

# Analysis of students and recent graduates survey 2012

THE SOCIETY AND  
COLLEGE OF  
RADIOGRAPHERS



## Executive Summary

In July 2012, the Society and College of Radiographers surveyed current students and recent graduates from radiography programmes to gather information about their motivations, finances and experiences. Nearly 500 respondents answered a range of questions in an online questionnaire about the reasons they chose radiography, their finances during and after their degree and their experiences in their first job. This document presents an analysis of this survey and the following bullet points highlight the main findings:

- The main reasons students give for choosing the subject of radiography are that they want to help people / contribute to society; feel it is likely they will find a job on graduation; are interested in a healthcare career; and have the potential to develop their career. The key reasons for choosing a specific course are the reputations of the course and the university; the clinical placement arrangements and the location of the course.
- The top two reasons for not completing a course are: for diagnostic radiography students, financial problems and personal reasons; and, for therapeutic radiography students, dissatisfaction with the clinical placement and wrong career choice.
- 22% of respondents do not receive either an NHS bursary or Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) award, presumably because they are not eligible. Only 51% of respondents receive financial support from family or friends.
- The average student radiographer debt on graduation is between £5,000 and £10,000.
- The proportion of diagnostic radiography graduates with jobs arranged in July of their graduation year (53%) remains lower than the proportion of therapeutic radiography graduates (81%). The proportion of diagnostic radiography graduates increased from 46% in 2011 to 53% in 2012. However, this increase is not statistically significant. The main reason given for not yet having a job arranged is that they have been so far unsuccessful at interview.
- 56% of 2011 graduates with a job who responded to the survey started their first job within 2 months of graduating. This is a significant decrease compared to last year's survey indicating that it took 2011 graduates longer to find a job than in previous years.
- 73% of working 2011 graduate respondents found a job with their preferred type of contract (full time or part time and permanent or temporary). This is a significant decrease since 2009 when 91% of

graduates found their preferred type of contract. This may be explained by the increase in the percentage with temporary contracts; this has been a significant increase from 6% for 2009 graduates to 22% for 2011 graduates.

- 86% of 2011 graduates said that they did feel prepared for their first job. The most frequently cited reason relates to the importance of clinical placements in helping students feel prepared.
- 2011 graduates are very positive in their assessment of their first year working as a qualified radiographer: 88% agree, or strongly agree, that their career is so far consistent with their expectations.
- When respondents are asked for their general comments relating to the subject of the survey the most common themes are the unfairness of the NHS bursary scheme and financial issues. Some respondents highlighted that bullying is an issue and commented on unprofessional behaviour from staff. There were also comments relating to respondents' appreciation of their radiography course.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Pre-registration education.....	4
2.1 Reasons for studying radiography .....	4
2.2 Reasons for choosing specific course .....	5
2.3 Reasons for not completing the course.....	5
3. Student finances.....	6
3.1 Types of finance .....	6
3.2 Student debt .....	7
4. First job.....	8
4.1 Arranging first job .....	8
4.2 Starting first job.....	9
5. Career expectations .....	12
6. General comments.....	13
Appendix A – Questionnaire (pdf version only) .....	14

## **1. Introduction**

This document presents an analysis of an online survey of students and recent graduates run by the SoR in July 2012. The survey was targeted at current radiography students and graduates from radiography degrees since 2011. Respondents were asked about their motivations for studying radiography, details of their finances and their experiences since graduating.

The survey was anonymous and covered as many students and recent graduates as possible. 3553 potential subjects were identified from the SoR membership database and emailed to ask if they would complete the online questionnaire. Respondents were offered the option of entering a prize draw if they completed the online survey.

The questionnaire was completed by 468 individuals (a 13% response rate). It was designed to ask respondents different questions depending on their year of graduation: current students were asked questions about the reasons they chose to study radiography and why some students did not complete the course, and recent graduates were asked their experiences in their first job. All respondents were asked questions about their finances including how they financed their degree and their level of debt on graduation. Each question, therefore, has a different number of responses which is displayed as an 'n' figure on each graph, where appropriate.

The results are mainly displayed using descriptive statistics. Where there are key differences from last year's survey, a statistical test (t-test or chi-squared test) is used to determine, with 95% confidence, if the differences are statistically significant or could just be explained by chance.

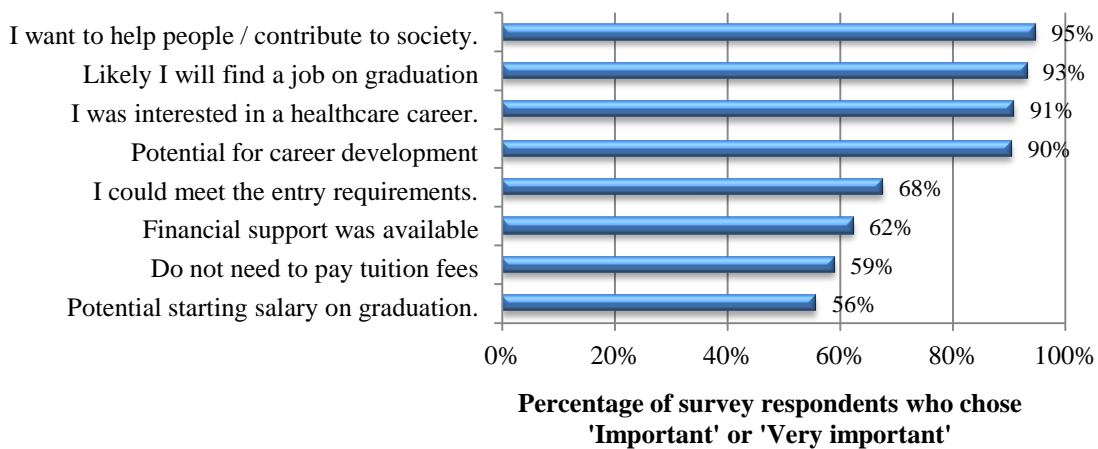
## 2. Pre-registration education

### 2.1 Reasons for studying radiography

The main reasons students give for choosing the subject of radiography are that they want to help people / contribute to society; feel it is likely they will find a job on graduation; are interested in a healthcare career; and have the potential to develop their career. Financial considerations are considered less important by respondents.

**How important to you were the following reasons for choosing the subject of radiography?**

*Source: SoR survey of students 2012 (n=263)*



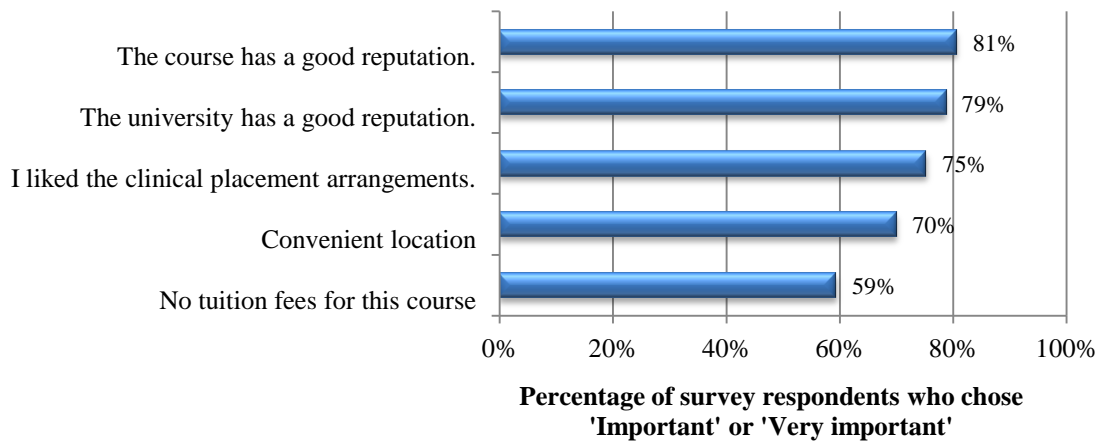
Other factors mentioned frequently as free text responses are family or friends in the profession; individual or family member had been a previous service user; previous work experience in radiography; the science / technology-based nature of the subject and the variety of modalities involved.

**2.2 Reasons for choosing specific course**

The key reasons for choosing a specific course are the reputations of the course and the university; the clinical placement arrangements and the location of the course.

**How important to you were the following reasons for choosing your specific course?**

*Source: SoR survey of students 2012 (n=263)*



Other factors highlighted in the free text responses include the attractiveness of a 2 –year course and the friendliness / responsiveness of the university. (Note the responses about 2-year courses are likely to be from students on pre-registration postgraduate programmes, of which there are a few in the UK.)

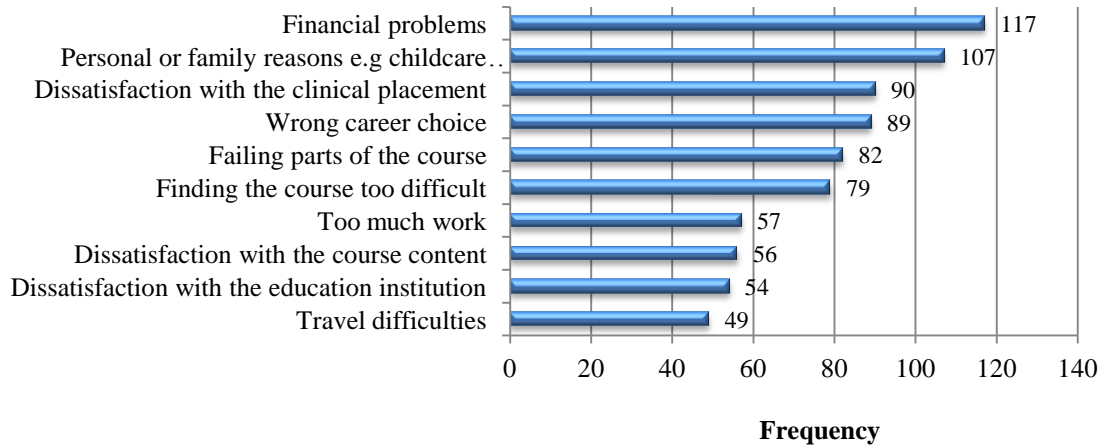
**2.3 Reasons for not completing the course**

Students were asked about factors which they found difficult and which may lead them to consider leaving the course. They were also asked if they knew of other students considering leaving the course and whether they knew the reasons why. In both questions they were given a list of potential factors to select from and also given the opportunity to add free-text comments. The responses to the list of factors are collated below according to the course discipline and are shown in separate graphs for diagnostic radiography and therapeutic radiography.

The top two reasons for not completing a course are: for diagnostic radiography students, financial problems and personal reasons; and, for therapeutic radiography students, dissatisfaction with the clinical placement and wrong career choice. Reasons also mentioned by more than two respondents in the free text responses are bullying, lack of support, feeling homesick or lonely and accommodation issues.

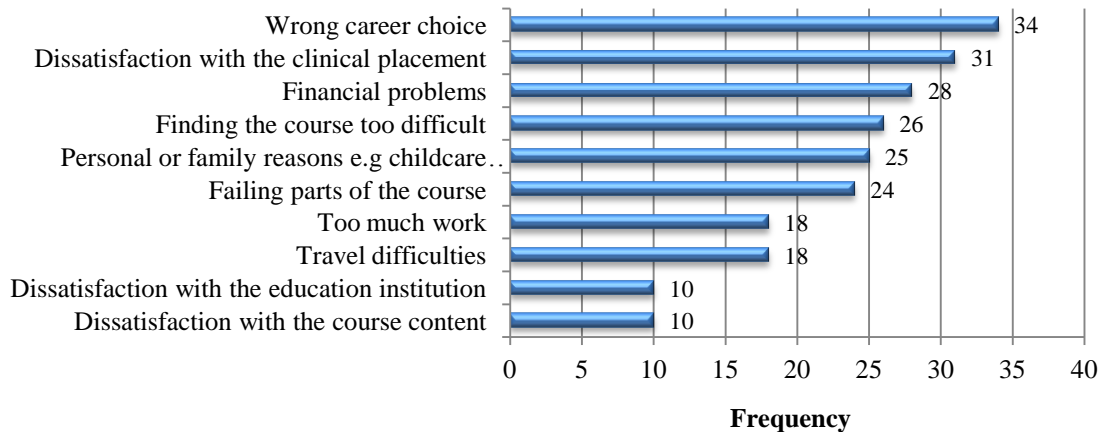
**Reasons why students do not complete the course**  
**Diagnostic**

Source: SoR survey of students 2012



**Reasons why students do not complete the course**  
**Therapeutic**

Source: SoR survey of students 2012



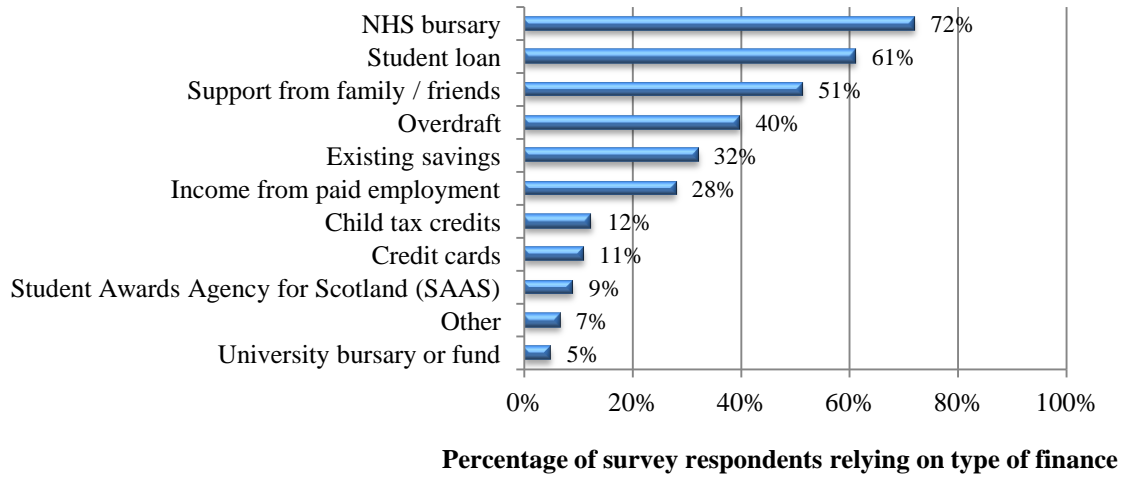
**3. Student finances**

**3.1 Types of finance**

Respondents were asked to select all the types of finance they relied on to fund their studies. 22% of respondents did not select either NHS bursary or Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), presumably because they are not eligible for an NHS bursary or SAAS award. Only 51% of respondents receive financial support from family or friends.

**Types of finance relied on by students to fund studies**

Source: SoR survey of students 2012 (n=468)

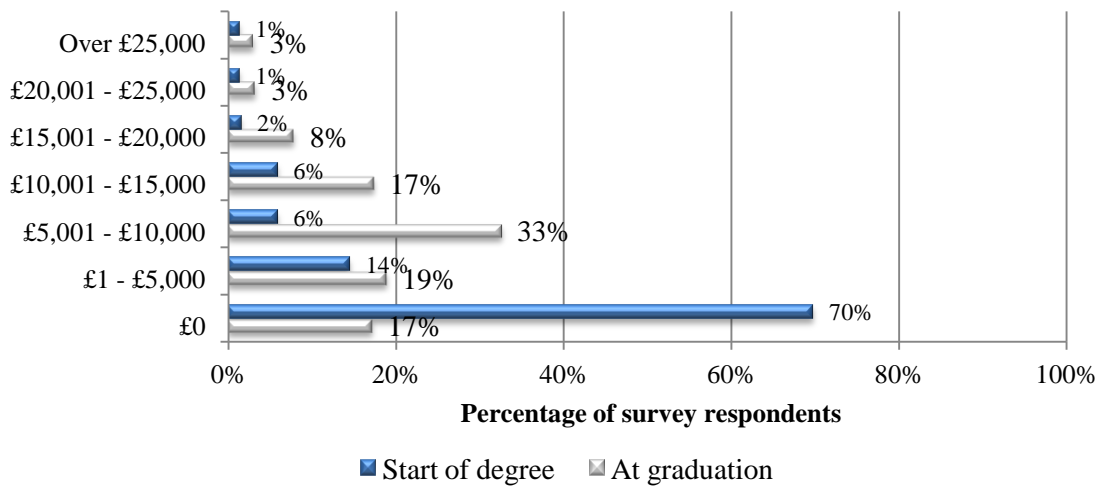


**3.2 Student debt**

The average respondent was in debt by between £5,000 and £10,000 on the date of their graduation, or was expecting to be.

**Level of student debt (not including mortgage)**

Source: SoR survey of students and recent graduates 2012 (n=463)



## 4. First job

### 4.1 Arranging first job

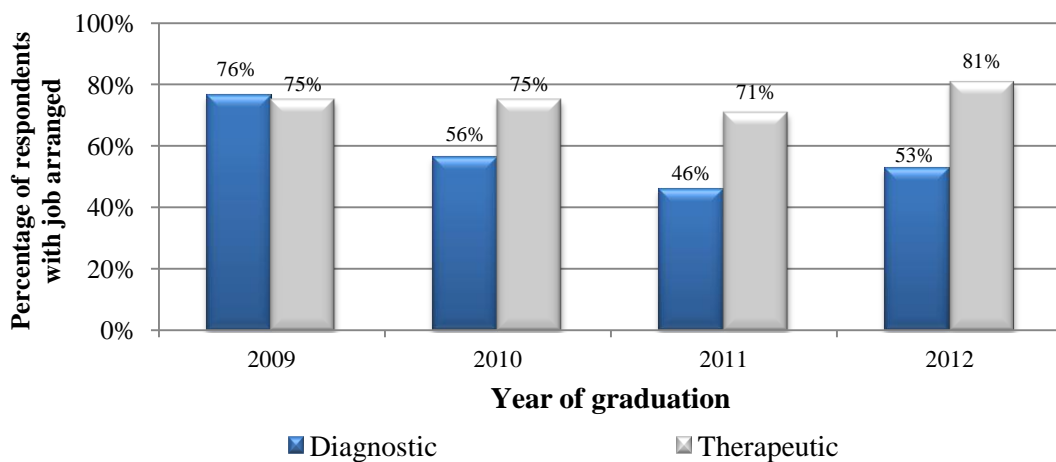
The proportion of diagnostic radiography graduates with jobs arranged in July of their graduation year (53%) remains lower than the proportion of therapeutic radiography graduates (81%). In the 2012 survey responses to this question were received from 112 diagnostic 2012 graduates and 26 therapeutic 2012 graduates. These response numbers are similar to previous years.

The proportion of diagnostic radiography graduates with jobs arranged in July of their graduation year increased from 46% in 2011 to 53% in 2012. However, this increase is not statistically significant.

A comparison of the responses from 2012 diagnostic graduates in England and the responses from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales shows that there is **no** statistically significant difference between the number in England with a job arranged as of July and the combined figures for the other UK countries. The number of responses was too low to perform a similar analysis for therapeutic graduates in 2012.

#### Percentage of respondents who had a job arranged as of July in their graduation year

Source: SoR surveys of recent graduates 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012

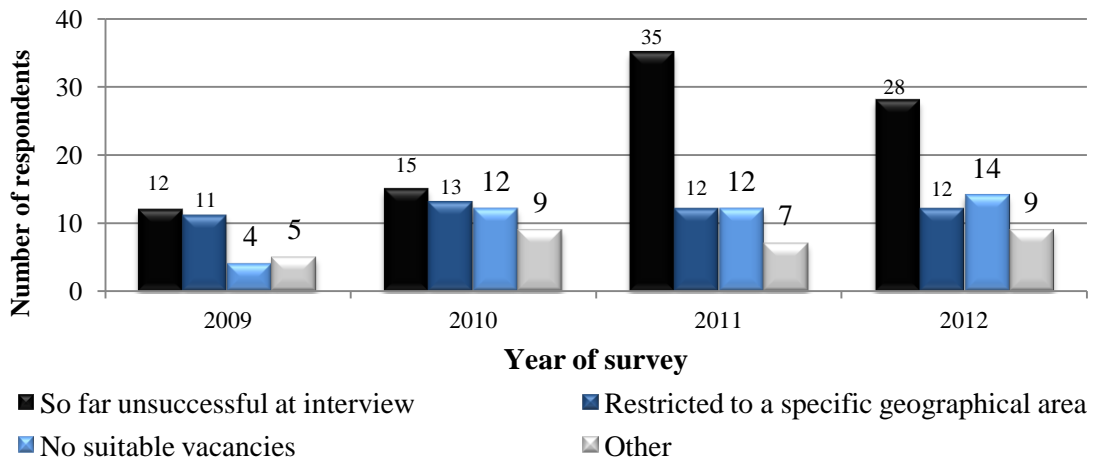


The main reason 2012 graduates give for not yet having a job arranged is that they have been so far unsuccessful at interview.



**If you do not have a job arranged yet please indicate the main reason for this?**

Source: SoR survey of students and recent graduates 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012

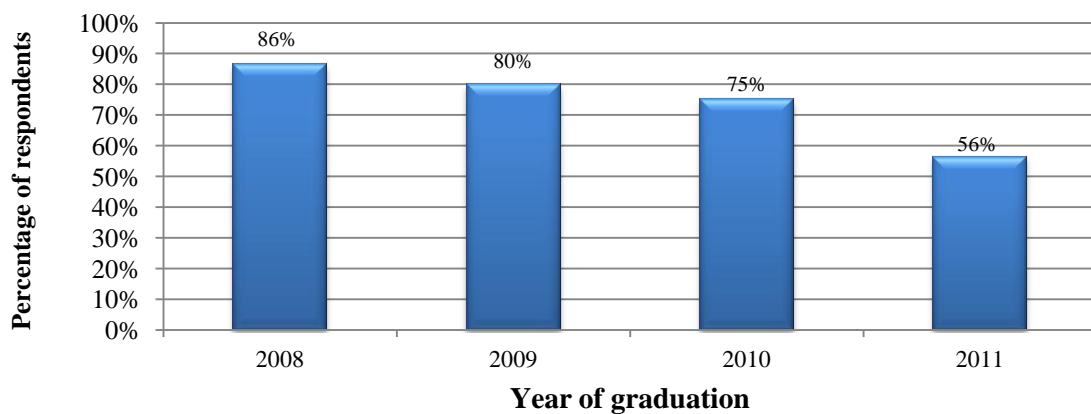


**4.2 Starting first job**

56% of 2011 graduates with a job who responded to the survey started their first job within 2 months of graduating. This is a significant decrease compared to last year’s survey, indicating that it took 2011 graduates longer to find a job than in previous years. In this year’s survey 64 working 2011 graduates responded to this question. This is a slightly lower response number than in previous years.

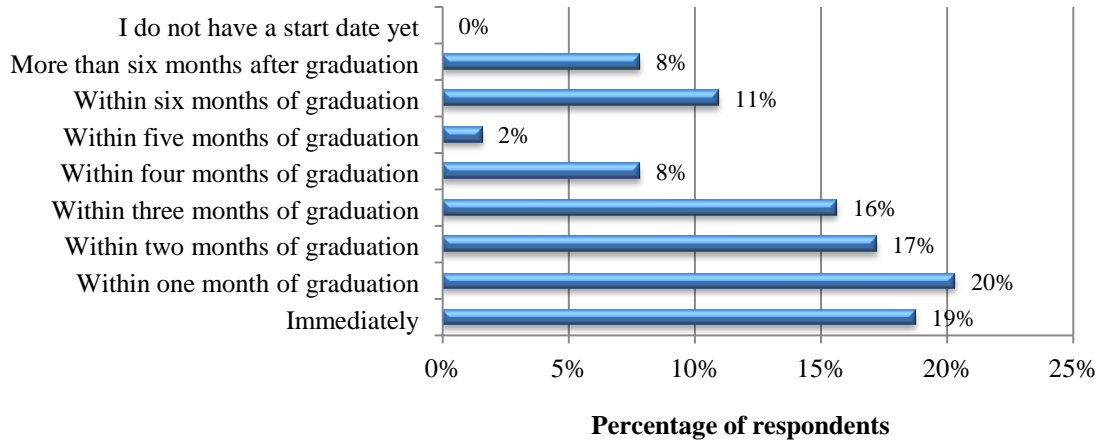
**Percentage of working graduates who started their first job within two months of graduation**

Source: SoR surveys of recent graduates 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011



**Number of months after graduation before 2011 working graduates started first job**

Source: SoR survey of recent graduates (n=64)

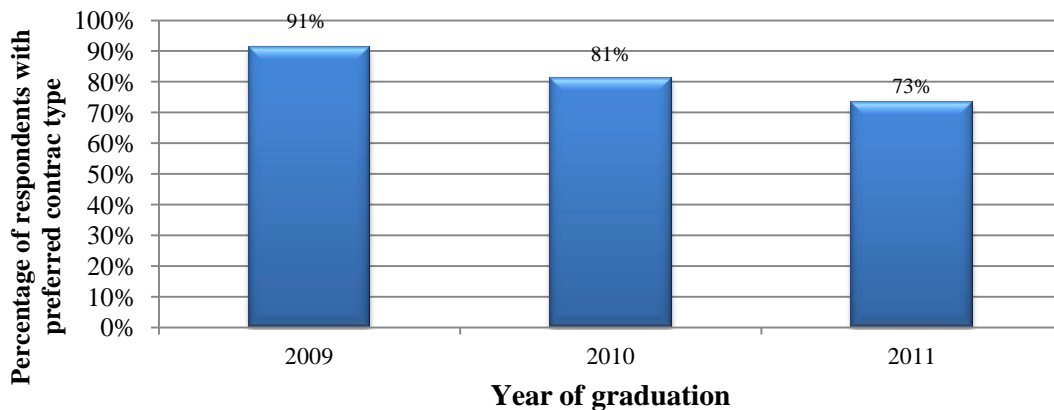


The majority of graduates work in the NHS and obtain their first choice of job in the country/region where they studied. However, 28% of recent graduates responding to the survey who have worked since graduation did not obtain their first choice of job and 11% were forced to find work outside the region in which they had studied.

73% of working 2011 graduate respondents found a job with their preferred type of contract (full time or part time and permanent or temporary). This is a significant decrease since 2009 when 91% of graduates obtained their preferred type of contract.

**Percentage of working graduates with their preferred contract type**

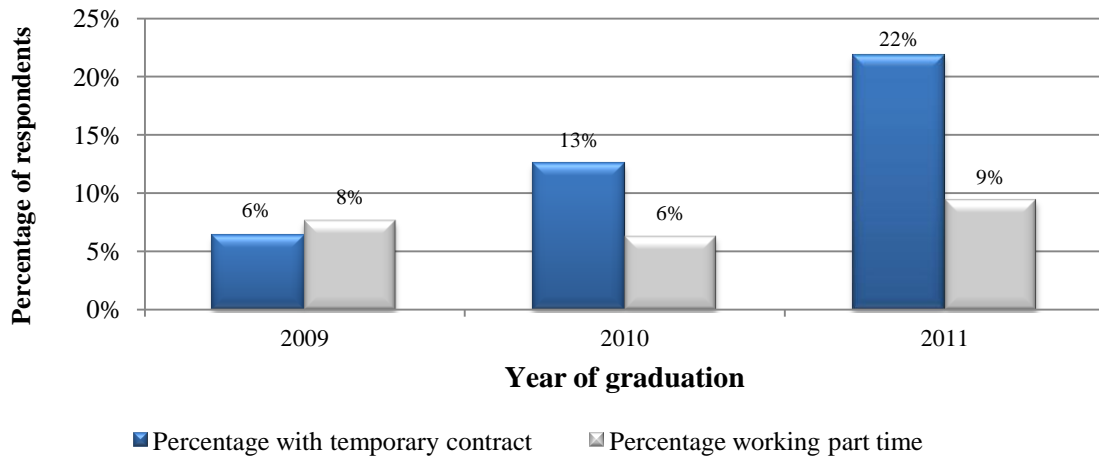
Source: SoR surveys of recent graduates 2010, 2011 and 2012



This reduction in the percentage of working graduates obtaining their preferred contract may be explained by the increase in the percentage with temporary contracts; this has been a significant increase from 6% for 2009 graduates to 22% for 2011 graduates.

**Percentage of working graduates with temporary contract / working part-time**

*Source: SoR surveys of recent graduates 2010, 2011, 2012*



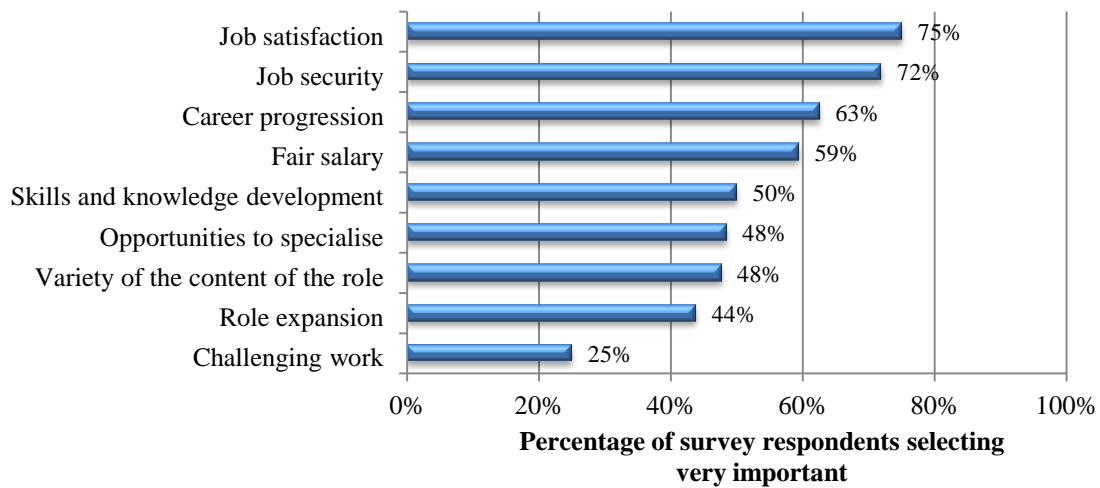
86% of 2011 graduates said that they did feel prepared for their first job. The most frequently cited reason relates to the importance of clinical placements in helping students feel prepared.

## 5. Career expectations

Recent graduates were asked how important certain career attributes were to them in terms of their expectations of a career in radiography. The most important expectations are job satisfaction and job security.

### Expectations of a career in radiography

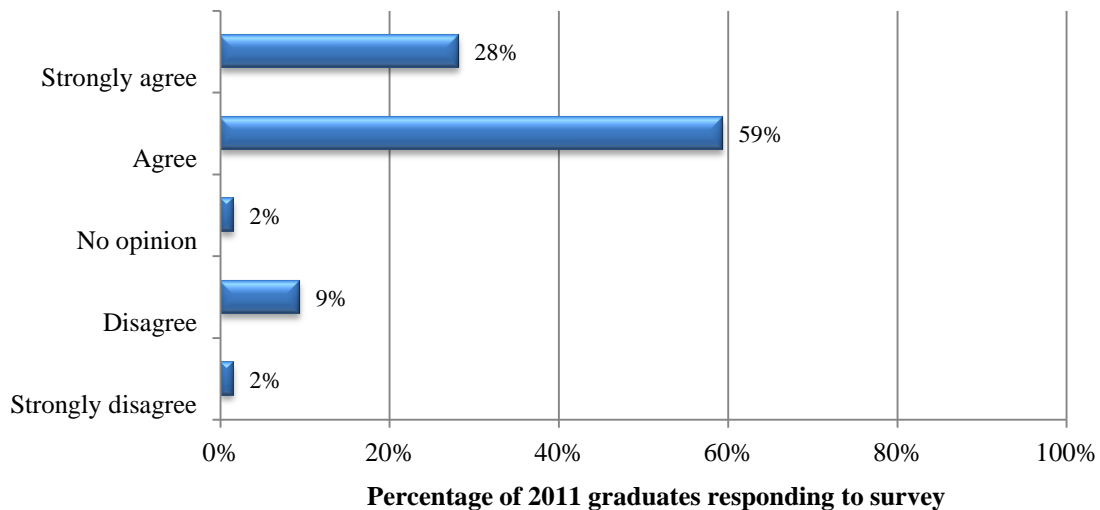
Source: SoR survey of recent graduates 2012 (n=64)



2011 graduates are very positive in their assessment of their first year working as a qualified radiographer: 88% agree or strongly agree that their career is so far consistent with their expectations.

### Radiography as a career is so far consistent with my expectations

Source: SoR survey of recent graduates 2012 (n=64)



## 6. General comments

Finally, respondents were asked if there were any general comments they would like to make related to the survey. Themes mentioned by three or more respondents are given below with the number of respondents given in brackets after the theme. The most common themes are the unfairness of the NHS bursary scheme and financial issues. Some respondents highlighted that bullying is an issue and commented on unprofessional behaviour from staff. There were also comments relating to respondents' appreciation of their radiography course.

**Theme: The NHS bursary scheme is flawed (6)**

Illustrative comment: *"Bursary is means tested on parental income; this doesn't take into account that parents may not be willing to aid you in financial matters. Applying for the bursary, regardless of if you get it, means student finance give you less money, meaning more financial difficulty!"*

**Theme: Financial issues (5)**

Illustrative comment: *"The first year of the course I have found hard, but a lot of that has been the financial worries. With petrol prices going through the roof hasn't helped, despite this I am looking forward to the second year."*

**Theme: Bullying (3)**

Illustrative comment: *"One comment I would like to make is the subject of bullying as I know the SoR is highlighting this. I know of several students who have been bullied or at least have had poor placements due to "clashes of personality" and I know of at least one department that continues to be hated by students due to bullying and yes lecturers are aware (they are constantly battling with them about it). I wanted to highlight this because the students I have spoken to will not speak up about it or make any formal complaints, this is because Radiography is a small world and they don't want to rock the boat and risk not being able to get a job in the area. So I wanted to point out that however big you think bullying is, it's bigger!"*

**Theme: Unprofessional staff behaviour (3)**

Illustrative comment: *"Hit and miss mentoring and uninterested staff. Both are a menace. It does not need to be this way!"*

**Theme: Appreciation of course (3)**

Illustrative comment: *"I love the radiotherapy course and discipline. After numerous healthcare sector related jobs I am so pleased I stumbled across this future career and training path as it's an area which uses lots of skills, is dynamic and challenging."*

**Appendix A – Questionnaire (pdf version only)**

# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

Welcome to the annual survey of students and recent graduates by the Society of Radiographers. This short survey should be completed by:

- all those on an education programme leading to qualification as a radiographer; and
- all those who have graduated from such a programme since January 2011.

It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete and all answers will be anonymous. If you have any questions about the survey please contact Claire Dumbleton at [claired@sor.org](mailto:claired@sor.org)

You will have the option to enter a prize draw at the end of this survey. The prize is your choice of £75 worth of either Amazon or Marks & Spencer vouchers. One prize is available for therapeutic students/graduates and one for diagnostic students/graduates.

## Which year did you start your radiography degree?

- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011
- 2012

## Which year did you / are you due to graduate?

- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016

# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

## How important to you were the following reasons for choosing the subject of radiography?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not relevant
I could meet the entry requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not need to pay tuition fees for this subject.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to help people / contribute to society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think it is likely I will find a job on graduation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have previous experience in healthcare / radiography.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial support was available (e.g. bursary).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was attracted by the potential starting salary on graduation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was attracted by the potential for career development following graduation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was interested in the scientific aspects of radiography.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was interested in a healthcare career.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Did any other factors influence your choice of subject?

## How important to you were the following reasons for choosing your specific course?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not relevant
The university has a good reputation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did not need to pay tuition fees for this course.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course has a good reputation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The course is at a convenient location.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I liked the clinical placement arrangements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Did any other factors influence your choice of course?

We are continuously working to reduce the numbers leaving radiography courses before they have completed their studies.

Your answers to the questions on this page will help us understand why some students do not complete their course.



# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

**Are there any factors which you have found difficult and may have led you to consider leaving the course? (Select all that apply.)**

- Dissatisfaction with the clinical placement
- Personal or family reasons e.g childcare arrangements
- Wrong career choice
- Finding the course too difficult
- Failing parts of the course
- Too much work
- Financial problems
- Travel difficulties
- Dissatisfaction with the education institution
- Dissatisfaction with the course content

Other (please specify)

**Do you know if any other students in your year are considering leaving your course, or have left this academic year?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, do you know why? (Select all that apply.)**

- Personal or family reasons e.g childcare arrangements
- Finding the course too difficult
- Financial problems
- Failing parts of the course
- Too much work
- Travel difficulties
- Dissatisfaction with the course content
- Wrong career choice
- Dissatisfaction with the clinical placement
- Dissatisfaction with the education institution

Other (please describe the reason without identifying the individual)

# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

## Do you have a job arranged for after graduation?

- Yes
- No

## If you do not have a job arranged yet please indicate the main reason for this. (Select one answer only.)

- So far unsuccessful at interview
- Not actively seeking radiography work
- No suitable vacancies
- I am restricted to a specific geographical area

Other (please specify)

## Have you worked in radiography since you graduated?

- Yes
- No

## How important to you are the following items in terms of your expectations of a career in radiography?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Not relevant
Challenging work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role expansion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to specialise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enjoyment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career progression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fair salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Skills and knowledge development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of the content of the role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Do you agree with the following statement?

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Radiography as a career is so far consistent with my expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## If you wish, comment further on whether a career in radiography is meeting your expectations.

## Did you get your first choice of job?

- Yes
- No

## How soon after graduation did you / will you start your first job?

- I do not have a start date yet
- Immediately
- Within one month of graduation
- Within two months of graduation
- Within three months of graduation
- Within four months of graduation
- Within five months of graduation
- Within six months of graduation
- More than six months after graduation
- I do not have a job yet

## Do you feel your course prepared you sufficiently for your first job?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable
- Too early to say

## If you wish, please comment on how prepared you felt for your first job.

## Select the option which best describes the sector of your first job.

- Agency
- Education
- Health service abroad
- Industry
- Ministry of Defence
- NHS
- Private or independent healthcare

Other (please specify)

# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

**As the majority of graduates work for the NHS we are interested in your reasons for working elsewhere. Please describe below.**

**What type of contract is your first job? (A full time contract is generally considered to be 37.5 hours per week.)**

- Permanent (full time)
- Permanent (part time)
- Temporary (full time)
- Temporary (part time)

**If you could choose, which type of contract would you wish to be on for your first job?**

- Permanent (full time)
- Permanent (part time)
- Temporary (full time)
- Temporary (part time)

**Where is your first post?**

- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales
- England - London strategic health authority area
- England - Midlands and East strategic health authority area
- England - North of England strategic health authority area
- England - South of England strategic health authority area
- Outside the UK
- I don't know

**Is this the same geographical area where you completed your radiography degree?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

## If you started your first job outside the geographical area where you studied, why is this?

- I can easily commute
- I chose to relocate
- I chose to return to my home area to work
- I relocated out of necessity for family reasons
- I relocated out of necessity for financial reasons
- There were no suitable local vacancies
- I was unsuccessful at local interviews

Other (please specify)

## If you have not worked in radiography since you graduated, please explain why.

To help you with your job search the Society website has hints and tips on finding a job [here](#).

Your answers to the questions on this page will help us gather evidence on debt levels among radiography students.

## Whilst studying radiography, what type of finance do you / did you rely on? (Select all that apply.)

- Child tax credits
- Credit cards
- Existing savings
- Income from paid employment
- NHS bursary
- Overdraft
- Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)
- Student loan
- Support from family / friends
- University bursary or fund

Other (please specify)

## SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

**When you started your radiography degree, how much were you in debt? (not including mortgage)**

- £0
- £1 - £5,000
- £5,001 - £10,000
- £10,001 - £15,000
- £15,001 - £20,000
- £20,001 - £25,000
- Over £25,000

**On the date of your graduation, how much were you / do you expect to be in debt? (not including mortgage)**

- £0
- £1 - £5,000
- £5,001 - £10,000
- £10,001 - £15,000
- £15,001 - £20,000
- £20,001 - £25,000
- Over £25,000

# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

## Education institution where you studied / are studying on a programme leading to qualification as a radiographer.

- Anglia Ruskin University
- Bangor University
- Birmingham City University
- Canterbury Christ Church University
- Cardiff University
- City University
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- Kingston University & St George's, University of London
- London South Bank University
- Queen Margaret University
- Sheffield Hallam University
- The Robert Gordon University
- University Campus Suffolk
- University of Bradford
- University of Cumbria
- University of Derby
- University of Exeter
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Leeds
- University of Liverpool
- University of Portsmouth
- University of Salford
- University of Teesside
- University of the West of England
- University of Ulster

Other (please specify)

## Degree discipline

- Diagnostic
- Therapeutic

# SoR Annual Survey of Students and Recent Graduates

**Please select your age group.**

- Under 20
- Aged 20-29
- Aged 30-39
- Aged 40-49
- Aged over 50

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

If you wish to be entered in the prize draw, please email [claired@sor.org](mailto:claired@sor.org) quoting "Prize Draw 2012" in the subject field by the end of July. Please indicate whether you specialise in diagnostic or therapeutic radiography. The prize is your choice of £75 worth of either Amazon or Marks & Spencer vouchers. One prize is available for therapeutic students/graduates and one for diagnostic students/graduates.

**If there are any additional comments you would like to make related to this survey, please use the box below.**