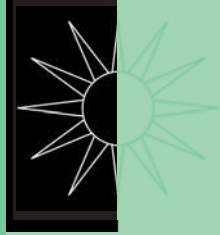


THE COLLEGE OF  
RADIOGRAPHERS



RADIOGRAPHY

**Guidance on  
Approval and  
Accreditation  
of Practice  
Placements  
at all Levels of  
Pre-Registration  
Education**

THE SOCIETY OF  
RADIOGRAPHERS





# Guidance on Approval and Accreditation of Practice Placements at all Levels of Pre-Registration Education

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## Contents

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Introduction	5
Development and Approval and Accreditation of Practice Placements for all Levels of Pre-Registration Education	6
Process for Accreditation	6
Arrangements Between Placement Providers and Education Providers	7
Guidance for Placement Providers	7
Responsibilities: Education Providers	8
Assessment Criteria for Quality Practice Education	8
The Monitoring and Evaluation of Practice Placements	9
Practice Placement Visits	10
References	10

# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 This document details policy for the accreditation by the Society and College of Radiographers of a clinical department as an approved practice placement provider for pre-registration learners. It provides guidance on the approval process leading to recognition of a clinical department as an approved clinical placement in association with approved education programme(s) and education centre(s) or as an approved specialist placement provider, for example a dedicated paediatric department. Approval will encompass the collaborative arrangements between education and placement providers and the total numbers of pre-registration learners which the site can accommodate.
- 1.2 This revised and developed approval and accreditation policy of the professional body provides guidance and direction to practice placement providers to ensure that they are able to provide effective learning for all learners, at all levels, in a resource and capacity constrained environment.
- 1.3 This guidance specifically addresses the clinical education of the range of students at all levels of pre-registration education and training, including:
  - Trainee assistant practitioners;
  - Students on BSc(Hons) or PgDip or Masters programmes in Radiography leading to eligibility for registration;
  - Radiographers seeking to return to practice;
  - Overseas trained radiographers undergoing a period of adaptation.
- 1.4 The Society and College aim, as outlined in *The Approval and Accreditation of Education Programmes and Professional Practice in Radiography: Policy and Principles* (College of Radiographers 2004), to encourage departments of Clinical Imaging and Radiotherapy and Oncology to become coherent and supportive learning environments, with clear policies and procedures in place to demonstrate adoption of the complete career progression framework, and the opportunity and support for all staff to develop their careers and engage in life long learning. This is in alignment with current Department of Health policy in respect of facilitating work place training and development (*Meeting the Challenge: A Strategy for the Allied Health Professions*, DOH, 2000).
- 1.5 Approval and accreditation of clinical departments for all levels of pre-registration practice education is part of the wider framework of the Society and College of Radiographers recognised not only as providing high quality practice placements, but also as accredited learning departments that support the career development of the radiography workforce in line with the professions career development framework, as outlined in the document *Education and Professional Development: Moving Ahead* (College of Radiographers, 2003).
- 1.6 The following guidance takes account of the findings and recommendations of the report *Clinical Education and Training: Capacity and Quality* (College of Radiographers, 2004) and supports diverse, creative and practical solutions to providing placement education, provided that the quality of practice education is maintained. The College of Radiographers commends the publication *Placements in Focus: Guidance for Education in Practice for Health Care Professions* (ENB & DOH, 2001) which provides “practical and contemporary guidance to enhance the quality and innovative development of practice placements” (ibid, p 6).
- 1.7 The term Education Provider has been used throughout this document because, although higher education institutions have been the main providers of education, provision of education for assistants may involve further education establishments and the placement provider may deliver some programmes at pre-registration level ‘in-house’.

## **2. Development and Approval and Accreditation of Practice Placements for all Levels of Pre-Registration Education**

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- 2.1 The College of Radiographers will approve and accredit clinical learning on a NHS Trust or Board-wide, employer-wide or departmental basis in order to identify and recognise all potential learning opportunities available.
- 2.2 In relation to any approval and accreditation process, recommendations will be made regarding:
- Appropriate numbers of learners a practice placement can support taking into account its staffing, resources, range of examinations, workload and facilities available for learners.
  - Support mechanisms such as clinical supervision and mentorship and training of staff to undertake these roles.
  - Contracting and funding arrangements. Where a placement provider is providing clinical education for a range of learners in collaboration with more than one education provider this may be complex.
- 2.3 The College of Radiographers will normally approve clinical departments for an overall total number of students that the site can support at any one time.
- 2.4 In advising education providers preparing for validation or periodic review of programmes, it is expected that discussion would take place to encourage education providers to adopt best practice in fulfilling their responsibilities, as identified in section 6 of this document.

## **3. Process for Accreditation**

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- 3.1.1 Departments of Clinical Imaging or Radiotherapy and Oncology wishing to become a College of Radiographers' approved placement for pre-registration learners or seeking advice following an approach from an education provider should notify the Approval and Accreditation Department at the Society and College of Radiographers at [approval@sor.org](mailto:approval@sor.org) or on 020 7740 7200.
- 3.1.2 Alternatively, an Education Provider seeking to place students in a practice placement which it has not previously used may make the initial approach to the College of Radiographers. This should be following initial discussion with the placement provider and any other education provider placing students/trainees with that provider.
- 3.2 The College of Radiographers will nominate an advisor, who will advise on the issues identified in 2.2 and other matters relevant to the proposed provision.
- 3.3 Dialogue and exchange of information will then take place between representatives of the proposed placement site and the education provider/s and the College of Radiographers' adviser. Communication may be undertaken remotely eg, electronically, or the advisor may visit the department to view facilities. If a visit takes place the placement provider, or associated education provider, will be responsible for the advisor's expenses.
- 3.4 Following satisfactory, constructive liaison, the advisor will submit a summary report with a recommendation for approval to the Approval and Accreditation Board of the Society and College of Radiographers.

## 4. Arrangements Between Placement Providers and Education Providers

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- 4.1 The Society and College of Radiographers expects that, normally, there will be a formal agreement or memorandum of agreement in place between an education provider and associated placement providers, this could be under the aegis of the local education commissioning, contracting or funding arrangements where appropriate.
- 4.2 This agreement should specify arrangements to assure the quality of clinical learning opportunities for all identified learners proposed for the site. It should also identify arrangements to enable spare capacity to be identified and made available through secondary agreements or contracts to other learners.
- 4.3 Some clinical departments have specialist facilities available that are in great demand as learning opportunities by a number of education providers. Arrangements should be in place to ensure that all learners have equity in learning opportunities, without compromising the quality of clinical service delivery or clinical education and training provision.

## 5. Guidance for Placement Providers

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- 5.1 There are a number of quality and standards related factors that placement providers will need to address in order to assure effective provision.
- 5.2 The practice placement staff need to have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes expected to be achieved by each type of learner where an education provider is responsible for a programme of learning. These should be agreed with the education provider(s) and should include identification of mechanisms required to operate any specific student assessment or review processes.
- 5.3 In the case of trainee posts and part time in-service education programmes for employees of clinical sites, protected time for clinical education and study should be identified in the training regime. These students will be included in the total student numbers for which the placement is approved.
- 5.4 Special consideration should be given to identifying reliable learning opportunities for first year undergraduate students, as this is where there is greatest difficulty in meeting demand. This should take into account that their requirements may overlap with those of other learners such as trainee assistant practitioners.
- 5.5 Clinical sites will be expected to demonstrate how the funded staffing establishment reflects the contribution of staff time required to support clinical supervision, education and training, as recommended in *Clinical Education and Training: Capacity and Quality* (College of Radiographers, 2004).

## **6. Responsibilities: Education Providers**

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- 6.1 The quality of practice placements and practice education rests primarily with the education providers, who must work closely with their practice placement providers to secure quality education.
- 6.2 Although practice placements have tended to be associated with one education provider, this is no longer the case. Where more than one education provider is involved it will be the responsibility of all stakeholders to demonstrate effective collaborative arrangements and agree appropriate mechanisms for operation of the partnership.
- 6.3 Novel placements may be incorporated into students' practice education programme; for example, health centres with diagnostic imaging facilities or cancer support units, mobile facilities, and private clinics. These opportunities are entirely appropriate although for such sites, the maintenance of effective standards of student experience should be evident.
- 6.4 Education providers need to demonstrate how equity of the student experience in practice education is achieved and how the clinical environments used are able to support the different learning needs of diverse cohorts of students.
- 6.5 Education providers need to demonstrate that coherent and appropriate learning outcomes exist for all practice placements; and that the assessment of these is integral to their programmes. These should be well documented and training provided to enable clinical staff to support specific groups of learners/trainees. Appropriate systems to enable audit and evaluation of the student experience must be in place. While the nature of programmes is likely to become more diverse, it is, nevertheless, expected that practice learning outcomes reflect competency and initial fitness for practice and registration.
- 6.6 Education providers must ensure that confirmation of the supernumerary status of students is established, and arrangements for the provision of honorary contracts are in place, as appropriate.

## **7. Assessment Criteria for Quality Practice Education**

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- 7.1 Criteria for the assessment of placement sites are based on the need to assure quality and consistency of the student experience, effective capacity and support.
- 7.2 In order for accreditation as an approved practice placement provider the clinical site must identify the range of opportunities for practice education for each specific group of pre-registration learners. Education providers together with placement providers will need to ensure and demonstrate that the following have been considered and judged to be appropriate:
  - The range of practice education opportunities available within the placement sites.
  - The overall volume and range of work undertaken in the placement department.
  - The range, nature and standard of the equipment and modalities available to support practice education.
  - The maximum number of students that the placement department can manage and support effectively, taking into account the potential for multiple education provider involvement. Consideration will also need to be given to the number of students that can be associated with individual examination or treatment rooms where it is expected that two or more students will be rostered simultaneously.
  - Staffing arrangements to provide pastoral support, as well as practice education should be explicit. As part of this, the number of registered radiographers and other qualified staff available to support the proposed maximum number of students placed in the practice placement department at any one time needs to be identified.



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- Education and training specifically associated with enabling clinical staff to be effective in their various roles relative to students' practice education and development must be specified. Good practice would encourage clinical staff to gain recognised qualifications or academic credit for their development.
  - Practice departments may be working extended days and weeks and may consider offering practice education to students throughout its normal operational hours. In such circumstances, proper consideration must be given to the support provided to students and to how the extended working day or week may be used to provide effective practice education.
  - At any one time practice placements may have a range of students and learners to manage, for example, trainee assistant practitioners, those seeking to return to practice, and students from other education providers on elective placements. Evidence should be provided that demonstrates effective mechanisms for the management of such diversity.
  - The general environment apparent within a placement site as may be judged through considering the cohesion of the work force, the education and development culture of the placement, and the attitudes of staff towards supporting learners. Indicators of placements that are likely to provide the necessary quality of practice education and student support include evidence of a full and active continuing professional development programme for all of its staff; role development initiatives operating successfully; research and other academic or clinical collaborative work with the education provider, plans to introduce advanced and consultant level practitioners, and evidence that good clinical governance, risk management and health and safety policies and procedures are in place and operating effectively.
  - Student learning facilities, which need to include electronic access to the education providers e-learning and communication systems.
  - Effectiveness of liaison arrangements between the placement provider and the education provider to support practice learning.
  - Robust mechanisms for the evaluation of practice education provision which encompasses input from students and clinical staff, as well as the education provider(s).

## **8. The Monitoring and Evaluation of Practice Placements**

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- 8.1 The regular monitoring and evaluation of practice placements is the collaborative responsibility of education providers and placement providers. Such systems should be systematic and measurable. They should demonstrate a logical and contextual linkage to institutional ongoing quality monitoring and enhancement arrangements. The College of Radiographers does not intend to add to the burden of documentation and review.
- 8.2 Education providers and practice placement providers must ensure that practice placements:
- i) Provide a stimulating learning environment which enables the learning outcomes to be achieved;
  - ii) Have sufficient numbers of clinical staff with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the support of students and their education;
  - iii) Are able to demonstrate ongoing staff training, to include a robust programme of staff development;
  - iv) Have adequate facilities to support the approved number of students at all levels of pre-registration education and training;
  - v) Have clearly established lines of communication and liaison with the education provider(s).
  - vi) Demonstrate compliance with current legislation including health and safety legislation and ionising radiation regulations

- 8.3 There should be a robust agreement between the education provider(s) and the practice placement provider(s) specifying the duties and expectations of each.

## 9. Practice Placement Visits

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- 9.1 A visit to a practice placement may be required if the placement and advisor consider this would enable more effective clarification of arrangements.
- 9.2 The College of Radiographers reserves the right to visit a practice placement to satisfy itself that the site meets requirements for new or continued approval as a practice placement for pre-registration students.
- 9.3 Placement visits are intended to be an opportunity for dialogue. Representatives of the clinical and education providers may be able to provide a more effective picture of the proposed provision whilst the College advisor will offer constructive advice.
- 9.4 Reports of such visits will reflect in realistic terms the spectrum of opinion that is expressed. Opinions expressed by staff and students may be recorded but statements should not be attributed to named individuals.

## References

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