



## The Approval and Accreditation of Educational Programmes and Professional Practice

# Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme

CLINICAL IMAGING AND  
ONCOLOGY





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**The Approval and Accreditation of Educational  
Programmes and Professional Practice**

**Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme**

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**June 2006  
First edition  
ISBN 1 871101 37 9**

**£15 to SCoR members  
£25 non-members**

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## **1. Introduction**

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- 1.1 The Society and College of Radiographers has consistently encouraged and supported the education and training of Practice Educators. It has, however, looked to individual Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to provide programmes suitable for the Practice Educators who support their programmes. There is wide variation in provision across HEIs. The role of Practice Educator is one that largely has not received due recognition.
- 1.2 The College of Radiographers, therefore, set up a working group to look at accreditation of Practice Educators. This group noted that most programmes offered by HEIs were multiprofessional in nature and, consequently, looked closely at the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) Accreditation of Clinical Educators (ACE) and College of Occupational Therapists' (COT) Accreditation of Practice Placement Educators (APPLE) schemes and The Higher Education Academy Occasional Paper 6, *Making Practiced-Based Learning Work*. It concluded that the College of Radiographers' scheme should sit in harmony with the ACE and APPLE schemes and that the Society and College of Radiographers should set up a UK register of Practice Educators, accredited by the organisation.
- 1.3 Practice education will continue to be part of the responsibility and role of all clinical practitioners and opportunities to engage in work based education will remain open to all, regardless of accredited status. It is recognised that only some radiographers involved in practice education will identify pursuing accredited status as a priority, however, this provides an excellent opportunity to evidence Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

## **2. Definition of Practice Educator**

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- 2.1 The College of Radiographers has adopted the definition of Practice Educator from *Making Practiced-Based Learning Work*, which states:

*The term 'Practice Educator' is used to describe the identified practitioner in practice placement who facilitates student learning face to face on a daily basis and generally has responsibility for the formative and/or summative assessment. Throughout the literature this role is described by a number of terms, including work-based supervisor, mentor, preceptor, practice learning facilitator, clinical tutor and trainer.*

- 2.2 The term 'practitioner' is any recognised professional, employed at practitioner level (the level achieved on qualification), or above, involved in the support of learners. Normally, practitioners would be registered with a statutory regulator. Learners are individuals undertaking education at any level from support worker to doctorate level.

### **3. Rationale**

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3.1 Approximately half of each radiography undergraduate or postgraduate programme, leading to accreditation as a practitioner [and eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council (HPC)], is practice-based. It is here that clinical radiographers and other healthcare professionals have a crucial role as educators. Wherever they work, at whatever career stage, most radiographers are likely to have responsibility for the education of others in their work place. This may include pre- or post-qualifying radiography and other learners. Traditionally, this is a role that many practitioners have assumed, with relatively little preparation, ongoing support or recognition.

3.2 The Articles of Association of the Society of Radiographers state:

*14.1 The UK Council is responsible for the setting, maintenance and the raising of standards of education in radiography, radiotherapeutic technology and allied subjects.*

3.3 The organisation recognises the important role Practice Educators play in ensuring the provision of high quality education.

3.4 The College of Radiographers' *Curriculum Framework* 2003 includes amongst its outcomes for Behavioural and Communication Sciences:

Practitioners	Supervise and effectively mentor students, assistant practitioners and less experienced staff.
Advanced Practitioners	Demonstrate effective clinical supervision, teaching and team leadership in their specialist area of practice.
Consultant Practitioners	Contribute to and promote the education, training and continued professional development of other staff and students including other staff groups.

3.5 The Society and College of Radiographers recognises that the work and role of Practice Educators throughout the UK is invaluable. However, so far this unceasing work, so vital for the continuance of the radiography profession, has received little formal national recognition.

3.6 The College of Radiographers' *Education Strategy* (2005) identifies important aspects of the learning environment, which include:

- Practice learning environments, including clinical skills laboratories, need to provide the learner with a sufficient volume and range of experience and ensure that there is appropriate clinical mentoring and support of learners at all levels;
- Academic and clinical environments should provide a stimulating learning experience employing a range of learning methods;
- Provision of student/learner guidance and support;
- Interprofessional learning should play an important role in learning environments, facilitating effective team working and promoting mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities;
- Sufficient time should be allocated for education activities and the provision of support for learners at all levels.

3.7 In *The Approval and Accreditation of Education Programmes and Professional Practice in Radiography: Policy and Principles* (2004), the College of Radiographers has, as one of its aims, *to encourage departments of Clinical Imaging and Radiotherapy and Oncology to become coherent and supportive learning environments, with clear policies and procedures in place to demonstrate adoption of the complete career progression framework, and the opportunity and support for all staff to develop their careers and engage in life long learning.*

3.8 This is in alignment with current Department of Health policy in respect of facilitating work place training and development (*Meeting the Challenge: A Strategy for the Allied Health Professions* (2000)).

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- 3.9 The College of Radiographers, *Guidance on Approval and Accreditation of Practice Placements at all levels of Pre-Registration Education* (2005), states in paragraph 2.2:

*In relation to any approval and accreditation process, recommendations will be made regarding:*

- *Appropriate numbers of learners a practice placement can support taking into account its staffing, resources, range of examinations, workload and facilities available for learners;*
- *Support mechanisms such as clinical supervision and mentorship and training of staff to undertake these roles.*

- 3.10 HEIs with radiography undergraduate or postgraduate programmes leading to accreditation as a practitioner [and eligibility to apply for registration with the Health Professions Council (HPC)] have identified staff members responsible for managing the practice education component of courses. There are local systems in place to prepare clinicians in their role as Practice Educators, which should offer a schedule of activities to support the development of their practice education community.

- 3.11 Such activities are likely to include:

- Bespoke sessions for individuals, small groups or department staff;
- Course specific induction information sessions;
- Ongoing regular update sessions;
- Specific current issue sessions for departments or clinicians with shared clinical or service interests;
- Collaborative sessions offered by HEIs who share members of the same clinical education community, for example shared assessment procedures;
- Relevant modules with academic currency, for example role development as a professional work based educator.

- 3.12 Many of these activities are informal, course specific and greatly valued by service and education providers as a means of enhancing their partnership and good practice in clinical education.

## **4. The Multiprofessional Approach**

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- 4.1 The College of Radiographers believes, for a number of reasons, that it is most appropriate to adopt a multiprofessional approach. These include the following:
  - The development of interprofessional education and training is central to the government's commitment to modernising education and training, *Meeting the Challenge: A strategy for the Allied Health Professions* (2000);
  - The Higher Education Academy in *Making Practice Based Learning Work*, (2005) states, *Interprofessional education in practice environments should be encouraged not solely for the benefits that it brings for students and Practice Educators but ultimately because of the benefits it brings for the patients*;
  - Increasingly, Radiography Departments/Divisions within HEIs form part of a School or Faculty of Health Care Sciences, with interprofessional learning incorporated in their programmes;
  - The majority of programmes currently run by HEIs for Practice Educators are multiprofessional.
- 4.2 The College of Radiographers has considered the outcomes of the CSP's ACE and COT's APPLE schemes and believes that, as the learning outcomes are entirely generic, the most appropriate way forward is to adopt them for the College of Radiographers' scheme. In so doing, it recommends that there is radiographer involvement in the planning and delivery of such programmes.

## **5. The Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme**

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- 5.1 The introduction of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme builds on current good practice by providing a new and accessible opportunity for interested Practice Educators to pursue their professional development in this role, via the route which best suits their personal circumstances.
- 5.2 The Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme has been developed in order to:
- Provide an opportunity for professional recognition for the role of the Practice Educator;
  - Establish a nationally recognised scheme that is transferable across UK regions and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);
  - Harmonise the varying practices for accrediting Practice Educators that were previously offered at a number of HEIs;
  - Facilitate citing, by Practice Educators, of their involvement as part of their CPD;
  - Promote interprofessional learning and standards for practice placements through the development of a scheme with generic learning outcomes;
  - Contribute to the maintenance and improvement in standards of client care.
- 5.3 The Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme is intended to be a national scheme for qualified radiography practitioners and other health and social care professionals involved in the education of learners in clinical imaging and radiotherapy and oncology practice environments, at any level from support worker to consultant practitioner.
- 5.4 It has been designed for those who have normally completed a period of preceptorship and whose post is at Agenda for Change (AfC) band 6 (or equivalent outside the NHS), as a minimum. The Society of Radiographers in *Agenda for Change Accelerated Career Progression: A Policy Briefing* (2005) states, *All newly qualified radiographers must be subject to a preceptorship period of between one and two years during which they will be given appropriate support and funding to facilitate accelerated progression from Band 5 to Band 6*. This accords with Annex T of the NHS Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions Handbook, January 2005.
- 5.5 The Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme will offer Practice Educators a choice of three routes by which they can be eligible to apply for accreditation on the UK register:
- Programme route (taught course);
  - Experiential route (guided application form);
  - Fast-track route (short application form). This route is available until 31 October 2007.
- 5.6 These are described in detail later in this document.
- 5.7 All routes will be offered and assessed by the HEIs and when a Practice Educator has successfully completed the chosen route to accreditation, the relevant HEI will recognise the practitioner's accredited status and recommend to the College of Radiographers entry of the practitioner onto the register of Practice Educators.
- 5.8 Accredited status is valid for a five-year period, at the end of which it is the responsibility of Practice Educators to demonstrate continuing competence through completion of an application form which details their involvement with students' education. Normally, this would require the Practice Educator to be involved in the supervision and assessment of students, or a single student, for a minimum of 20 weeks per year, unless the role in the education of students involved a different function such as a practice placement co-ordination, or there were extenuating circumstances preventing regular student contact, such as leave of absence. (The 20 weeks need not be continuous.)

## **6. How the scheme will work**

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6.1 The Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme has adopted the six learning outcomes of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy's ACE and the College of Occupational Therapy's APPLE schemes. HEIs running these schemes may wish to offer joint learning opportunities to their Practice Educators. As the learning outcomes are generic, other health and social care professions could adopt them. Both the experiential and programme route to accredited status will require the Practice Educator to demonstrate how all the learning outcomes have been achieved.

### **6.2 Learning outcomes**

6.2.1 The Practice Educator should provide evidence that s/he is able to:

1. Describe the role and identify the attributes of an effective Practice Educator;
2. Apply learning theories that are appropriate for adult and professional learners;
3. Plan, implement and facilitate learning in the practice setting;
4. Apply sound principles and judgement in the assessment of performance in the practice setting;
5. Evaluate the learning experience;
6. Reflect on experience and formulate action plans to improve future practice.

## 7. Details of accreditation routes

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### 7.1 Programme route

#### 7.1.1 *Criteria*

The programme route will take the form of a taught course run by an HEI, which meets the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcomes. In order to apply for accreditation via the programme route, Practice Educators will need to have been involved in the supervision and assessment of students (or a single student) for a minimum of 20 weeks in the past year, or 40 weeks over the past five years, or in the case of practice co-ordinators, need to have organised at least one cohort in the past year, or two cohorts within the past five years.

#### 7.1.2 *Details of process*

- 7.1.2.1 All programmes should attract academic credit with the benchmark for courses leading to accreditation being set at level six of an Honours Degree (equivalence of final year of an Honours Degree), or above.
- 7.1.2.2 The core content of the programme will be determined by the HEIs and will be based around the six learning outcomes of the scheme.
- 7.1.2.3 Programmes must be subject to the HEI's validation process and details sent to the Approval and Accreditation Department at the College of Radiographers for endorsement.
- 7.1.2.4 The programme should operate according to a structured timetable and resource implications be clearly identified.
- 7.1.2.5 Interprofessional programmes with physiotherapy, occupational therapy, other allied health professions, social work and nursing are encouraged, where appropriate, if the learning outcomes are adopted.

#### 7.1.3 *Assessment of the Practice Educators Accreditation Scheme*

HEIs should consider offering a range of assessment methods, for example written assignment or oral presentation for the programme route from which the Practice Educator could choose how they wish to be assessed. All assessment processes should demonstrate how the six learning outcomes have been met.

### 7.2 Experiential route

#### 7.2.1 *Criteria*

The experiential route is open to all health and social care professionals who are involved in the education of learners in the clinical imaging and radiotherapy and oncology practice environments. There are no specific entrance criteria, but those who wish to become accredited via this route must have had sufficient experience to meet the learning outcomes, (for example having been involved in the supervision and assessment of students for a minimum of 40 weeks over the past five years.)

#### 7.2.2 *Application process*

- 7.2.2.1 This requires the Practice Educator to evidence how s/he has met the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcomes through the development of a reflective profile, which is assessed by the supporting HEI.
- 7.2.2.2 The profile will include:
  - Completed application form containing personal and professional details and six specific reflective statements, demonstrating how each Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcome has been met (maximum 500 words each);
  - Supporting evidence, for example an anonymised copy of a completed assessment form, student learning contracts, evaluation questionnaires, tutorial programmes;
  - Two supporting statements from referees with knowledge of the applicant in his/her role as a Placement Educator. (One supporting statement should be from a peer, learner or former learner, the other should either be from a line manager or placement co-ordinator).
- 7.2.2.3 This should then be assessed by the HEI and details forwarded to the College of Radiographers with the recommendation for accreditation of the Practice Educator and entry on the Register.
- 7.2.2.4 HEIs have the freedom to determine the most appropriate ways of resourcing and offering support to Practice Educators pursuing the experiential route that suits their local circumstances, in collaboration with their SHA/Health Board and practice education community.

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### 7.2.3 *Assessment*

- 7.2.3.1 The assessment is not a pass/fail process. Its purpose is to determine whether or not the applicant's profile demonstrates that they have met the Practice Educator Approval Scheme learning outcomes, NOT to determine the applicant's preparedness to participate in practice education. The applicant may be making a valuable contribution to the education process although not yet have sufficient experience to seek accredited status.
- 7.2.3.2 Consequently applicants will be assessed into one of three categories:
- Applicant is recommended for entry on the College of Radiographers Register of Practice Educators;
  - Further development is needed in the sections indicated. Suggestions for improvement, prior to resubmission, are given,
  - Further development is needed in the sections indicated. It is recommended that the applicant considers attending a formal Practice Educator course/study days.

## 7.3 **Fast-track route**

### 7.3.1 *Criteria*

If a Practice Educator has:

- i) Successfully completed a course, including the assessed work, which meets the learning outcomes listed in section 6, within five years prior to the launch of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme, and has been involved in the supervision and assessment of students (or a single student) for a minimum of 20 weeks in the past year, or 40 weeks over the past five years, or in the case of practice co-ordinators, has organised at least one cohort in the past year or two cohorts within the past five years.  
or
- ii) Previously attended an accreditation course, but not yet submitted a written assignment, within three years prior to the launch of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme and has taken at least one student a year since that time, for a period of 20 weeks.  
or
- iii) Substantial experience of involvement in students' practice education ('substantial experience' is defined as having been the named educator of at least one student for a minimum of 20 weeks per year for the last five years, or the demonstration of equivalent commitment as supported by a local HEI and Practice Placement Coordinator/Manager).

S/he can then complete an application form, which will provide a fast-track method of gaining accreditation for the five-year period. The Practice Educator has until 31 October 2007 to apply via this route.

### 7.3.2 *Application process*

- 7.3.2.1 This requires the Practice Educator (not meeting criteria (i) above) to evidence how s/he has met the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcomes through a reflective profile, which is assessed by the supporting HEI.
- 7.3.2.2 The profile will include:
- Completed application form containing personal and professional details and a specific reflective statement, demonstrating how the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcomes have been met (maximum 1000 words);
  - Supporting evidence, for example an anonymised copy of a completed assessment form, student learning contracts, evaluation questionnaires, tutorial programmes;
  - Two supporting statements from referees with knowledge of the applicant in their role as a Practice Educator (one supporting statement should be from a peer, learner or former learner, the other should either be from a line manager, or placement coordinator).
- 7.3.2.3 This should then be assessed by the HEI and details forwarded to the College of Radiographers with the recommendation for accreditation of the Practice Educator and entry on to the register.

## **8. Quality assurance**

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- 8.1 Programmes must be subject to the HEI's validation procedures and details sent to the Approval and Accreditation Department at the College of Radiographers for endorsement.
- 8.2 The standard of experiential and fast-track applications must be equitable with assessed work undertaken on the programme route.
- 8.3 To ensure a national standard of parity and quality of the learning opportunities provided for Practice Educators, HEIs should submit placement educator programmes to the same quality monitoring as their other programmes. External examiners should be invited to review work submitted and the annual monitoring report should be submitted to the Approval and Accreditation Department at the College of Radiographers.

## **9. Recognising Accredited Status and the College of Radiographers Database of Practice Educators**

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- 9.1 Successful completion of the scheme allows the Practice Educator to receive recognition of his/her professional status as an accredited Practice Educator. The College of Radiographers will enter the individual's details on the national database and the Practice Educator will receive a certificate in acknowledgement of his/her achievement.
- 9.2 At the end of the five-year period, it will be the responsibility of the accredited educator to complete a re-accreditation form (similar to the fast-track application form) to demonstrate that s/he still meets the learning outcomes of the scheme. The College of Radiographers will provide a recall process six months and one month before the accreditation period ceases to be valid.
- 9.3 HEIs should provide a support system for those seeking to re-register. The Practice Educator should submit their re-accreditation form to a participating HEI.

## **10. Data Protection Statement - Consent for use**

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- 10.1 The personal data that the Practice Educator provides to the accrediting HEI will be subject to the data processing rules as applied within that institution. By supplying this personal data, the Practice Educator agrees that the accrediting HEI can forward his/her data to the College of Radiographers to be held on its database.
- 10.2 The College of Radiographers will keep the Practice Educators' data confidential and not use it for any purpose other than to communicate with them about their accreditation for practice placement education and, in aggregate (and, therefore, anonymously), for research and reporting purposes for local and national statistics and trends.

## **11. Guidance and documentation**

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Additional guidance and application forms can be downloaded from the Society of Radiographers website [www.sor.org](http://www.sor.org) and are available on request from the Approval and Accreditation Department at [approval@sor.org](mailto:approval@sor.org).

## **12. Acknowledgements**

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The Society and College of Radiographers is grateful to:

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy for permission to adapt and reproduce the Accreditation of Clinical Educators (ACE) Scheme © The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy 2005.

The College of Occupational Therapists for allowing adaptation of elements of the Accreditation of Practice Practice Placement Educators Scheme (APPLE).

The Society and College of Radiographers wish to thank the members of the working party who participated in drafting this document:

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## 14. Placement Educator Accreditation Scheme glossary

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Academic level	See <a href="http://www.QAA.ac.uk">www.QAA.ac.uk</a> for definitions.
Accreditation	A statement by the Society and College of Radiographers that: 'an individual has been assessed as meeting stated criteria and judged as fit for practice and purpose'
ACE Scheme	Accreditation of Clinical Educators scheme developed by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) upon which the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme is based.
APPLE Scheme	Accreditation of Practice Placement Educators - the APPLE scheme is a national voluntary accreditation scheme for PPEs that gives them professional recognition of their role, by the College of Occupational Therapists.
Appraisal	The process (usually conducted on an annual, cyclical basis), enacted through constructive discussion that allows an employee's performance to be evaluated (usually by their line manager) against agreed criteria or standards, the outcomes of which should be the identification of objectives for ongoing learning that accord with the individual's job role and development needs and the broader strategic direction of that department/organisation.
BOAT	British Association of Occupational Therapists – the professional body and trade union for occupational therapists in the UK.
COT	College of Occupational Therapists – a wholly owned subsidiary of the British Association of Occupational Therapists (the professional body and trade union for occupational therapists in the UK), with charitable status representing the profession on a national and international level.
CPD – Continuing Professional Development	A wide range of learning activities through which professionals maintain and develop throughout their careers to ensure that they retain their capacity to practice safely, effectively and legally within their evolving scope of practice.
CPD portfolio	A private resource (that might be in hard copy or electronic format) that helps a professional to record, evaluate and reflect on learning and that provides a tool for identifying on-going learning needs and planning activity to meet these and that can be used to support a range of purposes (including preparing for annual appraisal, applying for a new job, seeking academic credit for work-based learning, and applying for Practice Educator status).
CSP – Chartered Society of Physiotherapy	The UK professional, education and trade union for qualified physiotherapists, physiotherapy assistants and physiotherapy students.
Evidence	Material submitted in support of an individual's application for accredited Practice Educator status through the experiential learning route to corroborate reflective writing contained within this, that may take a number of forms and be in a range of media, including materials rooted strongly in everyday practice (adapted to preserve users/colleagues/students' confidentiality and anonymity), demonstrations of having stood back from and evaluated practice, and external verification of practice from colleagues and others.
Experiential learning route	The route through which an experienced Practice Educator can seek accredited Practice Educator status which revolves around a structured application process that enables the individual to demonstrate how professional experience as a practice educator, and reflection upon this, fulfils the core outcomes for the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme.
HEI(s) – Higher Education Institution(s)	Higher Education Institutions or universities offering pre- and post- qualifying education in clinical imaging and radiotherapy and oncology.
Learning Outcome	A means of expressing learning in a way that explicitly states what the learner has achieved in terms of what they know or what they can do.

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Practice co-ordinator	A practitioner responsible for the co-ordination of the practice learning experience of a cohort of learners.
Practice education	The essential and integral element of learning within clinical imaging and radiotherapy and oncology education that takes place in practice settings, that enables learners to develop and refine their professional knowledge, skills and attributes within the areas of professional practice.
Practice Educator	A qualified practitioner who directly supports a student's learning during clinical education/practice-based learning. Also applies to the clinician's education role in relation to other learners (for example junior staff).
Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme Profile	Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme-specific material, reflective statements, evidence and other material that would fit within an application for recognition of accredited status and which, on assessment, demonstrates the applicant's fulfilment of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcomes (as well as fitting within an individual's broader CPD portfolio).
Practice Educator, Accredited	A Practice Educator who has successfully demonstrated fulfilment of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcomes either through following programme route or completing the experiential or fast track route.
Placement Educator Accredited status	The time-limited professional status of an individual, recognised by an HEI and registered with the SCoR, who demonstrates fulfilment of the Practice Educator Accreditation Scheme learning outcomes either through following a College of Radiographers endorsed Practice Educator programme or completing the experiential or fast track route.
Practice placement	A period of defined time, shaped by learning outcomes and assessment, within which students engage in supervised practice-based learning to develop their knowledge and skills and understanding of the organisation and context of health care delivery.





**The College of Radiographers**  
Limited company registration number 1287383  
Registered charity number 272505

**First Edition**  
**June 2006**  
**ISBN 1 871101 37 9**  
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**£25 non-members**

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