



Analysis of students and recent graduates survey 2011

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Published: Tuesday, August 30, 2011

ISBN: 978-1-906225-28-5

Summary

In July 2011, the Society and College of Radiographers surveyed current students and recent graduates from radiography programmes to gather information about their motivations, finances and experiences.

Nearly 500 respondents answered a range of questions in an online questionnaire about the reasons they chose radiography, their finances during and after their degree and their experiences in their first job.

This document presents an analysis of this survey.

Executive Summary

In July 2011, the Society and College of Radiographers surveyed current students and recent graduates from radiography programmes to gather information about their motivations, finances and experiences. Nearly 500 respondents answered a range of questions in an online questionnaire about the reasons they chose radiography, their finances during and after their degree 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 that they are interested in a healthcare career; want to help people / contribute to society; have the potential to develop their career; and feel it is likely they will find a job on graduation. The key reasons for choosing a specific course are the reputations of the course and the university.
- For diagnostic radiography students the top three reasons for not completing the course are wrong career choice, financial problems and failing parts of the course.
- For therapeutic radiography there are two main reasons for not completing the course: dissatisfaction with the clinical placement and financial problems.
- The average student radiographer debt on graduation is between £5,000 and £10,000.
- 46% of diagnostic radiography 2011 graduates and 71% of therapeutic radiography 2011 graduates had a job arranged as of July. The main reason given for not yet having a job arranged is that they have been so far unsuccessful at interview.
- 75% of 2010 graduates who responded to the survey started their first job within 2 months of graduating.
- 83% of 2010 graduates said that they did feel prepared for their first job. The most frequently cited reason relates to the importance of clinical placements in helping students feel

- prepared.
- Graduates from 2010 are very positive in their assessment of their first year working as a qualified radiographer: 87% agreed or strongly agreed 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 which arise are difficulties finding a job; the unfairness of the NHS bursary scheme and the challenging but enjoyable nature of studying radiography.

1. Introduction

This document presents an analysis of an online survey of students and recent graduates run by the SoR in July 2011. The survey was targeted at current radiography students and graduates from radiography degrees since 2010. Respondents were asked about their motivations for studying radiography, details of their finances and their experiences since graduating.

The survey was anonymous and covered as many students and recent graduates as possible. We identified 3081 potential subjects from the SoR 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 online survey.

The questionnaire was answered by 484 individuals (16% response rate). It was designed to ask respondents different questions depending on their year of graduation: current students were asked questions about the reasons they chose to study radiography and why some students did not complete the course, and recent graduates were asked their experiences in their first job. All respondents were asked questions about their finances including how they financed their degree and their level of debt on graduation.

The results are mainly displayed using descriptive statistics. Where there are key differences from last year's survey, 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.

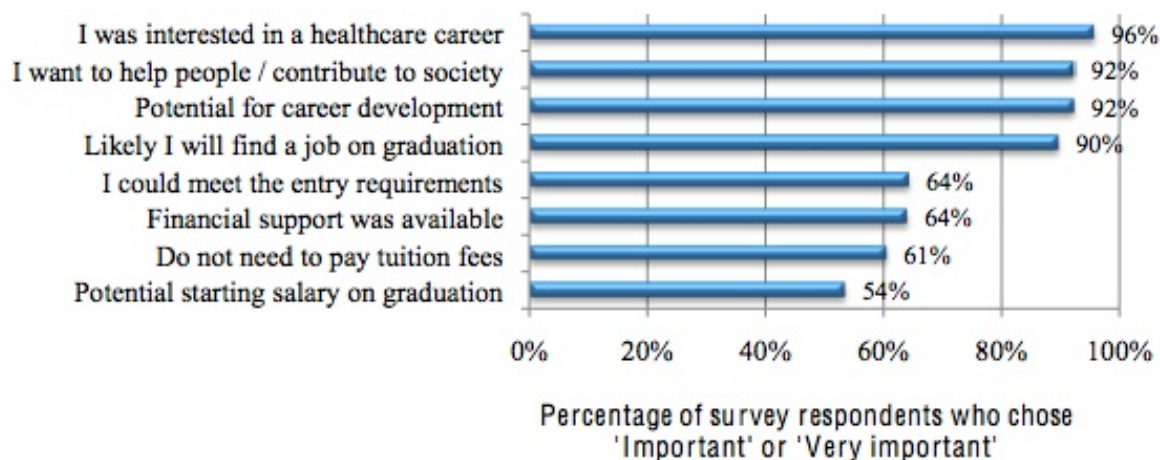
2. Pre-registration education

2.1 Reasons for studying radiography

The main reasons students give for choosing the subject of radiography are that they are interested in a healthcare career; want to help people / contribute to society; have the potential to develop their career; and feel it is likely they will find a job on graduation. Financial considerations are considered less important by respondents.

How important to you were the following reasons for choosing the subject of radiography?

Source: SoR survey of students 2011



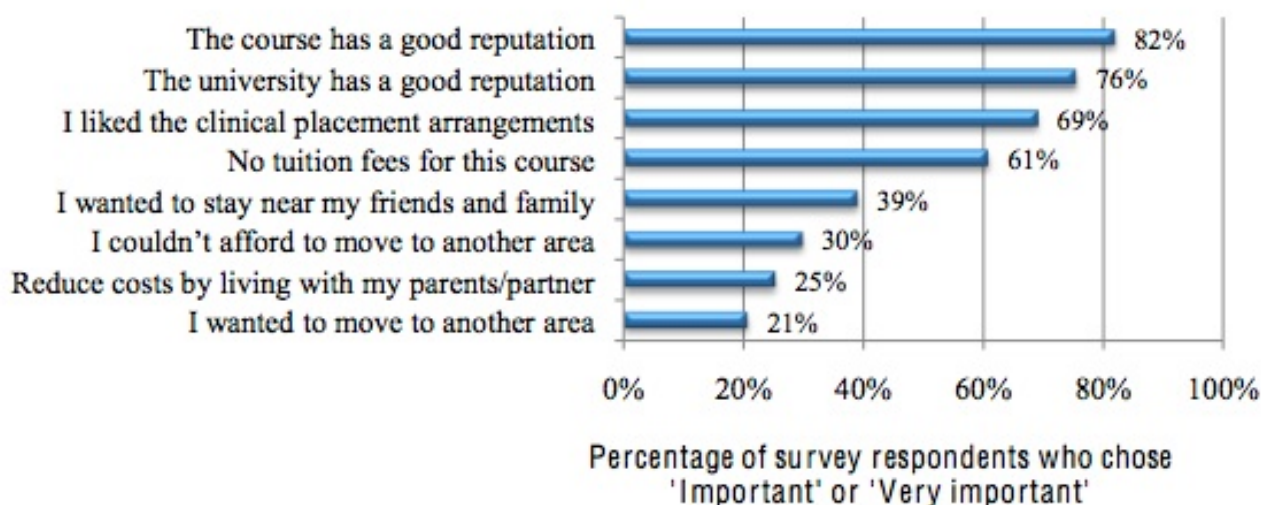
Other factors mentioned as free text responses are previous experience of radiography; the science-based nature of the subject; involvement in a caring profession; the location of the course; the ability to gain practical experience during the degree; the variety of modalities; and opportunities to work abroad.

2.2 Reasons for choosing specific course

The key reasons for choosing a specific course are the reputations of the course and the university. Respondents also feel that the clinical placement arrangements and the fact that tuition fees are not payable for the course are important.

How important to you were the following reasons for choosing your specific course?

Source: SoR survey of students 2011



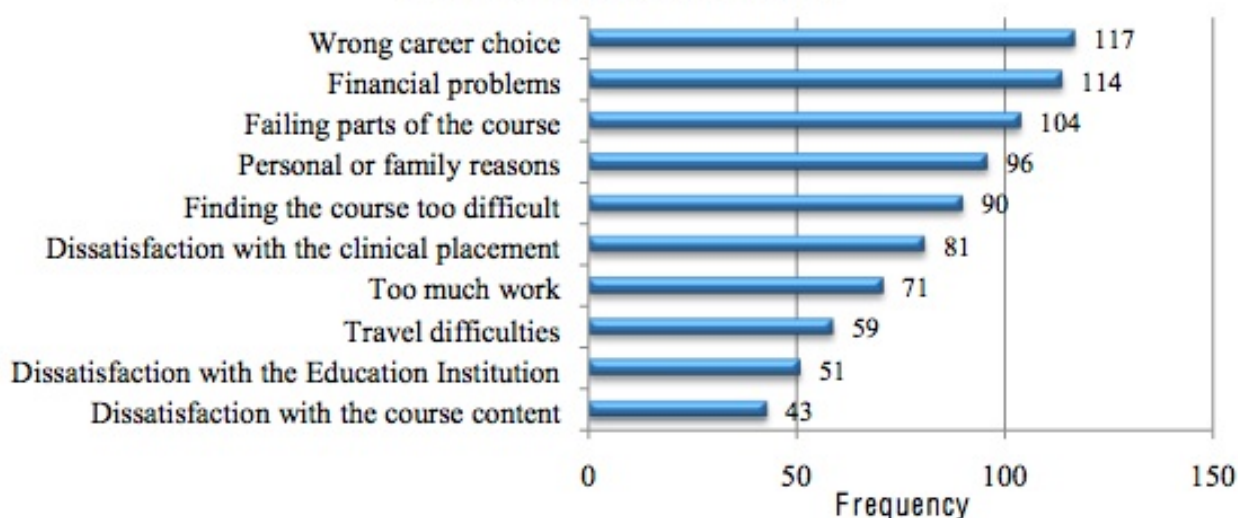
2.3 Reasons for not completing the course

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. The reasons given for not completing the course are collated below according to the course discipline and are shown in separate graphs for diagnostic radiography and therapeutic radiography. For diagnostic radiography students the top three reasons for not completing the course are wrong career choice, financial problems and failing parts of the course. For therapeutic radiography there are two main reasons for not completing the course: dissatisfaction with the clinical placement and financial problems.

Reasons why students do not complete the course

Diagnostic

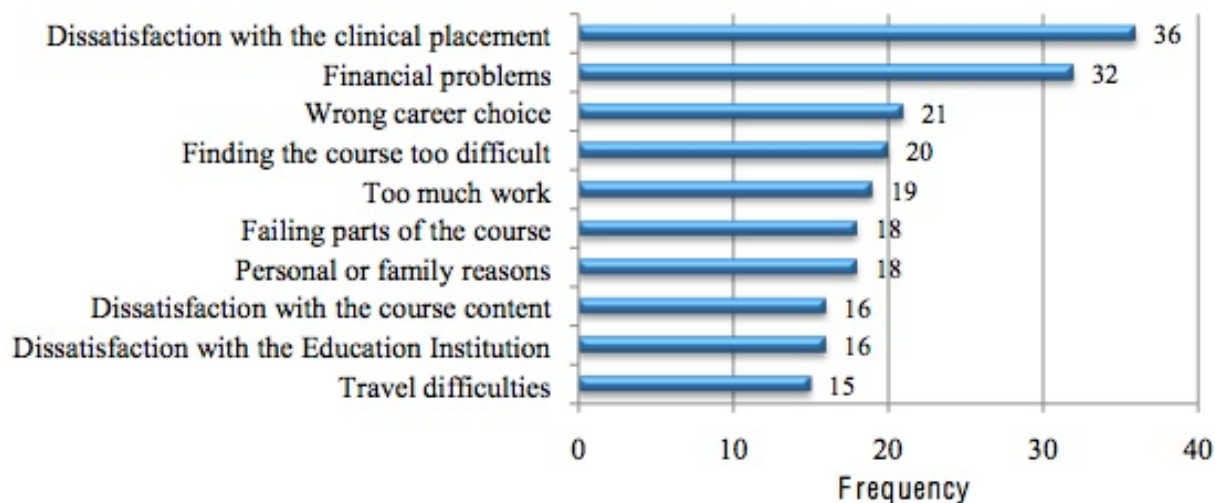
Source: SoR survey of students 2011



Reasons why students do not complete the course

Therapeutic

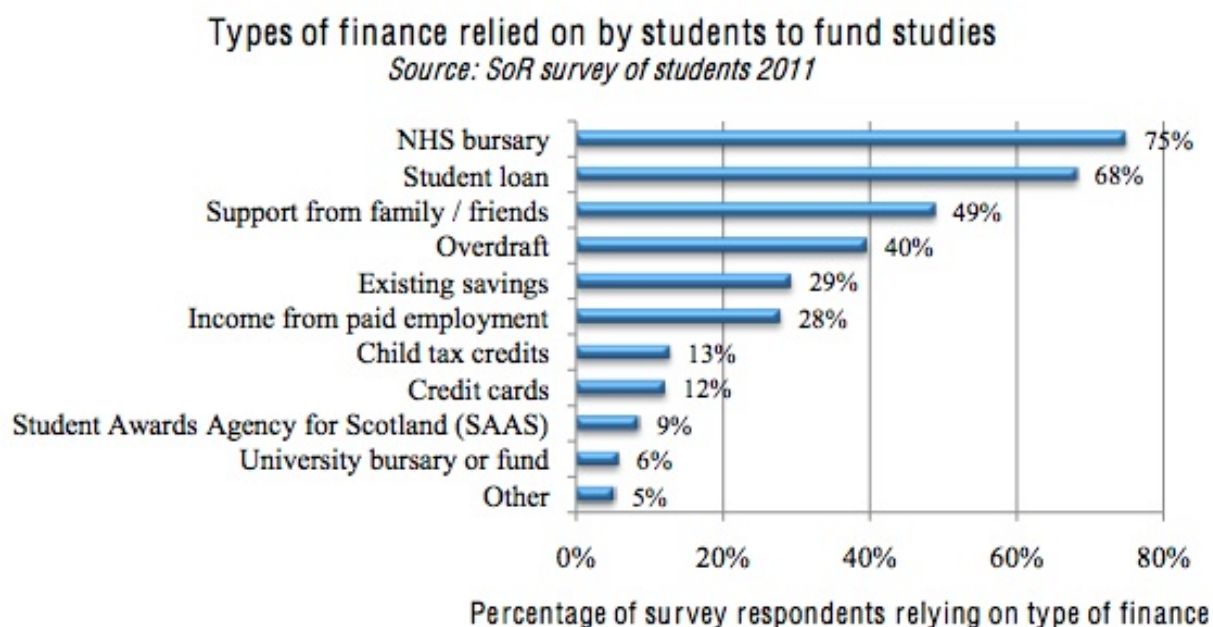
Source: SoR survey of students 2011



3. Student finances

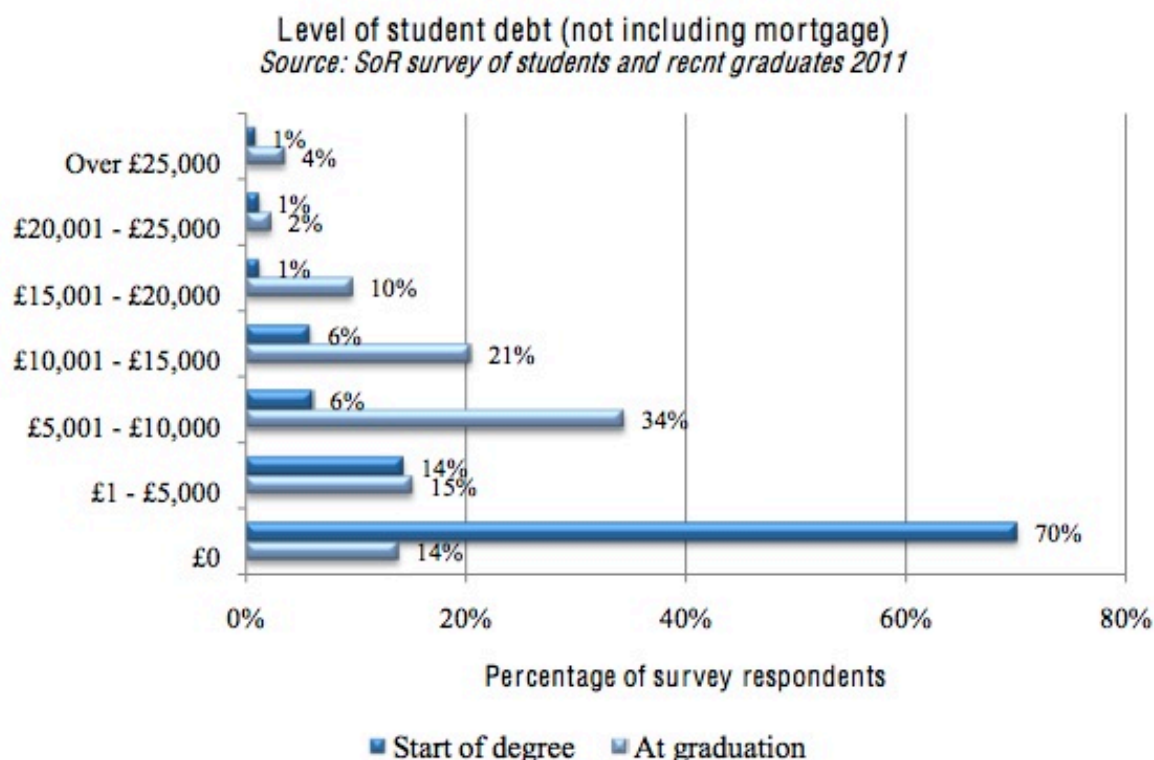
3.1 Types of finance

Respondents were asked to select all the types of finance they relied on to fund their studies. 20% of respondents did not select either NHS bursary or Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) presumably because they are not eligible for an NHS bursary or SAAS award.



3.2 Student debt

The average respondent was in debt by between £5,000 and £10,000 on the date of their graduation, or was expecting to be.

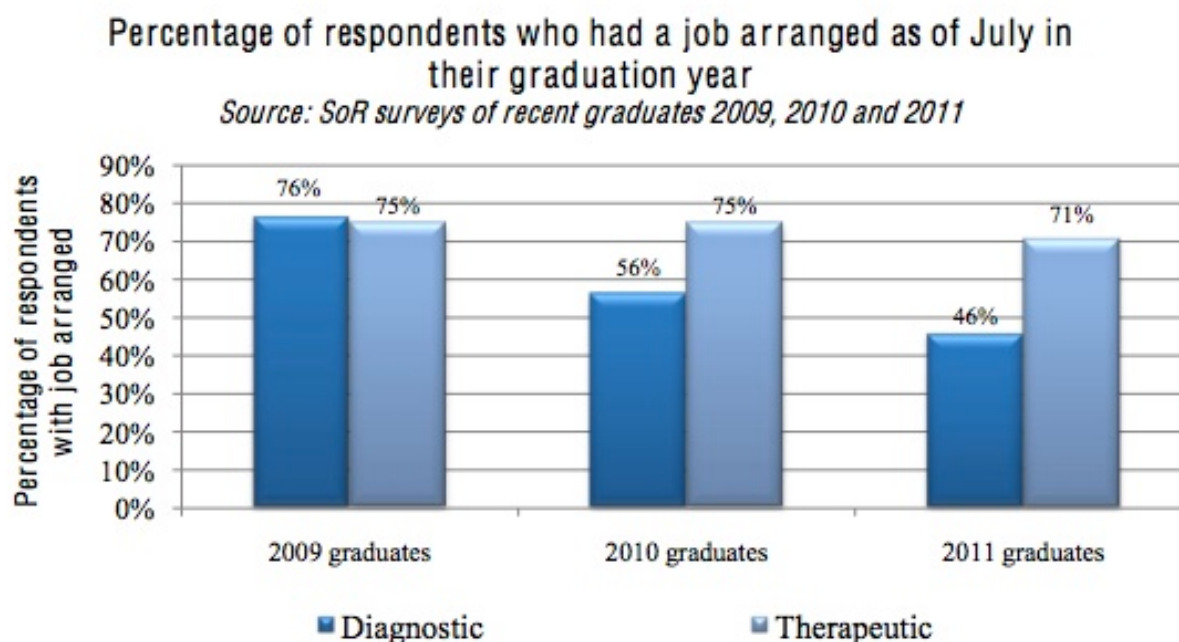


4. First Job

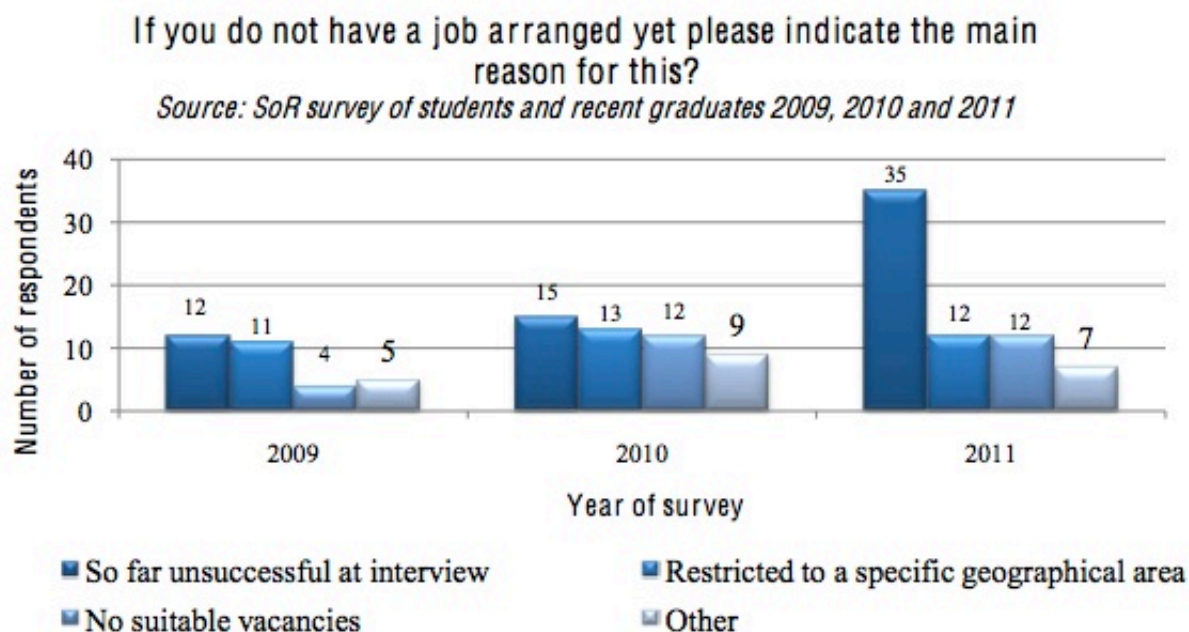
4.1 Arranging first job

While the number of therapeutic radiography graduates with jobs arranged in July of their graduation year has remained steady, there has been a fall in these figures for diagnostic radiography graduations: 46% of diagnostic radiography 2011 graduates had a job arranged as of July. This is not a statistically significant reduction compared to the 2010; however, the fall from 2009 levels is statistically significant.

A comparison of the responses from 2011 diagnostic graduates in England and the responses from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the number in England with a job arranged as of July and the combined figures for the other UK countries.



The main reason 2011 graduates give for not yet having a job arranged is that they have been so far unsuccessful at interview.

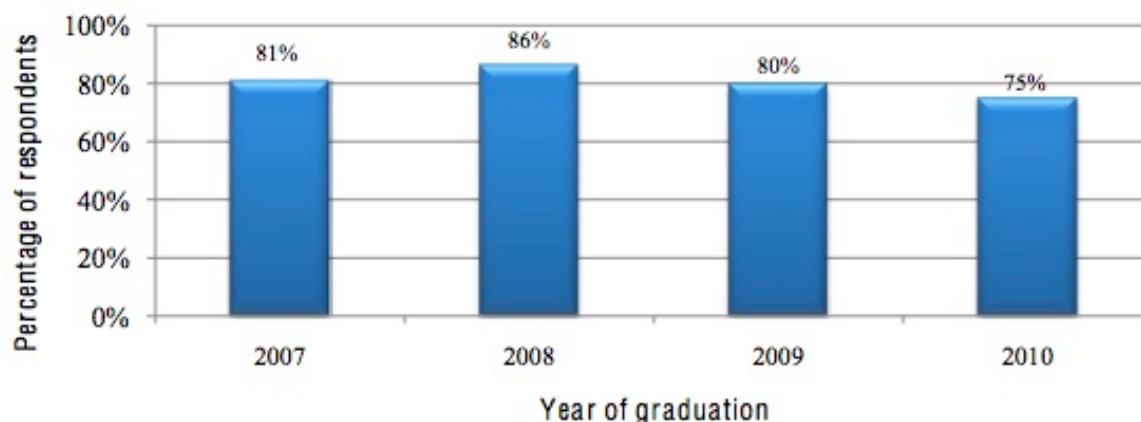


4.2 Starting first job

75% of 2010 graduates who responded to the survey started their first job within 2 months of graduating. This does not significantly differ from the data captured in the 2010 survey.

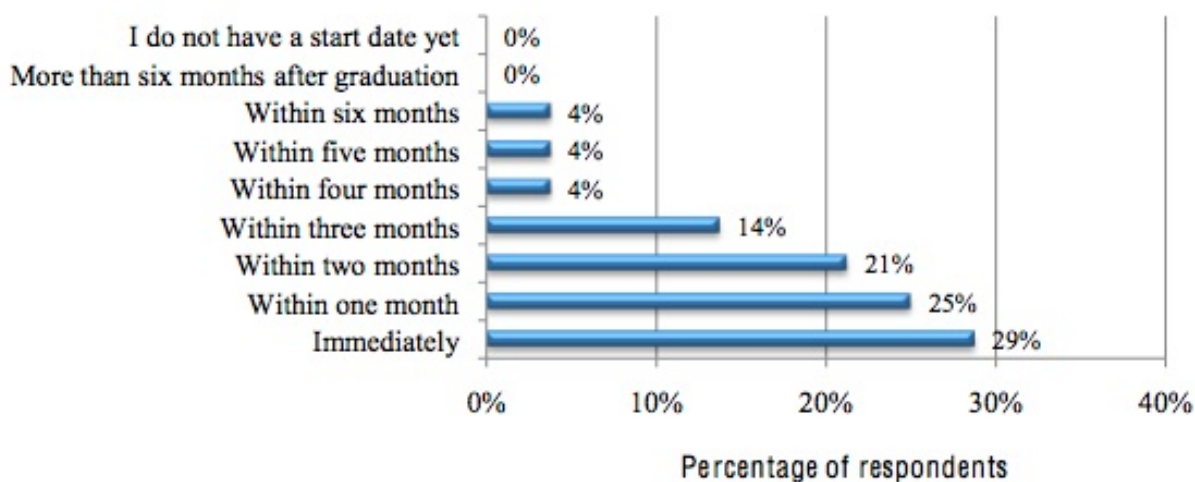
Percentage of graduates starting their first job within two months of graduation

Source: SoR surveys of recent graduates 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011



Number of months after graduation before 2010 graduates started first job

Source: SoR survey of recent graduates



The majority of graduates work in the NHS and get their first choice of job with a permanent full-time contract in the country/region where they studied. However, 9% of recent graduates responding to the survey who have worked since graduation are not working in the NHS, 29% did not get their first choice of job; 18% did not get their preferred type of contract; and 12% were forced to find work outside the region in which they had studied.

83% of 2010 graduates said that they did feel prepared for their first job. The most frequently cited reason relates to the importance of clinical placements in helping students feel prepared.

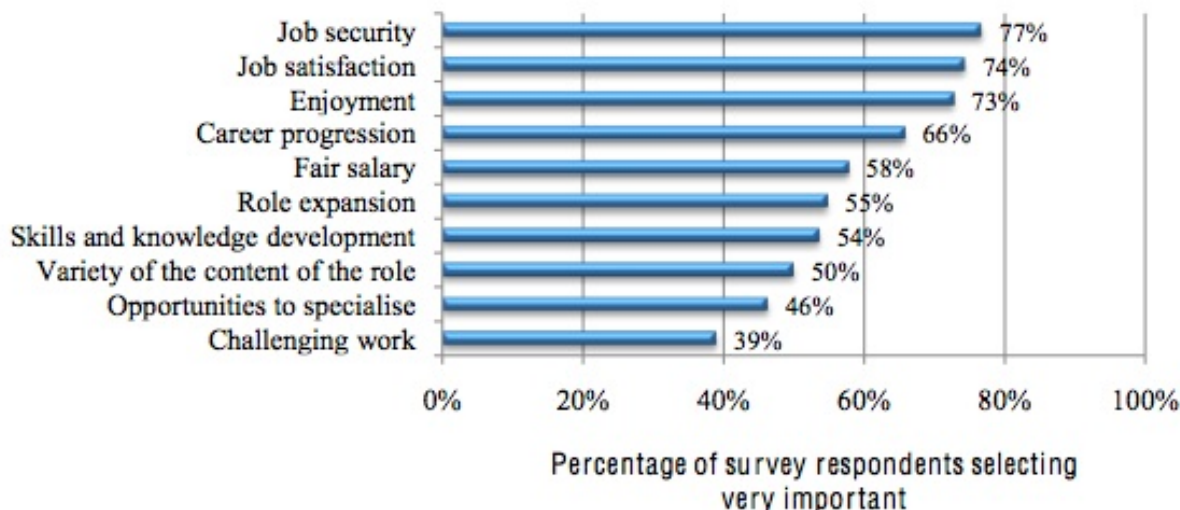
5. Career expectations

Recent graduates were asked how important certain career attributes were to them in terms of their

expectations of a career in radiography. Compared to the results of the same question in last year's survey, job security has now overtaken job satisfaction and enjoyment as the response most likely to be considered very important.

Expectations of a career in radiography

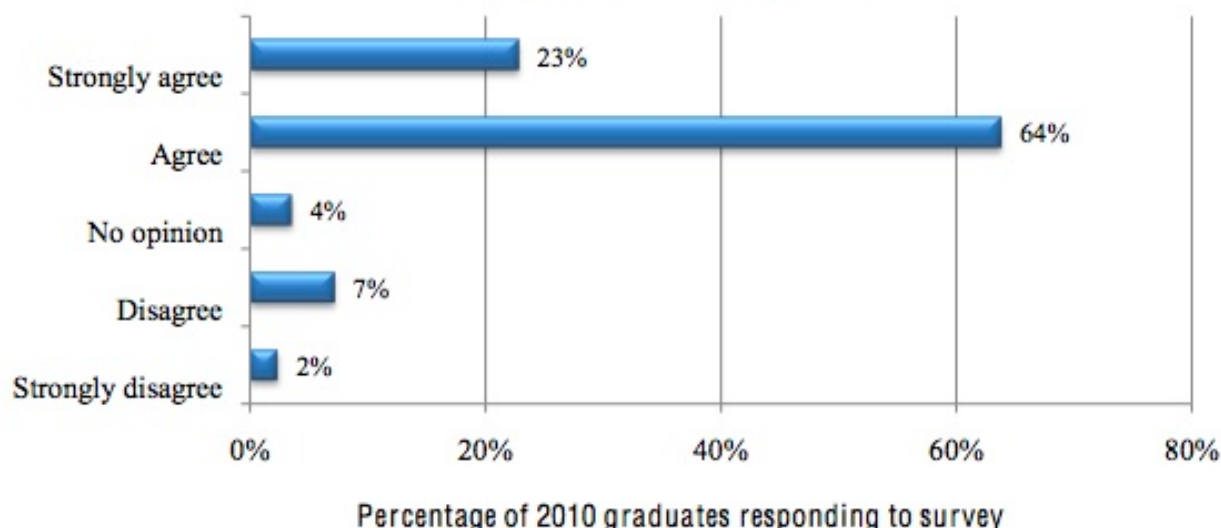
Source: SoR survey of recent graduates 2011



2010 graduates are very positive in their assessment of their first year working as a qualified radiographer: 87% agree or strongly agree that their career is so far consistent with their expectations. In the free text comments the theme most commonly cited by respondents is that there are fewer opportunities for career progression than expected.

Radiography as a career is so far consistent with my expectations

Source: SoR survey of recent graduates 2011



6. General comments

Respondents were finally asked if there were any general comments they would like to make related to the survey. Themes mentioned by four or more respondents are given below. The most common themes are difficulties finding a job; the unfairness of the NHS bursary scheme and the challenging but enjoyable nature of studying radiography. Some respondents also commented that there is little free time available, that there can be unprofessional behaviour by staff and that there are instances of bullying.

Theme	Number of respondents	Illustrative comment
Shortage of jobs	10	<i>"Very disappointed at how employment prospects changed during the jobs period that I was studying."</i>
NHS bursary system unfair	7	<i>"The bursary is minimal and I do not think it reflects the amount of work expected by a student radiographer."</i>
The course is challenging	7	<i>"I find the course challenging but rewarding and satisfying."</i>
The course is enjoyable	7	<i>"It is a great profession and I'm enjoying learning about it."</i>
Little free time	4	<i>"The course is very demanding with clinical placements and time spent at University. I did plan on getting a part time or summer job to help with my finances however I have found that I have very little spare time to work and only a short summer making temp work very difficult to obtain."</i>
Unprofessional staff	4	<i>"It would reduce drop-out rates and improve student morale if the SoR clarified exactly how NHS staff should interact with students. Otherwise unprofessional staff can treat students how they like as they do not fall within an employment law. Incidents at NHS hospitals have occurred which would be defined as 'gross misconduct' against students."</i>
Bullying	4	<i>"I have known of a lot of people who have left course so far for varying reasons including radiographers at clinical placement sites who are making students lives very difficult. It's sad that this goes on as radiographers should be welcoming new blood!"</i>

Appendix A - Questionnaire

[Download the Questionnaire](#) PDF

Source URL:

<https://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/analysis-students-and-recent-graduates-survey-2011>