

# Position statement: College of Radiographers update on practice-based learning hours for pre-registration diagnostic radiography and therapeutic radiography programmes

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**SoR**  
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## Background

The College of Radiographers (CoR) has an established, reputable process for approving education programmes, ensuring that both new and existing pre- and post-registration radiography education programmes meet the highest standards. Through this approvals process, the CoR:

- secures consistency of quality standards of clinical imaging and oncology education
- aligns standards of clinical practice with the profession's Education and Career Framework (College of Radiographers, 2022)
- supports and encourages the development of programmes that are at the forefront of education and of developing clinical imaging and oncology practice
- promotes and supports flexibility in the design and delivery of education through an outcomes-based approach
- disseminates guidance on best practice in clinical imaging and oncology education and practice.

The CoR supports and enables programme teams to be creative and innovative when designing and delivering programmes, while ensuring that each programme is contemporary and of the highest quality. Until now, the CoR has not outlined specific guidance for practice-based learning hours. However, as the professional body, the CoR recognises the changing context and increasing challenges faced by education providers.

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (LTWP) highlights a projected shortfall in staff by 2037 and targets increasing the Allied Health Professions (AHP) workforce by over 70,000, with an emphasis on training more radiographers through apprenticeship routes. To meet these workforce demands, radiography education has expanded, with established providers introducing various new pre-registration routes, including postgraduate pre-registration and apprenticeship pathways. Similarly, there has been an increase in new education providers, with many seeking CoR approval for multiple training pathways. The resulting complexity and increased demands have added pressure on an already stretched practice-based learning environment. Although innovations such as shift work, extended placement hours, various supervision models, and expanded practice-based learning opportunities across the four pillars of practice have been helpful in some cases, these approaches are not yet widely adopted and do not fully address the limitations in practice-based learning capacity.

In recognition of these challenges and to support workforce growth while maintaining the quality of practice-based learning, the CoR is now introducing guidance on the recommended minimum number of practice-based learning hours within pre-registration radiography programmes.

To support the development of the future workforce, NHS England Workforce, Training and Education commissioned work across the AHP bodies to consider practice-based learning hours, standardised assessment and simulation. This guidance forms part of the outputs from the detailed work programme, specifically in relation to practice-based learning hours.

## **College of Radiographers position on practice-based learning hours**

***Following a review of the evidence surrounding practice-based learning hours, the CoR proposes a minimum threshold of 1200 hours. This is the minimum number of practice-based learning hours that should be completed by the end of a programme for pre-registration learners completing standard route pre-registration diagnostic radiography and therapeutic radiography programmes in the UK (not applicable to apprenticeship pathways).***

***The 1200 hours can include practice-based learning across the four pillars of clinical, education, leadership, and research but the hours across each setting should remain proportionate to meeting the programme learning outcomes and the HCPC Standards of Proficiency.***

***Based on the available evidence on simulation-based education in radiography, typically 120 hours of simulation-based education is recommended as an adjunct to 1200 practice-based learning hours. As the evidence continues to develop for simulation-based education, guidance will be reviewed and updated accordingly.***

## **Frequently asked questions**

*When will the change be implemented?*

The minimum threshold of practice-based learning hours will be implemented from 1 August 2025. From this date, all education providers seeking CoR programme approval or re-approval, in line with the standard approval period of 5 years, will be encouraged to demonstrate a minimum threshold of 1200 hours for practice-based learning.

*If I have a current CoR approved programme with more than 1200 practice-based learning hours what action should I take?*

Providers will be encouraged to consider aligning the practice-based learning hours to the recommended guidance of 1200 hours at the point of their scheduled re-approval. This means that providers of currently CoR approved provision will not be expected to seek early re-approval of their programmes.

However, for approved programmes that exceed 1200 practice-based learning hours and where the provider would like to make changes in alignment with the minimum threshold hours ahead of their re-approval date, a change request may be submitted via the change panel process. Information on the change panel process can be accessed [here](#).

*If I have a current CoR approved programme with less than 1200 practice-based learning hours - what action should I take?*

Practice-based learning is a key component of the programme approvals process, therefore for those CoR-approved programmes that do not currently meet the recommended minimum threshold of 1200-hours, providers will need to present a rationale and supporting evidence for this at their next scheduled re-approval or where early re-approval is sought or required following submission of a change request via the CoR change process.

*What does this guidance mean for simulation-based education?*

The CoR are supportive of simulated learning, and recently commissioned a project to develop the evidence base on the efficacy of simulation (funded by NHS England). As the evidence develops on this topic, the guidance will be reviewed accordingly. The current research indicates that alongside 1200 of practice-based learning, 120 hours of simulation-based learning is recommended.



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