



CAREERS IN RADIO THERAPY

THERAPEUTIC RADIOGRAPHER



EAST OF ENGLAND
RADIO THERAPY
NETWORK

WHAT IS A THERAPEUTIC RADIOGRAPHER?

Therapeutic Radiographers specialise in the planning, delivery, and care of patients having radiotherapy (treatment with high energy radiation) most of whom have cancer. Therapeutic Radiographers can treat patients of all ages and sometimes treat benign (non-cancerous) conditions. We are the only healthcare professionals to train solely in cancer treatment and care, and operate a wide range of state of the art equipment.

Therapeutic Radiographers are one of many Allied Health Professions and work as a multidisciplinary team including clinical oncologists, medical physicists, and nurses.

Studying therapeutic radiography is interesting and challenging with excellent employment opportunities.

You might be interested in the career if you are interested in science (particularly biology) and healthcare.

GLOSSARY

AfC – Agenda for Change. The pay scale and conditions for most professionals in the NHS

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

HCPC – Health and Care Professions Council

QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED

At least 5 GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent, including English, maths and science.

Each University has different application criteria, 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.

To practise as a Therapeutic Radiographer, you must be registered with the HCPC. To register, you must successfully complete an HCPC-approved therapeutic radiography training programme at either undergraduate or postgraduate level. Currently, the following universities run the appropriate undergraduate programme:

- AECC University College
- Bristol, University of the West of England
- Birmingham City University
- Cardiff University
- City St Georges, University of London
- Glasgow Caledonian University
- London South Bank University
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of Hertfordshire
- University of Liverpool
- University of Suffolk

Apprenticeships give you the chance to earn a living while gaining your qualification. Your employer and the government will pay the tuition fees, so apprenticeships aren't eligible for student grants.

Currently, you can undertake an apprenticeship degree at:

- London South Bank University
- Sheffield Hallam University
- University of the West of England
- University of Hertfordshire

Increasingly more universities are opening apprenticeship degrees, find out more



Courses include theory and clinical practice and are three years full-time. You will apply theoretical knowledge of anatomy, physiology and oncology to a wide range of clinical scenarios during clinical placements. In addition to the academic requirements, you will need to have or develop:

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Emotional resilience to cope with looking after people with a life-threatening condition
- A sensitive, tolerant and non-judgemental approach to others
- The ability to empathise with your patients and their carers
- Observation skills and attention to detail
- The ability to work well as part of a team
- Organisation, planning and time management skills
- Reasoning, analytical and decision-making skills
- The ability to work well under pressure and to cope with interruptions
- A creative approach to problem solving to ensure that all options are considered

- Self-motivation, along with the ability to motivate others
- Confidence to work with current and new technologies
- Flexibility and the ability to adapt to developments in working practices
- An understanding of the requirements needed for the safe delivery of treatment

RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Therapeutic Radiographer you will be involved in:

- Producing routine and complex treatment plans in accordance with relevant clinical protocols
- Explaining the treatment to your patients to help them make informed decisions about their treatment. This includes explaining the management of acute and long-term side effects.
- Using manual dexterity skills to position patients into position, and then acquiring appropriate images for analysis prior to delivering treatment to millimetre accuracy
- Use in-depth knowledge of anatomy to interpret and analyse various images of the human body
- Develop technical and manual dexterity skills for operating the equipment accurately and confidently
- Develop a rapport with your patients and their carers to gain their cooperation and trust
- Keep accurate, computer-based records
- Attend inter-professional team meetings
- Actively engage with CPD
- Support and assess students

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

You will have the opportunity to attend a range of events and conferences. These events allow you to network with colleagues and keep up to date with developments in the profession. The ability to take further study at Masters, and PhD level are offered by some universities providing therapeutic radiography and oncology degrees.

SALARY AND CAREER PROSPECTS

New graduates are usually employed into a band 5. There is no pre-registration year for Therapeutic Radiographers. After two years you may be ready to apply for a band 6 role. More details about the NHS pay scale and current rates can be found here:



Most Therapeutic Radiographers are employed in the NHS, where there is an established career structure. Career progression depends on gaining experience, further education and expanding your role within the radiotherapy team.

There are many opportunities as a qualified Therapeutic Radiographer in advanced roles, which may include:

- On treatment review
- Consultant
- Late effects specialist
- Cancer specific roles e.g., head and neck cancer
- Treatment specific roles e.g., brachytherapy
- Practice Educator

Once you have qualified and had some experience as a Therapeutic Radiographer, you could also work towards becoming a clinical tutor, where you can teach and inspire the next generation of therapeutic radiographers.

There are many ways that you can be involved in research, including engaging with the evidence base in your day-to-day work as a radiographer. You might support or be directly involved in clinical research delivery, or further develop as a clinical research lead.

There are many ways to transform clinical careers and influence the way that we sit in the wider healthcare workforce. You can become involved in:

- Mentoring
- Operational management
- Project Management
- Quality Improvement
- Public Health
- Commissioning
- Digital leadership

APPRENTICESHIP IN THERAPEUTIC RADIOGRAPHY

Hear from Liam about his
experience



How did you find out about the apprenticeship scheme?
After completing my A-levels, I was unsure of what career path I wanted to go down. Having always been interested in the anatomy of the human body, I decided to look at opportunities within the healthcare sector. After seeing the apprentice therapeutic radiographer job role on social media and looking more into what the job entailed, I knew it would be something I would enjoy so I decided to go for it.

What interested you about the apprenticeship?
The apprenticeship was very appealing to me as it gave me the opportunity to develop my knowledge further at university and put it into practice when working at the hospital. The apprenticeship scheme is also a great way of earning while you're learning.

Why did you choose radiotherapy?
I chose radiotherapy as I love the feeling of helping others and this role feels very rewarding in that way. It gives me the opportunity to build good relationships with both my work colleagues and patients that come in. As well as this I am also very fascinated by the physics behind the different machines and how much of a crucial role it plays in radiotherapy.

What support is provided by the hospital and the university?

The support provided by the hospital and the university is excellent. They want you to succeed as much as you do. I have 1 to 1 meetings with my tutor at university every few months, as well as a review with my line manager, practice educator and university tutor to see how I am progressing in the role. I also know when I am at the hospital that all my colleagues would provide excellent support and advice if I needed it. It's been so beneficial to me knowing I have such a great team around me that will help me if I am ever struggling.

What advice would you give to others considering apprenticeships in healthcare?

I would encourage anyone whose thinking about it to go for it. Ensure that it is what you're interested in doing and you are willing to work hard and give 100% at both the hospital and university. Also, if you do go for it, enjoy it! It's an amazing position to be in developing your practical and theory skills, as well as earning while you're learning

Is there anything you have found challenging?

I would say the only real challenge I sometimes face is working full-time whilst studying. My timetable is usually well-balanced, and I have separate blocks for work and university. On the odd chance they clash, it can be difficult to manage however as I said above it's a small price for such a great experience.

How have you found the experience so far?

So far, the experience has been nothing but positive. The apprenticeship is usually very well balanced between going to university and going to work. Everyone has been so helpful and understanding from my colleagues at work to my university lecturers, they have all helped develop my skills and knowledge. Sometimes my workload can be heavy if I have completed a day at work and have university work to complete, but it's something I'm more than happy to do given how great the opportunity is.

WORK EXPERIENCE FOR UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS

At your interview, you should have a good understanding of what radiotherapy is, it is advised that you shadow Therapeutic Radiographers in practice before applying for a place. This will show your interest in and commitment to, the profession. Remember to include details of relevant work experience in your university application. Experience working or volunteering in a caring or healthcare environment is also useful.

FOR MORE INFORMATION.....

RADIOTHERAPY



BEING A THERAPEUTIC RADIOGRAPHER



WORKING IN THE NHS

