseas (individual visa permitting)



Team working opportunities including mentoring, leading, educating, inspiring or researching with others

# Working as a Diagnostic Radiographer

**Diagnostic radiographers (DRs) use highly technical equipment to view inside the human body. They often diagnose injuries, illnesses, or conditions producing high quality, detailed digital images. Sometimes they use the technology for treatment procedures.**

As a diagnostic radiographer, you will use fascinating and fast evolving technologies such as x-ray radiation equipment, computerised tomography (CT) scanners, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), ultrasound waves (ultrasonography) and radiation-emitting radionuclides (nuclear medicine). Information communications technology (ICT) will be central to your work and the use of artificial intelligence is an exciting evolving element of the profession.

When caring for patients you will communicate sensitively and compassionately. Sometimes you will meet a patient once during their procedure or you could meet them over a series of appointments. Building a rapport with a patient quickly who might be in distress is an important skill, along with attention to detail and safety considerations.

Diagnostic radiographers usually work in hospital settings as part of radiology services. Whilst they can work independently, they often work in teams with other hospital staff who make up the radiology service team, e.g. radiography support workers, doctors (radiologists), nurses, other allied health professionals (AHPs), administration staff and porters.





# Working as a Therapeutic Radiographer

**Therapeutic radiographers (TRs) provide care to patients diagnosed with cancer and safely plan and deliver radiotherapy. They are responsible for patients throughout their whole radiotherapy journey and will support and advise patients, their friends, family, or carers.**

As a therapeutic radiographer, you are the only professional qualified to deliver radiotherapy to treat cancer illness. You will often use a variety of radiotherapy equipment for imaging, treatment, dosimetry (calculating how much radiation should be used), and administration. You will have an in depth understanding of oncology (cancer care).

You will need to communicate sensitively and compassionately to patients whilst using highly advanced technology. You will meet patients daily over a course of treatment lasting on average for 3-6 weeks. Information communications technology (ICT) will be central to your work and the use of artificial intelligence is an exciting evolving element of the profession.

Therapeutic radiographers usually work in a hospital setting within a radiotherapy department. They often work in small teams with other therapeutic radiographers and link with a variety of staff to provide the cancer care, e.g. doctors (oncologists), nurses, other AHPs, medical physicists, engineers, technologists and administration staff. However not all hospital services have radiotherapy departments.

# Qualifying as a Radiographer FAQs



## How long does it take to train?

It takes on average 3-4 years to become a Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) qualified and registered radiographer, which enables you to practice in the UK.

Radiography students are usually based in a university setting with several weeks at a time working within hospital services, learning the important clinical and patient care skills.

Postgraduate training can also be an option if your original degree is in a related subject.

## How do I apply for training?

Each University has different application criteria. For example on average three A-Levels (minimum C grade) or equivalent, with usually one pure science subject (biology, chemistry or physics) is required.

BTEC qualifications or access diplomas can be accepted depending on the individual training institutions entrance requirements.

Importantly you must have a genuine desire to care and work for and with other people. Voluntary work or evidence you have experience with caring or helping people can be invaluable with preparing to apply for a course.

There are variety of options to work in a role that supports radiographer's work too.

## Can I become a radiographer via an apprenticeship training route?

Yes if you would prefer this route to train as a radiographer there are currently a handful of DR degree level apprenticeships available. We anticipate this will include TR very soon.

Latest updates can be found on: [www.sor.org/news](http://www.sor.org/news) or by searching on [www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch](http://www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch)

## Is there funding available to support radiography training?

Bursaries are available to train depending on where you live.

There is also an opportunity to apply for the College of Radiographers (CoR) Valerie Carr Award. See our website for latest information on bursaries and the award.

Important to remember that the bonus of radiography training and qualifications are that as soon as finish and attain your HCPC registration, you can start working and earning a salary straight away. Plus you will have high employability opportunities.



# Qualifying as a Radiographer FAQs

## What is the pay like?

Most radiographers work in the National Health Service (NHS) and are paid according to NHS agenda for change pay scales. Starting salary of a newly qualified radiographer is usually Band 5 (circa 25-26k) and can increase depending on experience and or further studies.

Radiographers working in charitable, independent, or other public and private sector often have similar salaries depending on the type of role / skills required. These non-NHS salaries are locally agreed by the specific employer.

## I'm interested in learning more, what should I do?

Visit our website [www.radiographycareers.co.uk](http://www.radiographycareers.co.uk) for more information about working as a radiographer.

## What is the Society of Radiographers?

The Society of Radiographers is the trade union and professional body for those working in clinical imaging, ultrasound, nuclear medicine, radiotherapy and oncology in the UK. We help our members by:

- Lobbying government
- Looking after their professional, educational and workplace interests
- Providing advice and representation when needed
- Developing authoritative guidance on all areas of practice
- Funding research grants, awards, conferences and event programmes

To find out more, visit: [www.sor.org](http://www.sor.org)

## Where can I train in the UK?

Our approved pre-registration programmes can be found in the following locations:

For details about the different programmes available, please see [www.collegeofradiographers.ac.uk/prereg](http://www.collegeofradiographers.ac.uk/prereg)



# Glossary

## Allied Health Profession (AHPs)

AHPs are specialists usually working in health care who use their knowledge and skills helping patients live the fullest lives possible. There are 14 types of AHP job roles including radiographers, paramedics and art therapists.

## Dosimetry

This is the measurement, calculation and assessment of ionising radiation absorbed by substances, usually the human body.

## Medical Physicists

Medical Physicists are registered clinical scientists and provide scientific and technical support to patients and clinical departments providing for imaging and radiotherapy services.

## Oncologist

An oncologist is the key doctor (consultant) responsible for managing a patient's cancer care from the beginning to end of their treatment.

## Pre - natal

This is the period before birth or relating to pregnancy.

## Radiotherapy dosimetrist

A radiotherapy dosimetrist is a specialist in the use of dosimetry for radiotherapy for cancer patients.

## Radiologist

This is a specialist doctor trained to read and interpret medical images.





**SoR** 100  
YEARS  
THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS