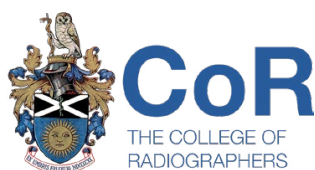


Position statement:

College of Radiographers update on practice-based learning hours for pre-registration diagnostic radiography and therapeutic radiography programmes

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207 Providence Square
Mill Street, London
SE1 2EW, UK

020 7740 7200
info@sor.org

collegeofradiographers.ac.uk



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Background

The College of Radiographers (CoR) has an established, reputable process for approving education programmes, ensuring that both new and existing pre- and post-registration radiography education programmes meet the highest standards. Through this approvals process, the CoR:

- secures consistency of quality standards of clinical imaging and oncology education
- aligns standards of clinical practice with the profession's Education and Career Framework (College of Radiographers, 2022)
- supports and encourages the development of programmes that are at the forefront of education and of developing clinical imaging and oncology practice
- promotes and supports flexibility in the design and delivery of education through an outcomes-based approach
- disseminates guidance on best practice in clinical imaging and oncology education and practice.

The CoR supports and enables programme teams to be creative and innovative when designing and delivering programmes, while ensuring that each programme is contemporary and of the highest quality. Until now, the CoR has not outlined specific guidance for practice-based learning hours. However, as the professional body, the CoR recognises the changing context and increasing challenges faced by education providers.

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan (LTWP) highlights a projected shortfall in staff by 2037 and targets increasing the Allied Health Professions (AHP) workforce by over 70,000, with an emphasis on training more radiographers through apprenticeship routes. To meet these workforce demands, radiography education has expanded, with established providers introducing various new pre-registration routes, including postgraduate pre-registration and apprenticeship pathways. Similarly, there has been an increase in new education providers, with many seeking CoR approval for multiple training pathways. The resulting complexity and increased demands have put added pressure on an already stretched practice-based learning environment. Although innovations such as shift work, extended placement hours, various supervision models, and expanded practice-based learning opportunities across the four pillars of practice have been helpful in some cases, these approaches are not yet widely adopted and do not fully address the limitations in practice-based learning capacity.

In recognition of these challenges and to support workforce growth while maintaining the quality of practice-based learning, the CoR is now introducing guidance on the recommended minimum number of practice-based learning hours within pre-registration radiography programmes.

To support the development of the future workforce, NHS England Workforce, Training and Education commissioned work across the AHP bodies to consider practice-based learning hours, standardised assessment and simulation. This guidance forms part of the outputs from the detailed work programme, specifically in relation to practice-based learning hours.

College of Radiographers position on practice-based learning hours

Following a review of the evidence surrounding practice-based learning hours, the CoR proposes a minimum threshold of 1,200 hours. This is the minimum number of practice-based learning hours that should be included within a programme for pre-registration learners completing standard route pre-registration diagnostic radiography and therapeutic radiography programmes in the UK (not applicable to apprenticeship pathways).

The 1,200 hours should be scheduled across the programme delivery and can include practice-based learning across the four pillars of clinical, education, leadership and research, but the hours across each setting should remain proportionate to meeting the programme learning outcomes and the HCPC Standards of Proficiency.

Based on the available evidence on simulation-based education in radiography, typically 120 hours of simulation-based education is recommended in addition to 1,200 practice-based learning hours. As the evidence continues to develop for simulation-based education, guidance will be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Frequently asked questions

When will the change be implemented?

The minimum threshold of practice-based learning hours will be implemented from 1 August 2025. From this date, all education providers seeking CoR programme approval or re-approval, in line with the standard approval period of 5 years, will be encouraged to demonstrate a minimum threshold of 1,200 hours for practice-based learning within education programmes.

If I have a current CoR-approved programme with more than 1,200 practice-based learning hours, what action should I take?

Providers will be encouraged to consider aligning the practice-based learning hours to the recommended guidance of 1,200 hours at the point of their scheduled re-approval, although this is not a requirement. This means that providers of currently CoR-approved provision will not be expected to seek early re-approval of their programmes.

However, for approved programmes that exceed 1,200 practice-based learning hours and where the provider would like to make changes to align more closely with the 1,200 hours ahead of their re-approval date, a change request may be submitted via the change panel process. Information on the change panel process can be accessed [here](#).

If I have a current CoR-approved programme with fewer than 1,200 practice-based learning hours, what action should I take?

Practice-based learning is a key component of the programme approvals process. Therefore, for those CoR-approved programmes that do not currently meet the recommended minimum threshold of 1,200 hours, providers will need to present a rationale and supporting evidence for this at their next scheduled re-approval alongside a plan to outline how the increase in hours to meet the minimum threshold will be achieved over the following approval period. This allows a minimum period of 5 years for implementation of any required increase in hours.

What does this statement mean if I am planning to seek CoR programme approval for a new pre-registration diagnostic or therapeutic radiography programme?

Requests for all new programme approvals from 1 August 2025 will be required to demonstrate 1,200 practice-based learning hours scheduled within the programme design.

What does this statement mean for simulation-based education?

The CoR is supportive of simulated learning, and recently commissioned a project to develop the evidence base on the efficacy of simulation (funded by NHS England). As the evidence develops on this topic, the guidance will be reviewed accordingly. The current research indicates that 120 hours of simulation-based learning is recommended in addition to 1,200 of practice-based learning.



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