Ever thought of being a radiographer?

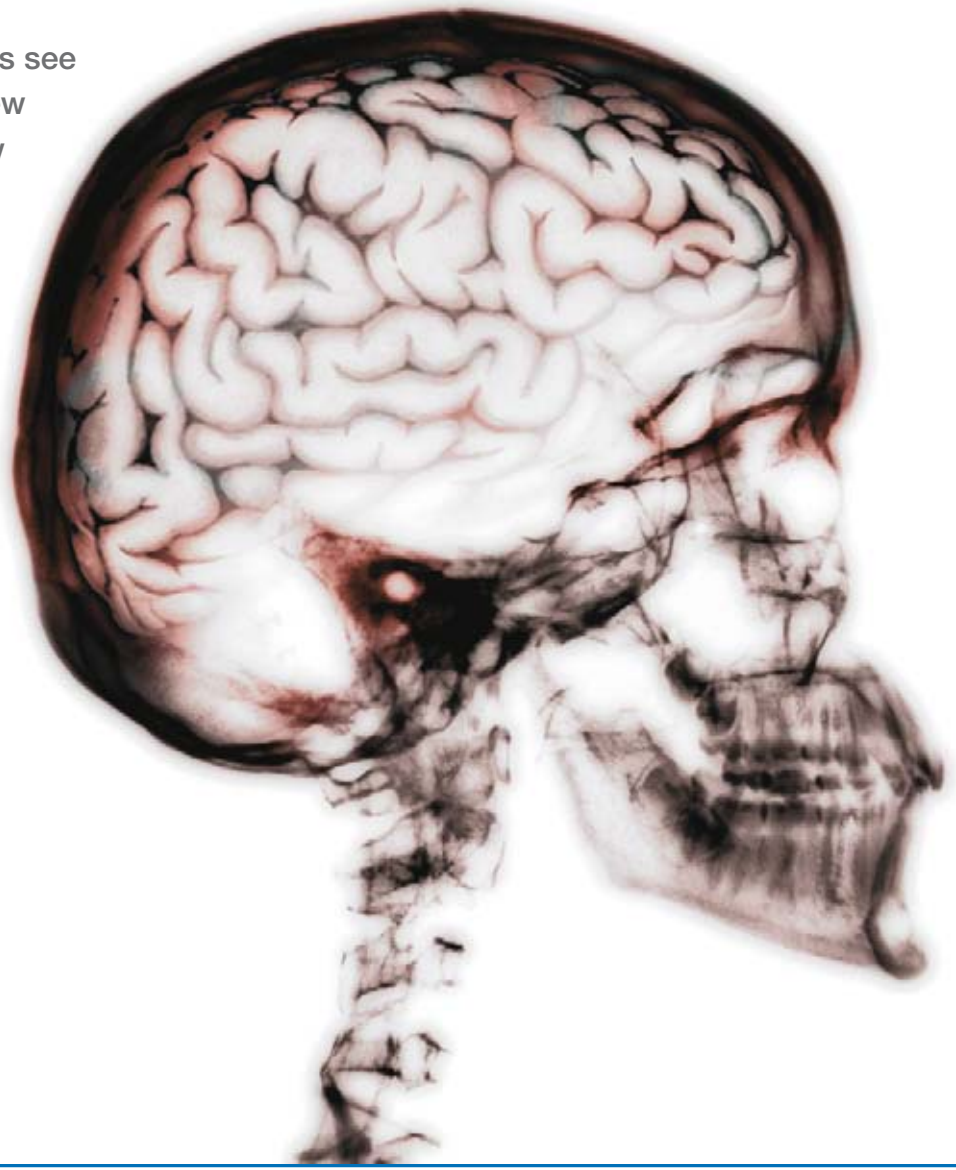
THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS

Most people haven't been in charge of over a million pounds worth of medical technology…

…OR, MORE IMPORTANTLY, SOMEONE'S LIFE.

A radio… what?

Nine out of 10 patients see a radiographer. But few of them actually know what a radiographer does, or why now is the best time to consider radiography as a career. Radiographers investigate why people are ill or they treat cancer.



There are two sorts of radiographer: diagnostic and therapeutic.

Diagnostic radiographers use the latest technology to produce images that are used to diagnose injury or disease.

Techniques include:

- **X-ray** - looks through tissue to examine bones, cavities and foreign objects
- **CT (computed tomography)** – creates a virtual three dimensional image of the body
- **MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)** - builds 2-D or3-D maps of different tissue types within the body
- **Ultrasound** - well known for its use in obstetrics and gynaecology. Also used to check circulation and examine the heart

Therapeutic radiographers are part of a team of health professionals that treats patients who have cancer. Some cancers are best treated with drugs, some with surgery and others respond well to precisely targeted doses of radiation. Frequently, a combination of methods is used. For example, radiation may be used to shrink a tumour to allow a surgeon to remove it.

A key member of the team, the therapeutic radiographer:

- Uses the latest technology such as three and four dimensional image guided radiotherapy
- Is involved with planning and verification
- Delivers treatment
- Has a key role in research and development

Radiographers provide information for patients, many of whom are frightened and need someone who will provide them with emotional support whilst they are receiving treatment, as well as explaining to them what is happening, and why.

Why should I be a radiographer?

Both diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers provide essential services every year to millions of people. Without them, modern healthcare would collapse.

Detailed images of what is happening inside the body ensure that treatments are effective and that valuable time isn't lost.

Radiotherapy has a major role in the treatment of cancer. More than 40 per cent of patients treated are cured.

Radiographers meet new people constantly and are highly regarded by patients for their professionalism and the support they provide.

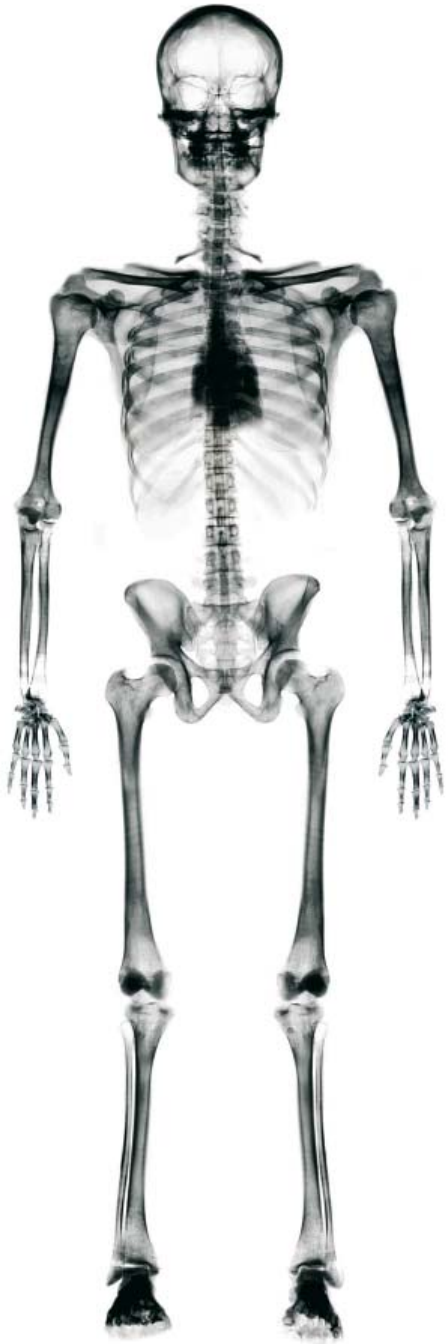
Every day they use the latest technology and manage machines that cost millions of pounds.

Promotion opportunities are excellent with a grading structure that sees the individual's salary increase as they move up the profession. There are increasing numbers of Advanced and Consultant Practitioners, as well as management opportunities. Top level pay is excellent.

British trained radiographers are recognised as being among the best in the world. Many countries recruit from the UK.

A radiography degree is a passport to a job.

Radiography students pay no tuition fees and they may qualify for an NHS bursary.



What makes a good radiographer?

Both diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers need a range of skills.

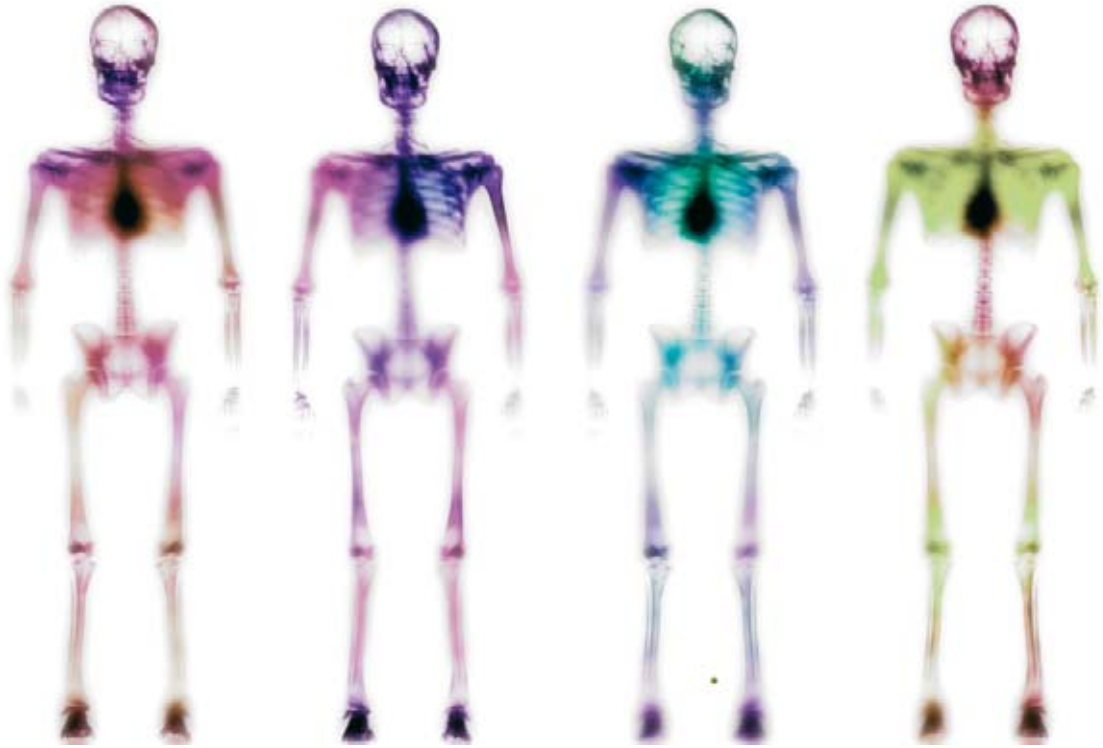
You must be able to communicate with other members of the healthcare team and to provide support for patients who may be frightened or uncertain about what is going to happen.

Therapeutic radiographers in particular get to know patients because they see them regularly through the course of treatment. It is important they can develop a rapport with the individual and their family.

An interest in the sciences such as biology, anatomy and physiology is useful. As is the confidence to work with leading edge technology.

You also need to be able to learn new skills and adapt – radiography is changing constantly – and to make decisions quickly and independently.

What do I have to do to qualify?



THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS

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In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, entry to a BSc degree course in either diagnostic or therapeutic radiography usually requires at least three GCSEs at grade C or above and at least two A levels or equivalent. Alternatively, you could have a BTEC in a relevant subject.

In Scotland, the entry requirement is for a Scottish Higher: BCC, A-level: DDE but each university does have slightly different entry requirements.

Courses are usually for three years (four years in Scotland and Northern Ireland). Subjects studied include anatomy, physiology and pathology; science and technology; social sciences; image interpretation, as well as aspects of patient care, including first aid and counselling skills. Some universities have access courses for mature students who do not have the necessary academic qualifications.

A significant part of the three years is spent working in Clinical Imaging or Radiothearapy and Oncology Departments. There is time spent in the classroom of course, but you get to work with patients and qualified radiographers as quickly as possible.

Want to know more?

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a radiographer go to:

www.radiographycareers.co.uk

or call NHS Careers on 0845 6060655

or e-mail advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk

or go to www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

Go to www.sor.org for information about radiographers