

BACKGROUND

- The University of Exeter have offered an apprenticeship degree programme for employers wishing to provide this employment based route into the profession since March 2020.
- The intention of the University of Exeter's apprenticeship programme has been to increase numbers of radiographers entering the workforce meaning that apprentice learners within a department are in addition to undergraduate radiographers on clinical placement.

WHAT IS THE APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE INTO RADIOGRAPHY?

- Both the apprenticeship route and the conventional undergraduate route are underpinned by degree level education which meet the HCPC's Standards of Proficiency.
- In addition, apprenticeship programmes must meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standard which, in the case of diagnostic radiography, includes an independently assessed End Point Assessment.
- Unlike conventional undergraduate radiographers, apprentices are employees of their department and (for a full time apprentice) will spend 4 days per week within the workplace with 1 day per week study time.
- The apprenticeship route offers employers an option to upskill existing members of their team and / or to undertake external recruitment specifically into these roles.
- The apprentice as employee means they are embedded within the department and are established as part of the team.
- The amount of time within the workplace means that, although still requiring supervision, apprentices gain strong clinical experience whilst developing their theoretical understanding through the taught content provided by the University.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF PLACEMENT CAPACITY

- A key difference between conventional undergraduate radiography programmes and the apprenticeship programme is that, for the apprenticeship programme, the University is not responsible for securing clinical placements.
- Any employer wishing to support an apprentice along this route instead selects a training provider offering the programme.
- Prior to entering into a contract with the employer, the University of Exeter undertakes an assessment of capacity to ensure the employer is able to support the proposed apprentice numbers *in addition* to any current commitment to other learners.
- This assessment takes into account the number of pre-registration learners (but also other learners that may be in the department who also need support and education).

ON-GOING MANAGEMENT OF CAPACITY

- The University of Exeter apprenticeship programme has been designed so that all modules, including the workplace based modules, run longitudinally throughout the programme.
- The module structure means there is flexibility with the scheduling of clinical and competency based workplace assessments for apprentices so that needs of undergraduate students undertaking similar types of assessment on more time limited placements can be prioritised without detriment to the overall development of the apprentice.
- Apprentices also need to use some of their workplace time for learning non-clinical aspects of radiography such as learning about the equipment, the environment and quality control. This also adds flexibility which can be utilised to enable both types of learner to be well supported.



SUMMARY

- It is possible to increase overall placement capacity through the measured introduction of apprentices to the workplace
- Consideration does need to be given to student: staff ratios for existing learners
- However the nature of the apprenticeship programme and the significant amount of time an apprentice spends in the workplace does mitigate the impact of having an additional learner or learners