

ADDRESSING THE BRITISH BREAST RADIOLOGY WORKFORCE CRISIS, A CREDENTIAL FOR BREAST CLINICIANS

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Background; With a higher than average retirement rate and increasing service demand, many British breast units have a radiology staffing crisis. This project between the Royal College of Radiologists, Association of Breast Clinicians and Health Education England, with funding through the National Breast Imaging Academy, will increase the number of Breast Clinicians (non-Radiologist doctors working in breast diagnosis and trained in breast imaging) working in the UK. This will standardise their training and provide formal accreditation by means of a Credential. Previous training for Breast Clinicians has taken many routes, including university based training and apprenticeship style learning, all service need dependent and variable between regions and units. The three year training pathway will allow transferability of skills between units through a recognised qualification. The Credential provides a national standard of competency based, assured safe practice for the individual doctor, the employing Trust and most importantly, for patients. Medically qualified breast imagers with additional skills in clinical assessment, breast disease management and family and genetic risk assessment will be able to lead services and provide flexible working solutions to breast units across the UK. To pilot the curriculum, ten partially funded places were offered to breast units within England willing to employ and train a Breast Clinician via the new Credential pathway.

More than just imaging; whilst the crisis facing the UK is primarily within breast radiology, symptomatic clinic referrals are rising and women with perceived and actual increased risk of breast cancer are increasingly seeking additional screening and risk reducing interventions. By equipping the new cohort of Breast Clinicians with all the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with these patients, in addition to imaging and interventional skills, a truly flexible and invaluable asset to any UK breast unit will be trained within three years.

The Curriculum and Capabilities in Practice, CiPs.

Generic CiP	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3		Specialty Specific CiP	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
1. Demonstrate the professional values and behaviours expected of all doctors as outlined in Good Medical Practice (GMP)	2	2	3	Award of credential	7. Appropriately select and tailor breast imaging to patient context and the clinical question(s)	2	3	4	Award of credential
2. Successfully function within the health service and healthcare systems in the UK	2	2	3		8. Provide timely, accurate and clinically useful reports on imaging studies	1	2	4	
3. Engage in reflection, clinical governance and quality improvement processes to ensure good practice	2	2	3		9. Appropriately manage clinical and imaging workload according to clinical need, urgency and professional expertise	1	2	4	
4. Engage in evidence-based practice and safeguard data, including imaging data	1	2	3		10. Evaluate image quality and utilise the knowledge of imaging sciences to optimise image quality	3	4	4	
5. Act as a clinical teacher and supervisor	1	2	3		11. Lead, work within and effectively contribute to a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting	2	3	4	
6. Show proficiency in working well within a multi-disciplinary team, communicate effectively with colleagues and demonstrate the skills required to lead a team	2	2	3		12. Explain to patients and colleagues the use of prognostic and biological factors that influence oncological treatments for patients with early and metastatic breast cancer	1	2	4	
					13. Provide accurate risk assessment and instigate appropriate surveillance, counselling and tertiary referral for women at higher than population risk of breast cancer	3	4	4	
					14. Explain the impact of benign, uncertain and malignant breast pathologies on the diagnostic pathway and correlate these with clinical and radiological findings	3	3	4	

Mirroring many aspects of the Clinical Radiology curriculum, with additional Breast Clinician specific content, 14 CiPs, outline what is expected to be achieved, and evidenced in order to be awarded the Credential. Progression must be shown through training. Generic CiPs progress through 3 levels, developing, capable & expert. Specific CiPs start at level 1, observation alone, progressing through degrees of supervision to unsupervised, level 4. Training & experience within the CiPs will overlap, although early focus is on clinical skills, knowledge of breast disease risk assessment.

Assessment; Trainees will be expected to pass the FRCR physics exam within the first year of training (CiP 10). Additional to this, multiple workplace based assessments and logbooks will provide formative assessment across all CiPs. Practical procedures including stereotactic and ultrasound guided interventional techniques are expected with increasing frequency, increased complexity and with more independence with each year of training. All evidence of competency will be collated through Kaizen, the RCR ePortfolio. Coupled with reports from a dedicated Educational Supervisor and annual appraisal, these will provide evidence of satisfactory progression and completion of training. An annual review panel, consisting of members of the RCR and ABC not affiliated to training centres, will oversee appropriate progression of all trainees, & recommend the final award to the Project Board.

Evaluation; Formal evaluation of the pilot by the Project Board and specifically by HEE is ongoing. Interest has been high and recruitment largely successful.

Conclusion; The Credential delivers an innovative solution to the breast radiology workforce crisis, providing accredited doctors, specialising in breast disease management, imaging and risk assessment within three years.

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