



Analysis of student and recently qualified radiographers survey 2014

Responsible person: Eugene Statnikov

Published: Monday, September 22, 2014

Summary

In July 2014, the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) surveyed current radiography students and recently qualified radiographers to gather information about their motivations, finances and experiences. Over 600 respondents answered a range of questions in an online questionnaire about the reasons they chose radiography, their student debt and their experiences in their first job. This document presents an analysis of this survey.

Executive Summary

In July 2014, the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) surveyed current radiography students and recently qualified radiographers to gather information about their motivations, finances and experiences. Over 600 respondents answered a range of questions in an online questionnaire about the reasons they chose radiography, their student debt 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 they are interested in a healthcare career; want to help people / contribute to society; feel it is likely they will find a job after qualification; have potential to develop their career; and are interested in the scientific aspects of radiography. The key reasons for choosing a specific course are the course/university reputation and the clinical placement arrangements.
- The main reasons for not completing a course are the same for both diagnostic and therapeutic radiography: failing parts of the course; wrong career choice; personal or family reasons; dissatisfaction with the clinical placement; and finding the course too difficult.
- The median respondent was in debt by £7,000 (excluding mortgage) on the date of their qualification, or was expecting to be.
- The proportion of recently qualified diagnostic radiographers with jobs arranged in July of their qualification year has seen a statistically significant increase since the low of 46% in 2011 to 83% in 2014. The proportion of recently qualified therapeutic radiographers with jobs arranged in July of their qualification year remains steady around 73%. The main reason radiographers who qualified in 2014 give for not yet having a job arranged is that they have been so far unsuccessful at interview.
- 79% of radiographers who qualified in 2013 and are currently working, started their first job within 2 months of qualifying. The increase in this percentage since 2011 (when it was 56%) is statistically significant indicating that qualified radiographers are starting their first jobs sooner than in 2011.

- 88% of working recently qualified radiographers found a job with their preferred type of contract (full time or part time and permanent or temporary). This is a statistically significant increase over the low of 73% in 2011. The number of recently qualified radiographers starting on temporary contracts has had a statistically significant reduction from its peak of 22% in 2011 to 11% in this year's survey.
- 82% of radiographers who qualified in 2013 said it was completely or mostly true that their radiography course prepared them sufficiently for their first job. The related comments cited by more than one respondent are that clinical placements are important in helping students feel prepared; it is impossible to feel completely prepared; and that there is insufficient theatre training in courses.
- Radiographers who qualified in 2013 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, enjoyment, job security and skills and knowledge development.
- Radiographers who qualified in 2013 are very positive in their assessment of their first year working as a qualified radiographer: 86% said it is completely or mostly true 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 appreciation of their radiography course, appreciation of this survey, dissatisfaction with their clinical placements, and financial issues they encountered during their studies.

1. Introduction

This document presents an analysis of an online survey of students and recently qualified radiographers run by the SCoR in July 2014. The survey was targeted at current radiography students and radiographers who had qualified since 2013. Respondents were asked about their motivations for studying radiography, details of their finances and their experiences since qualifying.

The survey covered as many students and recently qualified radiographers as possible. Around 3,800 potential subjects were identified from the SCoR 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 survey.

The questionnaire was answered by 617 individuals (a 16% response rate). It was designed to ask respondents different questions depending on their year of qualification: current students were asked questions about the reasons they chose to study radiography and why some students did not complete the course, and recently qualified radiographers were asked about their experiences in their first job. All respondents were asked questions about their level of debt on qualification. Each question, therefore, has a different number of responses which is displayed as an 'n' figure on each graph, where appropriate.

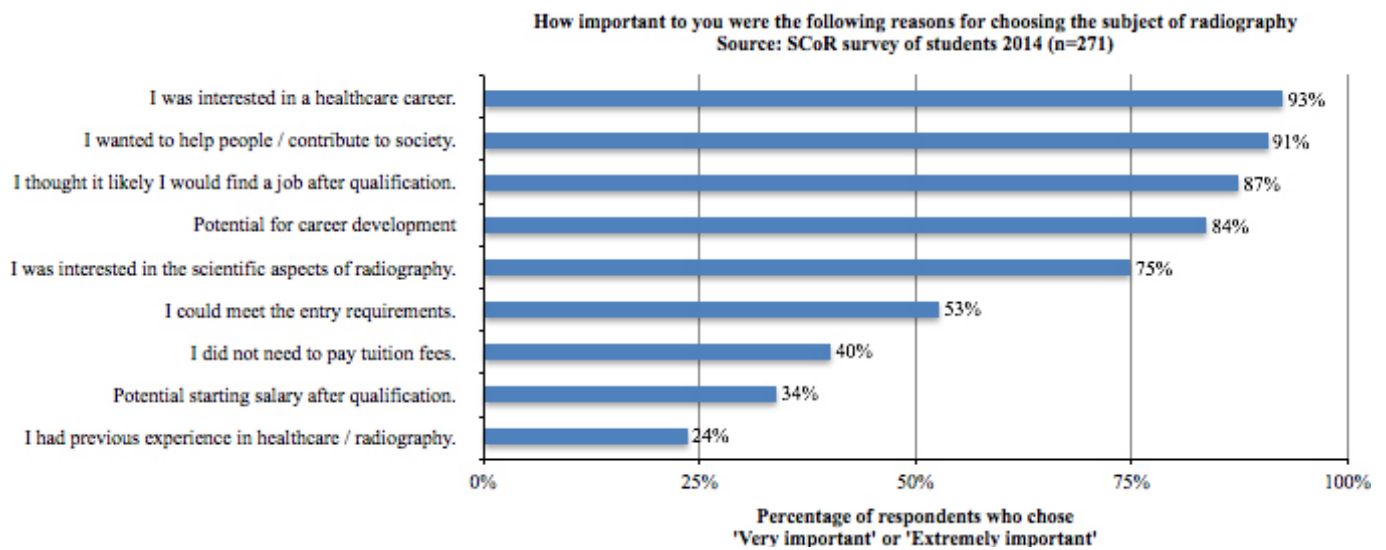
The results are mainly displayed using descriptive statistics. Where there are key differences from last year's survey or between categories of respondents, a statistical test (t-test) is used to determine, with 95% confidence, if the differences are statistically significant or could just be explained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

2. Pre-registration education

2.1 Reasons for studying radiography

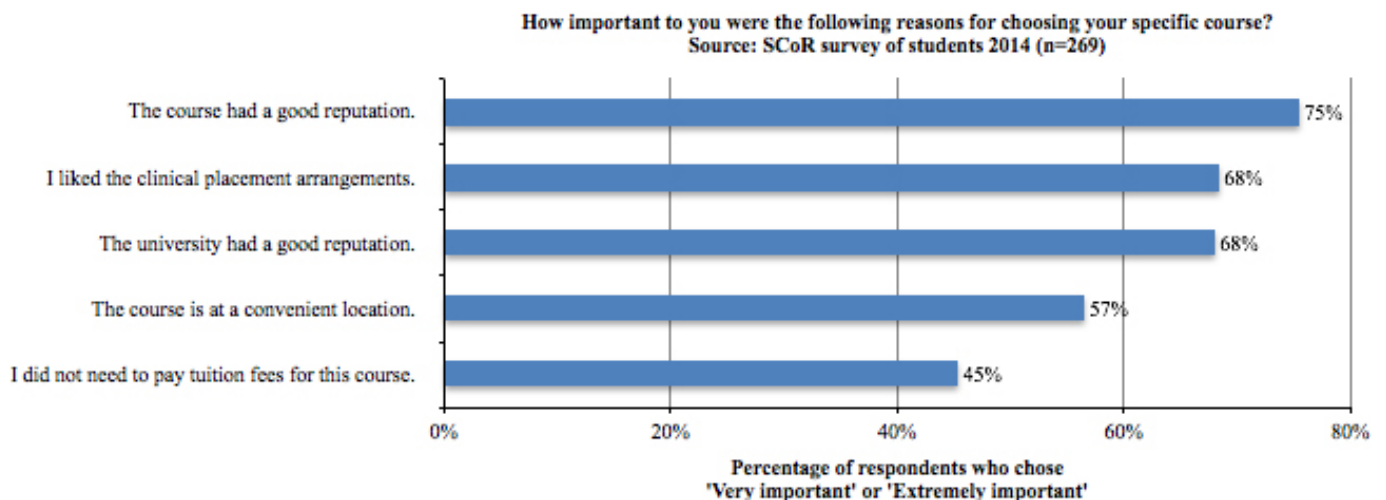
The main reasons students give for choosing the subject of radiography are they are interested in a healthcare career; want to help people / contribute to society; feel it is likely they will find a job after

qualification; have potential to develop their career; and are interested in the scientific aspects of radiography. Financial considerations are considered less important by respondents.



2.2 Reasons for choosing specific course

The key reasons for choosing a specific course are the course/university reputation and the clinical placement arrangements.



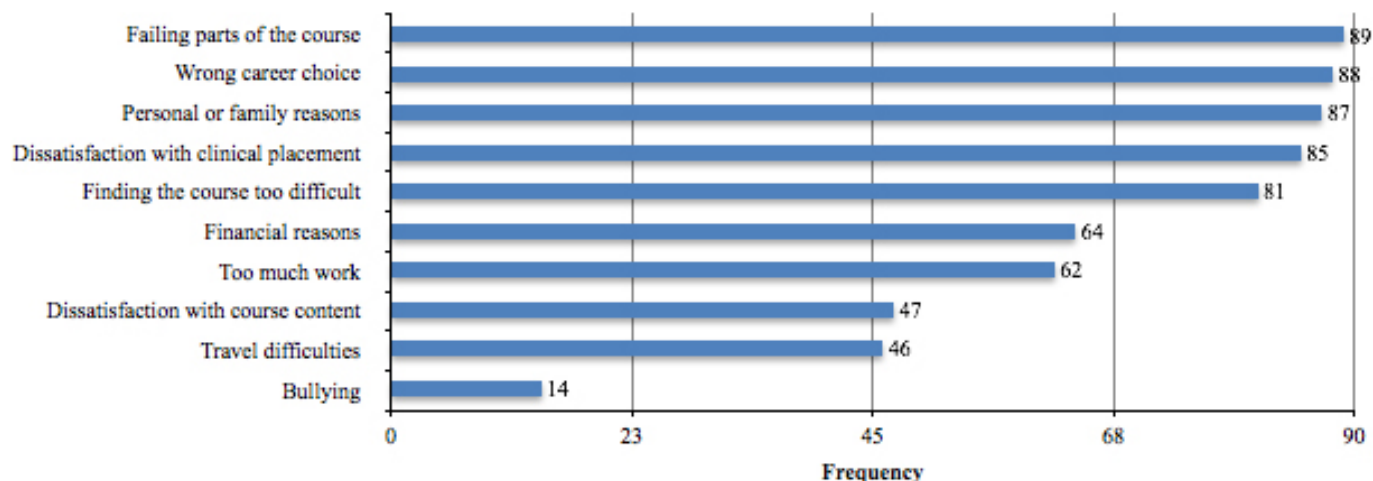
2.3 Reasons for not completing the course

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 respondents 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 and therapeutic radiography.

The main reasons for not completing a course are the same for both diagnostic and therapeutic radiography: failing parts of the course; wrong career choice; personal or family reasons; dissatisfaction with clinical placement; and finding the course too difficult. In the free-text area, the only additional reason mentioned by more than one respondent was illness, which was mentioned by four respondents.

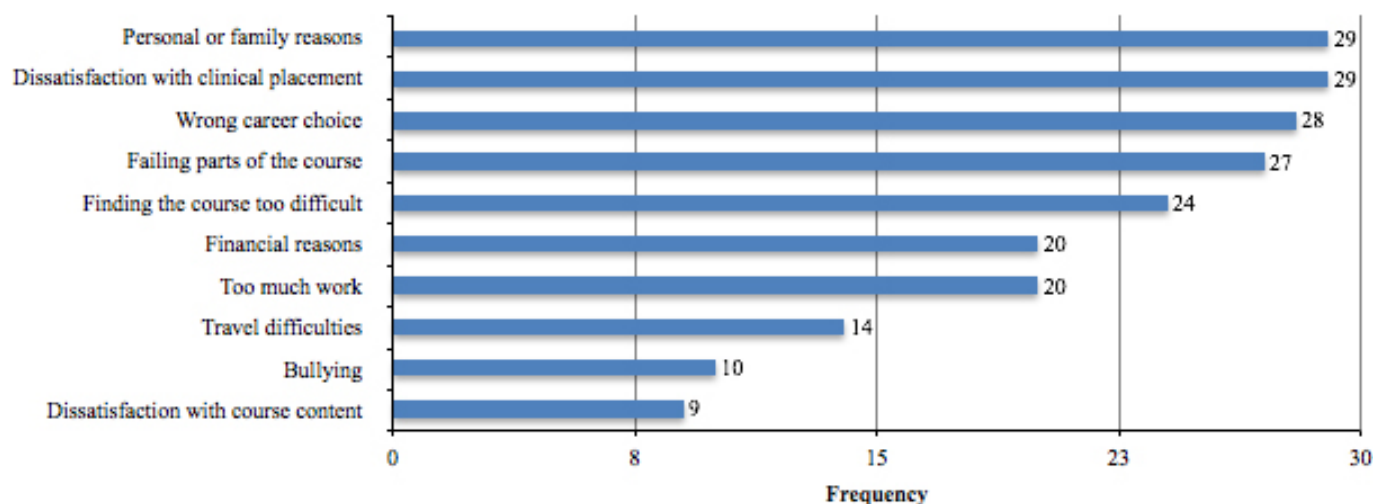
Reasons why students do not complete the course - Diagnostic

Source: SCoR survey of students 2014



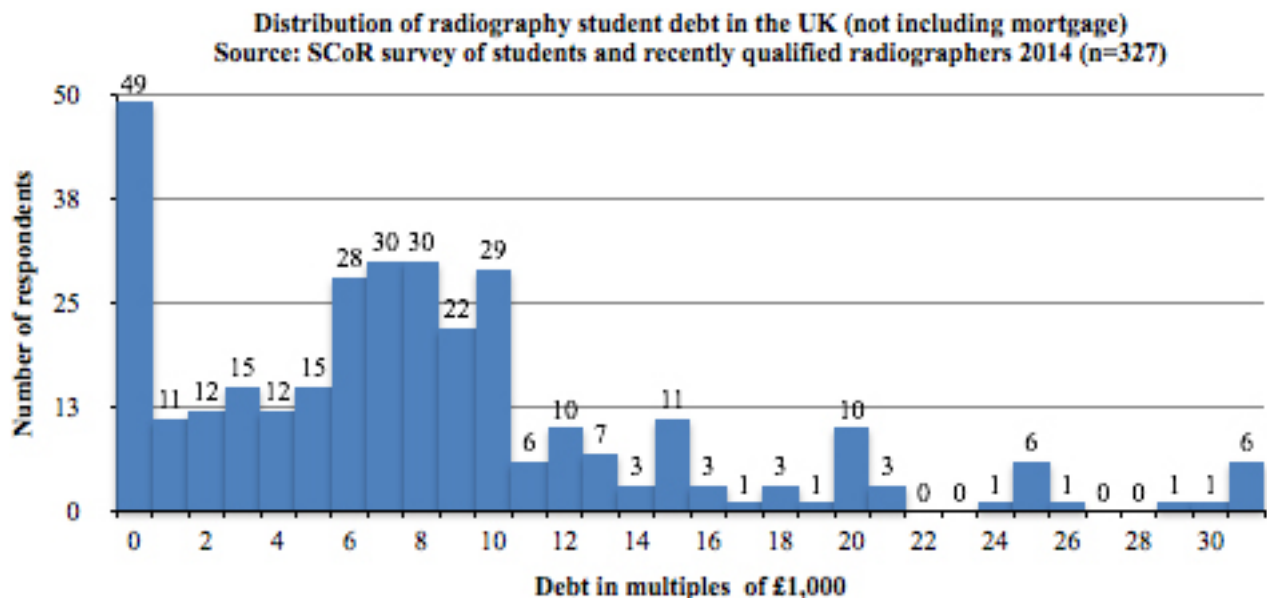
Reasons why students do not complete the course - Therapeutic

Source: SCoR survey of students 2014

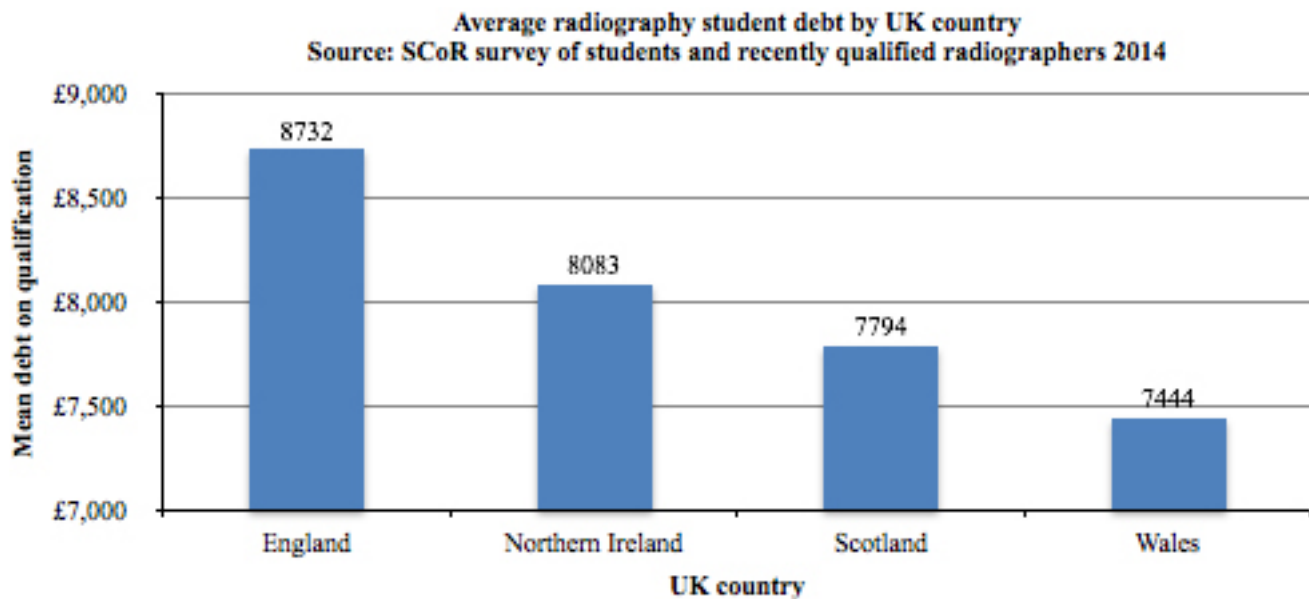


3. Student debt

The median respondent was in debt by £7,000 (excluding mortgage) on the date of their qualification, or was expecting to be. (UK median debt = £7,000; UK mean debt = £8,486)



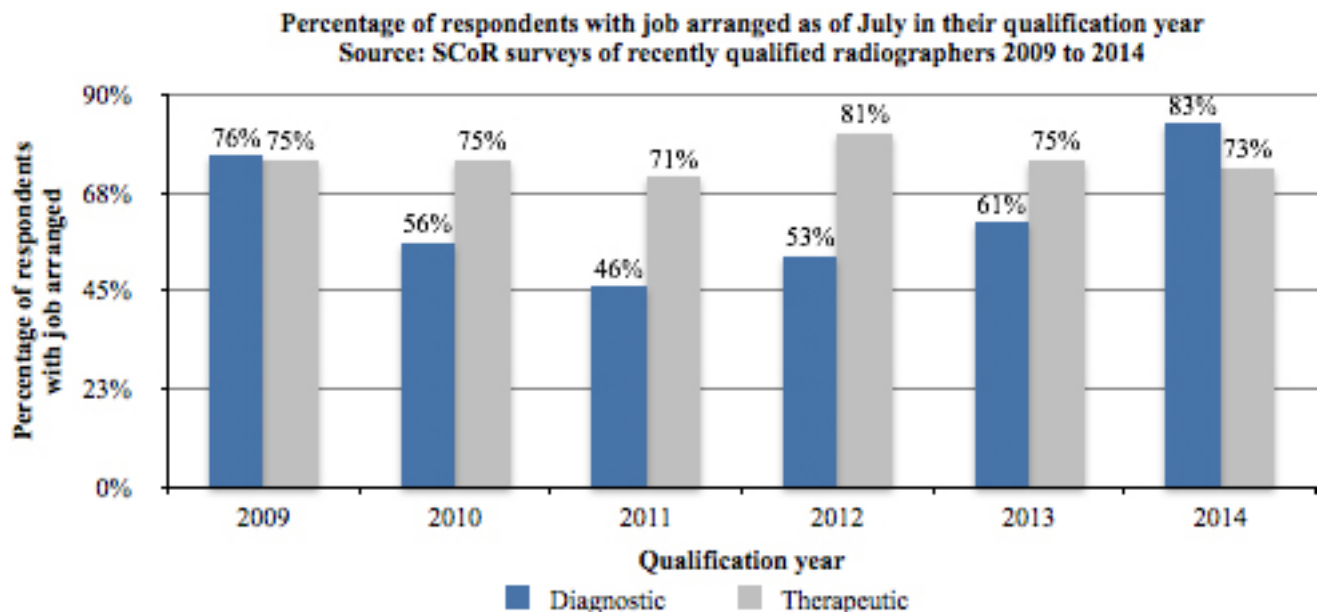
Analysing this data by UK country shows England with the highest mean debt of £8,732. However, the differences between the UK countries are not statistically significant; the sample sizes from outside England are too small to discount that the differences may simply be down to random chance.



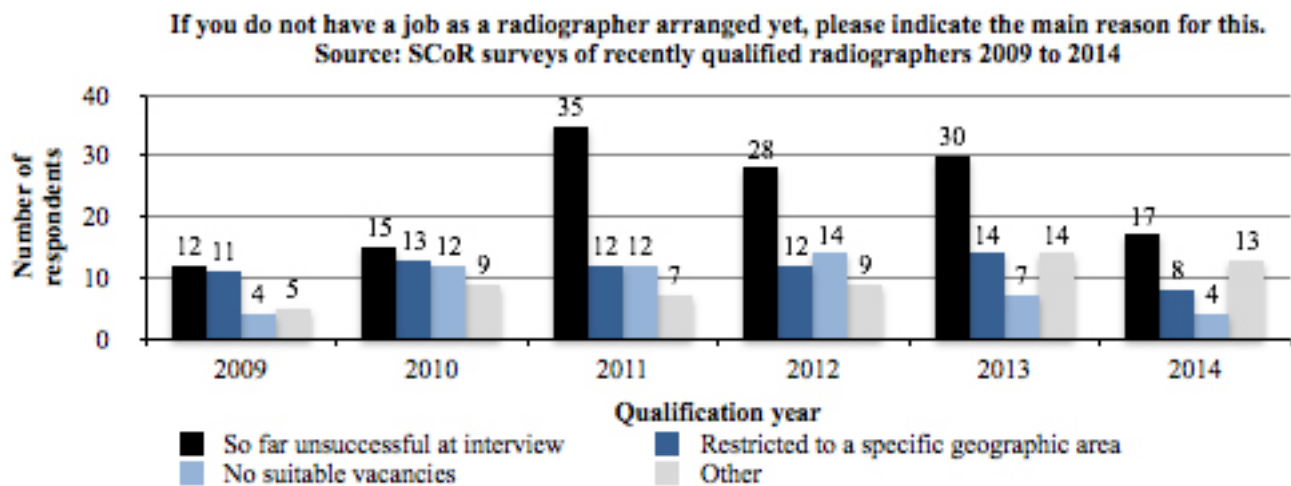
4. First job

4.1 Arranging first job

The proportion of recently qualified diagnostic radiographers with jobs arranged in July of their qualification year has seen a statistically significant increase since the low of 46% in 2011 to 83% in 2014. The variations seen in the proportion of recently qualified therapeutic radiographers with jobs arranged in July of their qualification year are not statistically significant i.e. they could simply be explained by random chance.



The main reason radiographers who qualified in 2014 give for not yet having a job arranged is that they have been so far unsuccessful at interview. In the 'Other' category, free text responses cited by more than one respondent are that they have not yet attended an interview; they are on a waiting list; and illness.

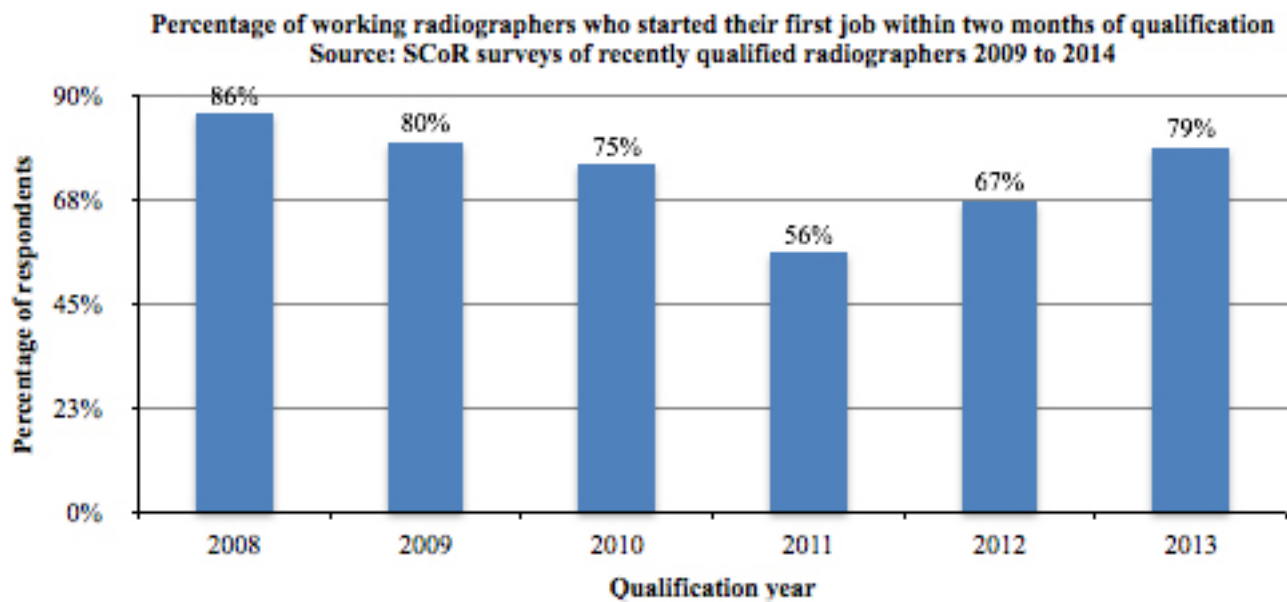
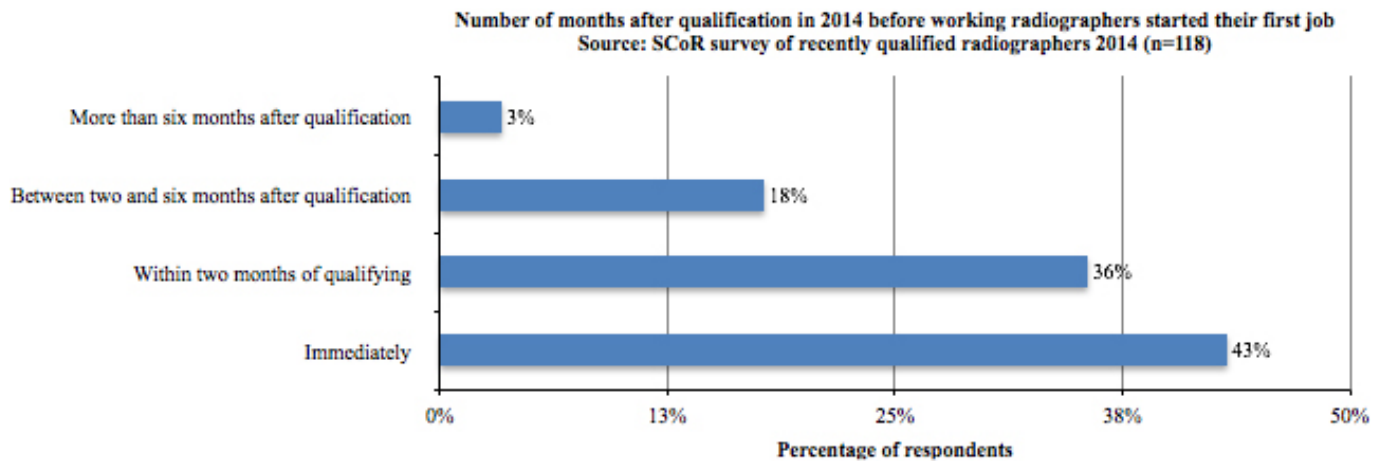


4.2 Starting first job

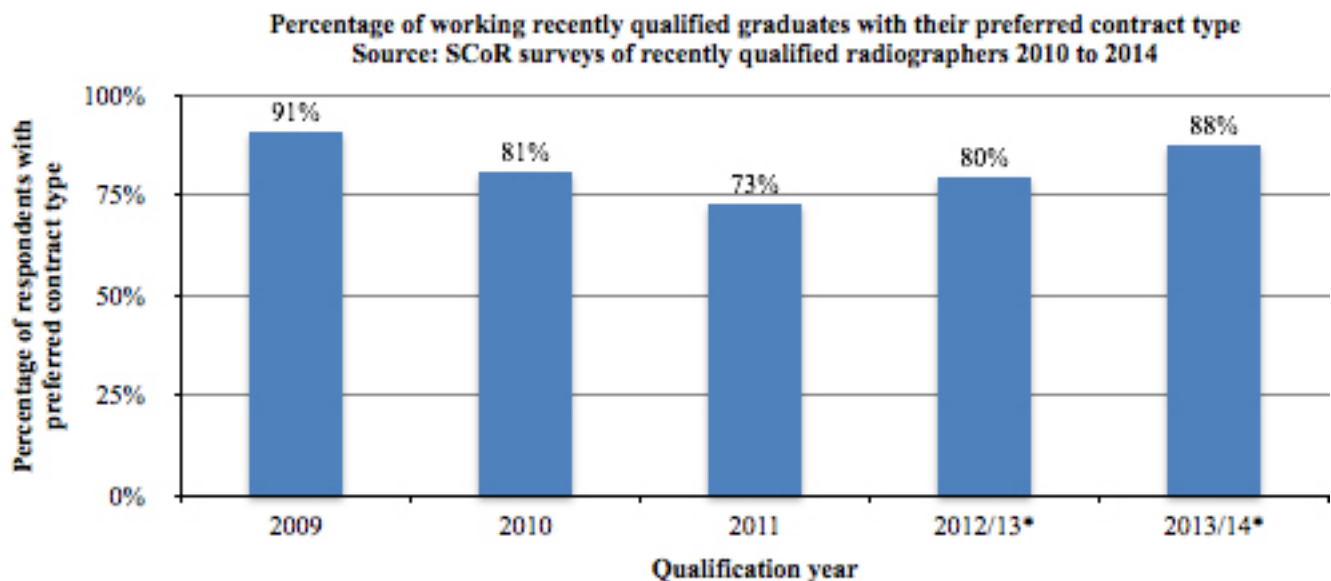
79% of radiographers who qualified in 2013 and are currently working, started their first job within 2 months of qualifying. This is a small increase over the 67% of those who qualified in 2012 and started their first job within two months. This increase is not statistically significant. However, the increase between 2011 (56%) and 2013 (79%) is statistically significant indicating that qualified radiographers are starting their first jobs sooner than in 2011.

Analysis of student and recently qualified radiographers survey 2014

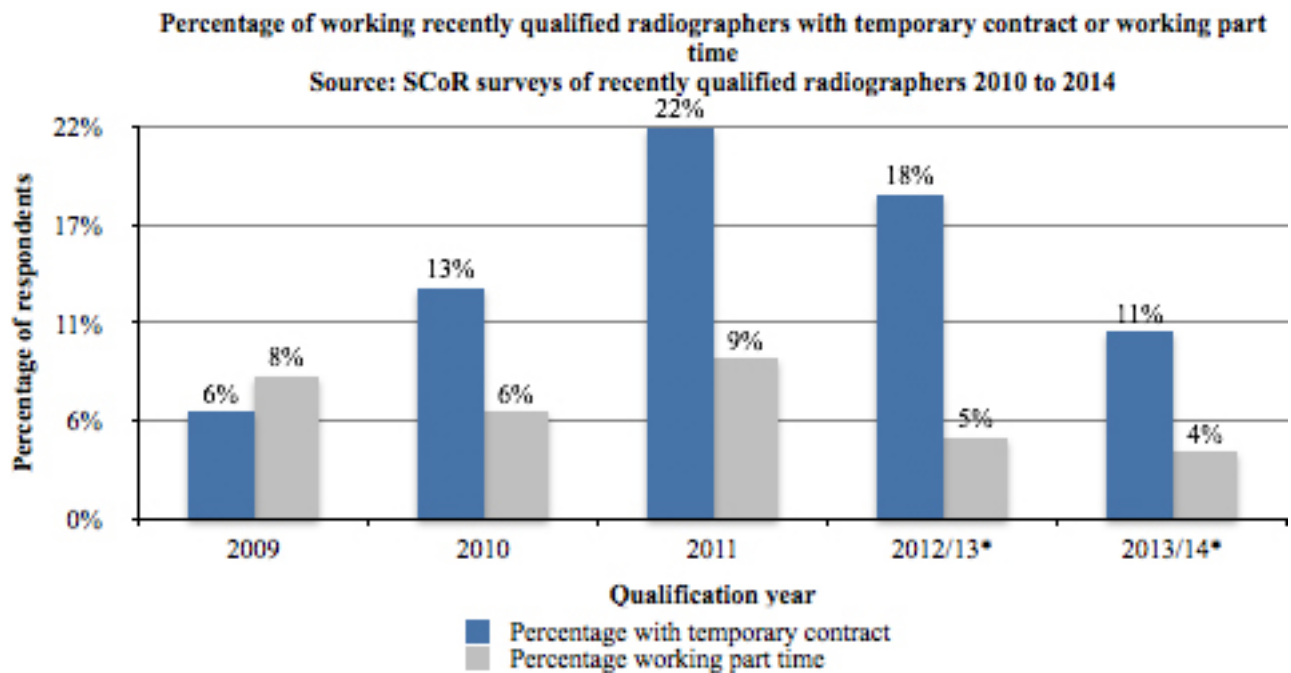
Published on Society of Radiographers (<https://www.sor.org>)



88% of working recently qualified radiographers found a job with their preferred type of contract (full time or part time and permanent or temporary). This is a statistically significant increase over the low of 73% in 2011.



The number of recently qualified radiographers starting on temporary contracts has had a statistically significant reduction from its peak of 22% in 2011 to 11% in this year's survey.

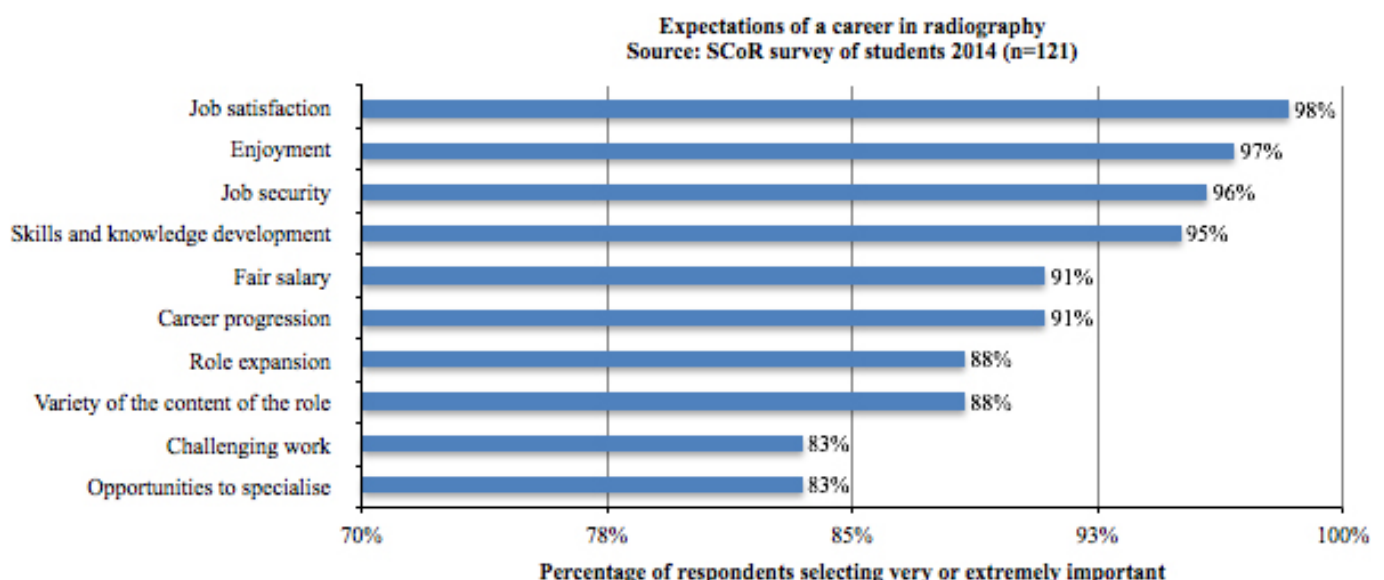


**Note: In the 2013 and 2014 surveys radiographers who had qualified in the current and preceding year were asked about their contract type. In surveys before 2013 only those from the preceding year were asked.*

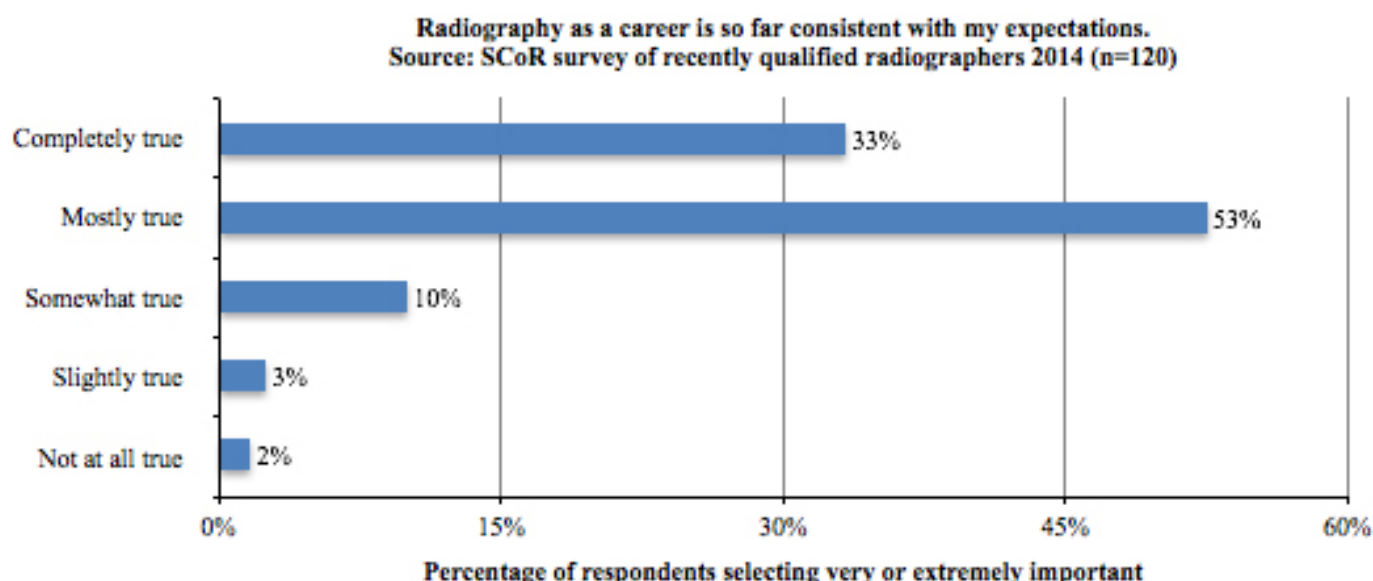
82% of radiographers who qualified in 2013 said it was completely or mostly true that their radiography course prepared them sufficiently for their first job. The related comments cited by more than one respondent are that clinical placements are important in helping students feel prepared; it is impossible to feel completely prepared; and that there is insufficient theatre training in courses.

5. Career expectations

Recently qualified radiographers 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, enjoyment, job security and skills and knowledge development. The two themes mentioned by more than one person in the free-text responses are a good location and a good working environment.



Radiographers who qualified in 2013 are very positive in their assessment of their first year working as a qualified radiographer: 86% said it is completely or mostly true that their career is so far consistent with their expectations. In the free text responses three radiographers commented on how much they enjoyed their job and three radiographers commented on a lack of career progression opportunities.



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 appreciation of their radiography course, appreciation of this survey, dissatisfaction with their clinical placements, and financial issues they encountered during their studies.

Theme: **Appreciation of radiography course** (7)

"The course that I am on is very well organised and all of the tutors offer support and help to all of the students, should they wish to discuss the learning outcomes for an exam or essay and support you if you are experiencing problems at home or generally outside of the University/placement environment. Very good choice."

Theme: **Appreciation of this survey** (7)

"Good range of relevant questions."

Theme: **Dissatisfaction with clinical placement** (5)

"Placement experiences should be more streamlined to give the students the same experience. Or placement rotation like in nursing."

Theme: **Financial issues** (5)

"Financial issues have come up frequently with myself and my peers. Costs of childcare and travel are not well covered by the bursary, although I am very grateful to receive the help. One of the biggest complaints is about the out of pocket expenses for living away on placement. Reimbursement is never as much as is spent, and many students have been known to go in to debt over it. I have even heard of students going hungry as they cannot afford food on top of the costs of placement accommodation."

Theme: **Difficulties with job search** (4)

"There have been barely any jobs advertised in Scotland. Too many new graduates and no where for

them to work. Very disappointing since every hospital department complains of staff shortages."

Theme: **Appreciation of radiography** (4)

"I really love this career, and cannot wait for new modalities to emerge during my time as a radiographer."

Theme: **Debt not wholly due to radiography degree** (4)

"My debt is not wholly due to training as a radiographer."

Theme: **Dissatisfaction with radiography course** (3)

"Workload is high rather than difficult. Courses have high contact hours, particularly on placement with travel, combined with assignments. Time management is challenging and demanding. I enjoy it very much but definitely feel under pressure to manage it all with family life."

Theme: **Unprofessional staff** (3)

"I think there is an attitude of staff in the NHS to treat students badly and more there to do the leg work and errands rather than what we are there for which is learning. Partially due to staffing issues and partly as that's how they were treated as a student so continue the cycle, but it's a major factor in making us wonder whether we want to be stuck like that for the rest of our working life."

Theme: **Up front knowledge is valuable** (3)

"There is probably a big difference between postgraduate diploma students and undergraduates. Not that some of the postgraduate students did not find out this profession was not for them, but most of them enter the course rather well informed."

Appendix A - Questionnaire

[Questionnaire \(pdf version only\)](#)

Source URL: <https://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/analysis-student-and-recently-qualified-radiographers-survey-2014>