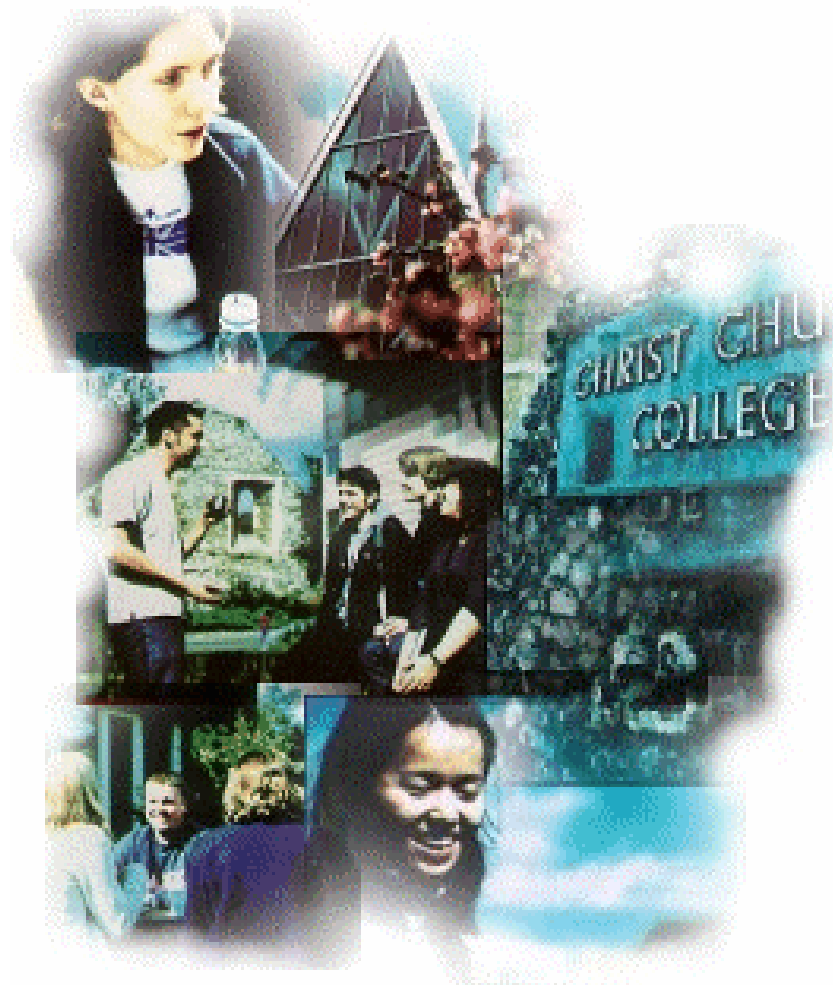




Canterbury Christ Church
University College

Promoting Diversity in Radiography



PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN RADIOGRAPHY – SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction and Context

People from ethnic minority groups, those with disabilities, males and those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are under-represented in the radiography workforce. Arising from and supported by equal opportunities legislation, Government policy in relation to the health and social care sectors and the widening participation agenda in Higher Education, there is a recognition by the health and social care sectors, the profession and Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) of their joint responsibility to develop a workforce that reflects the communities they serve.

This summary reports on a study undertaken by Canterbury Christ Church University College (College) in 2001-2002 and funded by Kent, Surrey and Sussex Workforce Development Confederation. Its purpose was:

- to identify issues that impact on the recruitment, selection and accommodation of people from these under-represented groups to higher education programmes leading to state registration in radiography, and subsequently into employment
- to make recommendations and suggest strategies for Higher Education Institutions and the profession that would enable them to enhance or develop their existing policy and practices in relation to the aim of attracting and retaining a diverse workforce in radiography

Method

A total of 136 participants contributed to the study through interviews, focus groups or survey.

At a local level the focus of the study was on the programme at the College and on the views of current students; staff directly involved in the recruitment, selection and accommodation of radiography students and middle/senior management with input to the diversity agenda within the College. Potential students from the under-represented groups contributed their views of radiography as a career, together with local community groups serving people with disabilities, males and ethnic minority populations.

At a national level, a survey of careers advisers and HE Admissions Tutors informed the project about issues related to the guidance and recruitment of students to radiography.

Both programme specific and national recruitment materials for radiography and health and social care sectors careers in general were critically reviewed with regard to their appeal and representation. A number of recommendations are included in the report.

Summary of key findings and recommendations

People from Ethnic Minorities

Recruitment

Although most participants from ethnic minority communities had heard of this profession, most felt that their knowledge about it was extremely limited. Some suggested that recent adult immigrants from countries where radiography does not exist as a distinct and separate profession may have little awareness of occupations within the health and social care sectors beyond that of nurse or doctor.

Careers advisers had encountered a lack of awareness and few enquiries about this profession from clients from ethnic minority communities. Their perception was that these clients tend to choose higher status medical professions. A significant number of Admission Tutors reported difficulties in recruiting radiography students from the Afro-Caribbean community, despite targeting these groups. It was assumed by some pupils and adults that racial discrimination within the health and social care sectors would exclude them from a career in radiography.

Various images of radiography were presented by those from ethnic minority groups, including a fear of exposure to radiation and of an occupation that lacks pressure, excitement, activity and client care. Some aspects were interpreted positively e.g. providing opportunities to work family-friendly hours. It was felt that females from some ethnic minority groups might be deterred on the grounds of gender and culture/religion.

Parental influence was considered to have a significant effect on career choice. Some parents' aspirations for their child to become a doctor was thought to deter students from considering radiography, although some felt that this might be resolved if parents were aware of the opportunities for progression to a PhD in radiography.

Selection

Some staff expressed a concern that the selection process does not sufficiently accommodate the needs of those applicants from ethnic minority groups whose first language is not English.

Accommodation and Support

Radiography College staff involved in recruitment felt they did not have adequate knowledge of the support mechanisms available for students from ethnic minority groups, whilst recognising that they may face discrimination and problems related to cultural practices when on placement.

Summary of recommendations and examples of suggested strategies

Recruitment

- **Raise awareness amongst ethnic minority communities of radiography and communicate that it is a separate profession within the health service, distinct from a medical doctor, having value in its own right**
 - e.g. make direct links with local community organisations serving ethnic minority groups - GPs, health service providers, careers/Connexions services, youth groups, schools and colleges
- **For deliverers of radiography education to provide opportunities for potential applicants on Access courses to 'try out' the occupation before making a financial commitment to the radiography degree programme**
 - e.g. programmes to arrange 'taster' days within a local professional setting and at the College
- **Programmes and the profession need to demonstrate a desire to be multicultural through anti-racist initiatives**
 - e.g. programmes need to promote their commitment by providing statements and illustrations of how they put into practice a multicultural policy
- **There is a need to communicate effectively the salary structure and progression routes within radiography to potential applicants from ethnic minority groups**
 - e.g. use case studies to demonstrate how radiographers from ethnic minority groups have progressed to senior positions within the profession
- **There is a need for the profession to engage more directly with females from ethnic minority communities in understanding and addressing concerns about radiography as a career**
 - e.g. consider inviting female radiographers from ethnic minority communities to act as role models in promotional materials and to give talks to school pupils from ethnic minority groups
- **There is a need for the profession and programme to counter misperceptions e.g. that radiography presents a health risk to practitioners and is isolated from the 'cut and thrust' of dealing with life and death situations**
 - e.g. consider the feasibility of offering work experience or work shadowing to pupils from schools with ethnic minority populations
- **There is a need for the profession and programmes to build on positive perceptions parents may have of radiography as a medical career and to communicate the opportunities to progress to an educational qualification that is respected within ethnic minority communities**
 - e.g. enable parents to raise specific concerns they may have about the profession and have available information and resources with which to address these

Selection

- **To avoid unfair discrimination, staff need to be clear about the criteria for selection and how to apply these to specific selection tasks**
 - e.g. consider reviewing the selection criteria to ensure that no unintended unfair discriminatory practices are in operation

Accommodation and Support

- **Staff need to have access to appropriate sources to which they can refer students from ethnic minority communities**
 - e.g. staff to have access to a list of sources of referral for students from ethnic minority groups. This may include societies run by the Students' Union, organisations serving the local community, individual students and College Support Services
- **Those responsible for organising clinical placements need to challenge stereotypes and prejudicial behaviours by promoting multicultural and anti-racist perspectives**

Research implications

- **Research may be needed to look at how radiography is viewed within Muslim communities as a career for Muslim women and to ascertain and address any needs or concerns that may come to light**
- **Research may be needed to look at how students are placed, how diversity may be accommodated and the degree of understanding by placement providers of the needs of students from ethnic minority communities.**

People with Disabilities

Recruitment

People with specific disabilities were seen to be attracted to particular types of occupations within health and social care, including working with people with the same disability. It was also felt that some may be deterred from considering any career in health care if they had had negative experiences as clients. Further, disabled students anticipated that there may be negative client reactions to being treated by a radiographer with a disability and this might result in them being considered to be unsuitable by those in the profession.

Careers advisers reported receiving few enquiries about radiography from students with disabilities and some felt that students may be influenced by others not to consider 'active' occupations, as they are regarded as unrealistic and/or too physically demanding. Some community representatives suggested that people with disabilities may exclude themselves as a consequence of believing that they may not be able to cope with the job. College recruitment staff felt that some, including those who are blind or wheelchair users would be precluded from access to a career in radiography on practical grounds.

Students with disabilities and community group representatives both pointed to their own lack of knowledge of radiography as a career and careers advisers identified a lack of awareness generally. The provision of task specific, accurate and accessible information was seen to be needed to enable careers advisers and individuals to assess their abilities in relation to radiography.

The educational requirements for entry to radiography courses were seen as a barrier to those who had attended educational institutions outside the mainstream and had not had the opportunity to acquire academic qualifications.

Potential students felt that a statement in recruitment advertisements encouraging people with disabilities to apply would have a positive effect.

Selection

Specific aspects of the selection process were considered to be potentially problematic for people with disabilities. For example, medical examinations for jobs within the health and social care sectors were seen to lack transparency and a fear of unfair discrimination against those with mental health disabilities was expressed.

Enabling applicants with sensory disabilities to prepare for the selection interview by providing information in an accessible form about the course was seen by a specialist careers adviser to be important. Some felt that unexplained gaps in their career history on their CV, together with revealing their disabled status might initiate discriminatory practices on the part of selectors.

Some radiography departmental staff involved in the selection of students voiced concern that a written selection task may discriminate unfairly against those with dyslexia, as staff are not aware of their disability prior to interviews. A lack of clarity was expressed about the selection criteria for students in relation to specific disabilities.

Accommodation and Support

Universities were seen to be the gateway to health careers for people with disabilities and providing access to them was regarded as important. Further, whilst recognising that certain severe disabilities might present insurmountable problems for entry to radiography, a specialist careers adviser felt that it was necessary for courses to work with advisers and students to assess their abilities and overcome surmountable barriers. Considering how the profession might change to become accessible to people who have abilities, rather than excluding them on the basis of their disabilities was seen to be important. A specialist careers adviser pointed to a need to ensure that all staff convey a positive, supportive and encouraging attitude to students with disabilities who may experience particular problems whilst on the course, and some radiography college staff felt that the needs of students with disabilities were not always recognised and responded to appropriately.

Summary of recommendations and examples of suggested strategies

Recruitment

- **The profession and programmes need to raise awareness of radiography among people with disabilities and recognise and build on the potential interest and particular capabilities that they may bring to this area of work, demonstrating how radiography may be seen as empowering**
 - e.g. for the profession to encourage openness amongst radiographers who experience mental health problems in order to promote diversity within the profession and to actively promote a wider feeling of support to potential applicants
- **The profession and programmes need to consider ways in which they can provide opportunities for those with disabilities to contribute to radiography in informal ways**
 - e.g. to explore possibilities for this through liaison with organisations supporting people with disabilities
- **Those recruiting or providing career advice to people with disabilities need access to specialist disability advice in relation to radiography**
 - e.g. for the profession to consult with organisations supporting people with specific disabilities (for example RNIB, RNID) about their views of radiography as a career for their service users. Based on these consultations and in the light of the Special Needs (2001) and Disability Discrimination Acts (1995), to provide advice and guidance for careers advisers and recruiters
- **For providers of radiography education to work more closely with Access courses and other learning providers within the community to enable those with disabilities to reach required educational standards for degree course entry**
 - e.g. for departmental staff to work closely with the college and Skill to develop an outreach programme that provides appropriate support for students with disabilities on Access courses
- **Courses need to actively encourage those with disabilities to apply to programmes**
 - e.g. consider actively promoting radiography to this under-represented group by including positive statements in recruitment materials that welcomes applications from those with disabilities
- **The actual physical fitness and mobility requirements need to be more effectively communicated, so as not to deter those with disabilities from applying**
 - e.g. analyse the job to determine any physical and mobility requirements

Selection

- **To allay fears that having a disability may automatically put them at a disadvantage, the selection process (including the medical examination) will need to be transparent with opportunities provided for dialogue**
 - e.g. make it transparent to applicants how the information they provide in relation to their disability will be used in the selection process
- **Staff responsible for recruitment need to be aware of a candidate's particular needs in relation to their disability to ensure these will be accommodated prior to and within the selection process**
 - e.g. make available to applicants with disabilities an explanation of the selection process in advance of the selection day and in an appropriate medium such as audio tape
- **Selectors to programmes and to the profession need to be clear about the medical criteria applied to selection, the grounds for rejection or deferment and how to communicate these to applicants**
 - e.g. ensure that the medical criteria for selection are uniform across programmes and the profession

Accommodation and Support

- **Coping and support strategies need to be considered with individual students and adaptations made appropriately to accommodate an individual's specific needs**
 - e.g. for the Society of Radiographers to initiate a discussion across the wider profession concerning the provision of clinical placements for students with disabilities
- **There is a need for staff to provide support that is explicit and available to students with disabilities throughout their programme**
 - e.g. for departmental staff to be prepared to actively offer support and provide differing types and levels of support as needed by those with specific disabilities during different aspects of the programme, including placements
- **The profession and programmes need to review the core components of the job and degree programmes in relation to people with disabilities and consider the scope for changing or adapting the content and/or delivery to accommodate those with different disabilities**
 - e.g. for the profession and programmes to consider the feasibility of introducing different levels of entry to the profession, dependent on the completion of particular courses. Thus enabling people to qualify to practice within limited and specific areas of radiography

Males

Recruitment

Both males and females were aware of radiography, however confusion was voiced about the responsibilities and job functions of radiographers. Careers advisers identified a general lack of awareness of this profession. College staff and careers advisers felt that males perceive radiography as a female dominated 'caring' profession, whereas potential applicants had differing views of its association with a particular gender. Some regarded the science, maths and technical aspects of the job as an indication of 'maleness', and others pointed to the 'female' qualities required as a carer and communicator. Some men viewed it as requiring them to work mainly with older female colleagues and not in the foreground where they could gain recognition and autonomy.

Radiography was seen as an old fashioned word by some males, as it suggested radiation and danger to them. Some males regarded working as a radiographer as a possible risk to their personal health and therefore as a disincentive to considering it as a career.

College staff and male and female potential applicants felt that pay was seen as more important to males than females when considering a profession. Radiography was regarded as relatively poorly paid, without the potential for radiographers to increase their basic pay via working in private practice, unlike less technical health care occupations e.g. physiotherapy. Further, it was perceived as offering no clear career path within the health and social care sectors.

Selection

No course staff identified a gender bias against males in the selection of students.

Accommodation and support

It was felt by some College staff that men may experience problems with some aspects of the course that relate directly to the female body. Further, some male radiography students had experienced gender related issues initiated by female radiography staff in clinical situations. Some staff identified that a number of male students with dependents withdrew from the programme due to inadequate funding.

Summary of recommendations and examples of suggested strategies

Recruitment

- **There is a need for the profession and programmes to raise awareness and counter misperceptions of radiography**
 - e.g. directly address concerns associated with radiography through careers literature and multi-media presentations by presenting it as non-hazardous to health and as dynamic, active and exciting

- **The profession needs to communicate effectively that it welcomes and is open to males and females and to illustrate the variety, complexity and responsibility involved in the job**
 - e.g. male radiographers to be given the time and resources to present the profession to school pupils and adults studying on Access courses
- **The profession needs to advertise more widely the career opportunities within radiography, together with the associated financial gains**
 - e.g. provide examples in promotional materials of opportunities within radiography to enhance basic pay – such as on-call work

Accommodation and Support

- **Programme providers need to be sensitive at the induction stage and throughout, enabling males and females to feel comfortable working together (not to personalise gender issues being discussed)**
 - e.g. programme providers to consider how to embed an attitude of acceptance and openness concerning gender issues within the course teaching
- **Ensure that materials providing financial advice to students include illustrations of older male radiography students who have successfully completed the course whilst supporting their families**

Research implications

- **Research may be needed to explore the reasons males may have for not feeling comfortable in working with females in some aspects of the programme and to establish how this can be resolved**

People from Socially Disadvantaged Backgrounds

Recruitment

College staff identified financial hardship as a major deterrent to attracting people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds from considering radiography as a career option. They felt that the initial outlay for placement accommodation would act as a disincentive to potential students from these backgrounds.

Accommodation and Support

Some staff and current radiography students felt that students with financial difficulties are not sufficiently well supported. Further, that those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds encounter problems both in the academic and practical aspects of the programme that are not addressed.

Summary of recommendations and examples of suggested strategies

Recruitment

- **Entry to radiography programmes needs to be facilitated by programmes working in a targeted way with Access courses, particularly those in socially disadvantaged areas**
 - e.g. focus recruitment literature on the practical benefits following qualification – career structure, salary, opportunities and job security
- **For courses to make clear in their recruitment materials how students can manage their finances**
 - e.g. provide case studies using students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to illustrate how they have managed their finances to complete the programme

Accommodation and support

- **Raise nationally the funding implications of students having to pay double rent whilst on placement**
 - e.g. consider introducing a part-time route to qualification, allowing students to work whilst studying
- **Review mechanisms to ensure that the needs of those with financial problems are given priority when allocating placements**
 - e.g. introduce a systematic and transparent form of prioritising the allocation of placements to accommodate those experiencing financial hardship
- **Provide training for all staff teaching on radiography courses about ways in which the effects of social disadvantage may impact on students' learning and progression**
 - e.g. enable staff to attend training sessions and to transfer this learning to their teaching and support roles

Recruitment Materials

Most recruitment materials, with few exceptions, consistently gave prominence to white students and practitioners. The vast majority of recruitment literature reviewed lacks reference to people with disabilities within the radiography workforce and on degree programmes. Further, none of the pictures representing the profession and courses depict people with visually apparent disabilities. There is also no reference to disability in the materials. The Society of Radiographers' website has links to the Minority Ethnic Network and to the Disability Network and includes equal opportunities statements.

The depiction of male radiographers is concentrated in particular areas of the literature i.e. those illustrating other branches of radiography (academic and armed forces radiographers, and those who have progressed to management). Males are under-represented in materials focusing on hospital radiography as a career.

No reference is made to social disadvantage issues in the recruitment literature. Little information is made available regarding funding/financial concerns.

No equal opportunities statements were included in any of the recruitment literature or materials reviewed, other than on the Society of Radiographers website.

Summary of recommendations

- **There is a need for the profession and programmes to ensure that people from ethnic minority groups, males and people with disabilities are not under-represented in publicity materials**
- **Recruitment materials need an inclusive statement welcoming applications from individuals with disabilities, those from ethnic minority groups and both genders**
- **Accessible, specific information for those with disabilities should be made available and referenced in recruitment materials**
- **Opportunities should be provided for radiographers from ethnic minority communities to speak directly to these communities about the professionalism of their role and the rewards it brings**
- **Males need to be shown in a range of settings as a means of countering stereotypical expectations**
- **Sources of financial advice for potential applicants should be included in recruitment literature**
- **National initiatives need to be undertaken to address funding issues**
- **National recruitment and retention drives need to be more sensitive and better targeted to reach broader groups**

Printed and electronic copies of the full report (also in large print) are available from:

Moira Helm

Head of Allied Health Professions Department

Canterbury Christ Church University College

North Holmes Road

Canterbury

Kent CT1 1QU

Tel: 01227 782935

e-mail: m.e.helm@canterbury.ac.uk

Website: <http://health.cant.ac.uk/allied-health-professions/index.htm>