

Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme Guidance: Practice Educators

One of the main objectives of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme is to ensure that as a Practice Educator you receive professional and national recognition for your role in educating and developing the Imaging and Oncology workforce.

There are two permanent routes to achieving accreditation as a Practice Educator. These are the **experiential route** and the **programme route**. You can choose which would be most suitable for you, depending on your own learning style and how you choose to manage your time. There is also a **fast track route** to accreditation, valid until 31 October 2007 (see point four for details of fast track criteria).

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Why does the profession need an accreditation scheme?

An accreditation scheme is a mechanism which allows the practitioners in the clinical imaging and/or oncology workforce to quality assure its practice education. It addresses the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice on Placement learning (QAA 2001) <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section9/default.asp> which requires that “staff who are involved in placement learning are competent to fulfil their role” and that “the development needs of institutional placement staff are met”.

It is an important means of valuing and recognising the role of the Practice Educator.

It will formalise current good practice in practice education.

It will promote interprofessional learning and standards for practice placements through the development of a scheme with generic learning outcomes.

2. Why should I become an accredited Practice Educator?

The profession will always value your skills and knowledge as a Practice Educator but there are three key reasons for becoming accredited:

Professional and national recognition of your role

The role of the Practice Educator is fundamental in the continuous development of the clinical imaging and/or oncology workforce. In helping to provide education for the future workforce, the Practice Educator offers a service that is fundamental to the effective development of the future workforce. It is, therefore, essential that the Practice Educator is providing high quality education and supervision and is in turn valued for this contribution.

The Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme will offer you national recognition and add value to your role.

Once you have achieved accredited status it will be valid in any region of the UK during the five-year timeframe.

Evidence to demonstrate your involvement in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The Health Professions Council (HPC) requires all registrants to engage in CPD activities with effect from 1st July 2006. Registrants will need to record their activities in their portfolio and if selected for audit, to complete the CPD profile which will then be assessed by CPD assessors (<http://www.hpc-uk.org/registrants/cpd>). In light of this, all allied health professionals should be regularly updating their CPD portfolio.

Participating in the Scheme will enable you to demonstrate how supporting the learning of others forms a significant dimension of your own professional development. Accreditation will demonstrate a high level of evidence of learning and application in the workplace and if you opt to undertake the programme route to accreditation then you may obtain an additional academic credit (depending on the particular scheme at the HEI) to add to your portfolio.

For more information about using your work in practice education to demonstrate your meeting professional and regulatory CPD requirements please refer to the section **CPD and Practice Education**.

Contribute to the maintenance and improvement in standards of patient care

You will be directly helping to ensure high standards of client care by demonstrating that you are a Practice Educator who is committed to developing the profession, and can reflect upon and evaluate your role.

3. How do I become accredited?

If you are interested in applying for accreditation, information and an application form can be downloaded from Society of Radiographers' website at: <http://www.sor.org>. Please ensure that you read the College of Radiographers' document '*Practice Educators Accreditation Scheme*', June 2006 as well as this guidance.

- i) If, having considered this guidance, you feel the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme is relevant to your current circumstances, discuss your interest and options with your local HEI link tutor or practice education co-ordinator. If you support learners from more than one HEI you should consider the range of Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme options each HEI offers and the practicalities of receiving support from each.
- ii) Remember, as this Scheme complements your CPD, it's never too early in your career to start considering working towards accredited status. Even if, on discussion, you choose to defer actively pursuing the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme now, you may still wish to save potential evidence from your daily practice for future inclusion in your Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme profile. Please refer to the section **CPD and Practice Education** for more guidance about this process.
- iii) Receiving students from more than one HEI, or relocating in the foreseeable future, should not be problematic as the Scheme is designed to be nationally transferable, as all Practice Educators accredited by the College of Radiographers will have achieved the same learning outcomes. Practice educator accredited status should be recognised by all UK HEIs that provide clinical imaging and/or oncology programmes.
- iv) Developing your role as a clinical educator and/or working towards accredited status is something that may have been discussed at your last appraisal. In any case, once you have the necessary information about the scheme you will probably wish to discuss the prospect of seeking accredited status with your service manager. Some service managers will have participated in the development of local HEI support systems for Practice Educators and all should be supportive of your wish to pursue accredited status at an appropriate career stage as it will form a major contribution to your CPD.

4. Which route should I choose?

If you would like to attend a taught programme at a local HEI based around the six learning outcomes of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme then you may wish to choose the **Programme Route**. It is the choice of the HEI as to whether their programme attracts academic credit and some programmes may be run as part of a structured programme such as a Master's module, while others may be run as a short course. Assessment of this route may be undertaken either by a written assignment or by an oral or poster presentation depending on your own preference and/or the choices of assessment offered by your local HEI.

If you would rather follow a route that provides a set of questions that prompt you to think about how you reflect on your work as a Practice Educator, then the **Experiential Route** may be best for you. Each of the six learning outcomes will require a maximum of 500 words in order to complete the application, which can be done in your own time and then submitted to your local HEI on their set submission dates. This should be at a level at least equal to final year work of an Honours degree programme. The HEI may also provide a workshop to help you complete your application.

Although both these routes are built on the same learning outcomes, each has significantly different features, some of which are identified below. Both will form a major contribution to your CPD and will involve you in substantial work. Therefore, you should choose carefully the route that best suits your current career/life stage and preferred learning style.

Some features of the routes

Programme route	Experiential route
Taught course offered by HEI	Independent study supported by HEI
Work with cohort	Work independently and/or have opportunities for informal peer support groups
Structured timetable – fixed time period	Flexible timetable – accommodating other life developments
Resource implications well identified, e.g. course fee, contact hours, study support and resources	Resource implications less readily identified, e.g. input hours, access to support and resources, costs and possible HEI fees
Include a work-based element	All work based, will require sufficient clinical education experience to reflect on
Assessment is programme specific	Assessment is profile based
May carry additional academic credit	Will have no academic currency but you may seek APEL credit (accreditation of prior experiential learning) from supporting or other HEI once successfully completed

Initially there is also a fast-track route available for experienced Practice Educators.

The **Fast-track route** to accreditation will be valid for the normal five-year period. This consists of completing a short application form, which demonstrates and evaluates achievement of the learning outcomes. Assessment by the supporting HEI will ensure that the standard of experiential and fast track applications are equitable with assessed work undertaken on the programme route. The benchmark for courses leading to accreditation is set at level six of an Honours Degree (equivalence of final year of an Honours Degree) or above.

You have one year from the launch of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme to gain accreditation via this route. Please refer to the College of Radiographers' document '*Practice Educators Accreditation Scheme*', June 2006 for details of whether you are eligible to apply via the fast-track route.

5. How will my accreditation be acknowledged?

Upon successful completion of your chosen route your local HEI will recognise your accredited status, recommend your entry to its Register of Practice Educators to the Society and College of Radiographers, and submit your details to the organisation.

The Society and College of Radiographers will recognise your professional status as a Practice Educator by entering you on the register of Practice Educators and sending you a Practice Educator Certificate of Accreditation, which you are likely to wish to retain in your CPD portfolio.

CPD and Practice Education

Practice education offers excellent opportunities for CPD and the College of Radiographers' web-based CPD tool, 'CPD Now', can provide you with an appropriate framework to evidence your involvement.

Using 'CPD Now' has several advantages:

- You can be confident that you are meeting your professional body's CPD standards.
- 'CPD Now' is an outcomes-based system. This is in keeping with current best practice in CPD but is particularly helpful for practitioners engaged in, or wishing to engage in practice education. There are at least six outcomes identified in 'CPD Now' that are directly applicable to work in practice education.
- Adding the work you do in practice education to your portfolio enables you to build up evidence for your CPD accreditation from the College, as well as providing you with the opportunity to make a reflective evaluation of the CPD you have undertaken.
- 'CPD Now' will, in due course, contain templates for you to incorporate your CPD evidence into a format designed to evidence your meeting the Health Professions Council's (HPC) CPD Standards and the requirements of the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF).

'CPD Now' can usefully support:

- Practitioners with a developing interest in practice education, who might choose to include some evidence in their CPD portfolio to support their case for a more defined role in practice education when suitable opportunities arise.
- Practitioners working towards Practice Educator accreditation, who can use CPD to collect together evidence of the CPD undertaken as part of this.
- Accredited Practice Educators who will be required to present evidence of their CPD as part of the process of registration renewal. *The College's preferred format for this evidence will be a current certificate of CPD accreditation with appropriate outcomes identified.*

In all cases evidence recorded in CPD Now will also count towards that individual's CPD accreditation from the College and will support compliance with the HPC CPD Standards and the requirements of the NHS KSF.

6. What personal details do I need to provide?

The following details will be provided by you to be held on the Society of Radiographers' database.

In providing this information you are giving the Society and College of Radiographers consent to acquire and evaluate your data pertaining to practice education in the clinical imaging and/or oncology workforce.

- Name of Practice Educator
- Employment Name and Address
- Practice Educator Email address
- Strategic Health Authority/Local Authority/Other
- Home address
- Society of Radiographers' membership number (if appropriate)
- Regulatory Body name and membership number (if applicable)
- Date accreditation starts
- Date accreditation ends
- Accreditation route profession
- Area of work
- Grade/Level of current job
- Number of programmes from which you take learners
- Number of learners supported in the last five years

You will be allocated a log in address and password, which will enable you to keep your personal and employment information up to date.

It is your responsibility to keep your personal details current during your accreditation period.

If you are undertaking the experiential or fast track route you will also need to provide anonymised supporting evidence material for your supporting HEI e.g. a copy of a completed assessment form, student learning contracts, evaluation questionnaires, or tutorial programmes to support your application. Experiential applications must also include two supporting statements from referees with knowledge of the applicant in their role as a Practice Educator (one supporting statement can be from a learner or former learner; the other should either be from a line manager or placement coordinator).

7. How long does accreditation last?

Accreditation lasts for a period of five years. The Society of Radiographers will send you notification about completing the application form six months, and again one month, before your accreditation period is due to expire. If you wish to become re-accredited at the end of this period, you do not need to follow either of the two routes above again. Instead you will need to complete a short re-accreditation application form, which will demonstrate evidence of your involvement. This would normally involve the supervision and assessment of students, or a single student, for a minimum of 20 weeks per year, unless your role in the education of students involved a different function e.g. a practice placement co-ordinator, or, there were extenuating circumstances that prevented you from regularly taking a student e.g. leave of absence. You will also need to provide evidence of CPD in practice education. Please refer to the section **CPD and Practice Education** for more guidance about this process.

Should an HEI become aware that a Practice Educator with accredited status is failing to meet any Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcome during their 5-year registration period, the HEI may invite the clinical educator to resubmit an updated profile.

8. I am not a radiographer but I do supervise and assess learners in the clinical imaging and/or oncology workforce. Can I still become accredited?

Yes. You do not need to be a radiographer to be entered onto the Society and College of Radiographers' database. If you supervise and assess learners in the clinical imaging or oncology workforce, then you are eligible to apply for accreditation.

9. Will I be required to pay an accreditation fee?

Accreditation is free to all members of the Society of Radiographers and also to individuals not eligible for membership undertaking the role of Practice Educator for a College of Radiographers' approved education provider. For others there will be a charge.

Further information on the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme

- Experiential route – see *Application for Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme – the experiential route* and discuss support provision with the Clinical Education Co-ordinator of your chosen HEI.
- Programme routes – discuss options with the Clinical Education Co-ordinators of local HEIs.