

Mind The Gap: Scoping the UK Radiography Workforce Needs and Available Post-Registration Education Provision [abstract only]

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Mind The Gap: Scoping the UK Radiography Workforce Needs and Available Post-Registration Education Provision

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Introduction

Future development of the clinical workforce in the UK is expected to align with incremental levels of practice, with increasing autonomy, complexity and decision making.¹ It is critical that appropriate education can support such developments in practice. This study was commissioned and funded by NHS England to identify the UK radiography clinical workforce needs at the enhanced, advanced and consultant levels and compare this to the available post-registration education.

Methods

Higher education institution (HEI) websites were scrutinised and content analysis of programmes undertaken with online interviews of programme leads and a face-to-face workshop. Clinical workforce needs were established through regional key informant interviews, supported by focus groups with consultant radiographers. Comparison of the data enabled identification of any gaps.

Results

Post-registration education was offered at 25 different HEIs, the majority being based in England. Predominantly clinically focussed, with defined awards as well as flexible modular pathways, there was limited education and leadership capabilities included, an expectation at the higher practice levels, with research often only on completion of a master's degree. Service identified needs of the clinical workforce, including backfill. Perceived challenges with current education included omission of the non-clinical capabilities and limited provision in key clinical foci, particularly at the advanced level. No specific education was identified to prepare individuals for the consultant radiographer level.

Conclusions

There is a perceived gap between the current UK education provision and workforce needs, particularly at the advanced and consultant level. The focus on clinical task appears to be at the expense of content to prepare practitioners for wider role expectations.

Implications for Practice

Further development of post-registration programmes is necessary to prepare the future workforce for enhanced, advanced and consultant practice.

References

1. College of Radiographers. *Education and Career Framework for the Radiography Workforce*. 4th Edn. 2022. Available at: <https://www.sor.org/download-file/?f=b2f6bf07-668f-4155-950ab9d96c48eae1&t=m>