

EFRS STATEMENT

Radiographers in Radiotherapy: Practice across the Radiotherapy Pathway

Radiographers in radiotherapy are autonomous, accountable practitioners working within the radiotherapy team, which includes oncologists, medical physicists, and nursing professionals.

Radiographers in radiotherapy are radiotherapy experts who:

- are professionally accountable to the patients' physical and psychosocial wellbeing, prior to, during and following examinations or therapy;
- take an active role in justification and optimisation of medical imaging and radio therapeutic procedures;
- are key persons in radiation safety of patients and third persons in accordance with the "As Low As Reasonably Achievable (ALARA)" principle and relevant legislation.

Radiographers in radiotherapy

are responsible for the preparation and performance of safe and accurate high-energy radiation treatments, using a wide range of sophisticated irradiation and imaging equipment and techniques, this includes:

- optimising the patient position and production of individual immobilisation as required;
- using simulation to collect data / information to identify the target volume and organs at risk using appropriate imaging modalities;
- treatment planning to achieve an optimal dose distribution in the target volume and organs at risk;
- verification of the treatment plan, patient set-up and daily verification of patient positioning
Irradiation of the target volume [1].

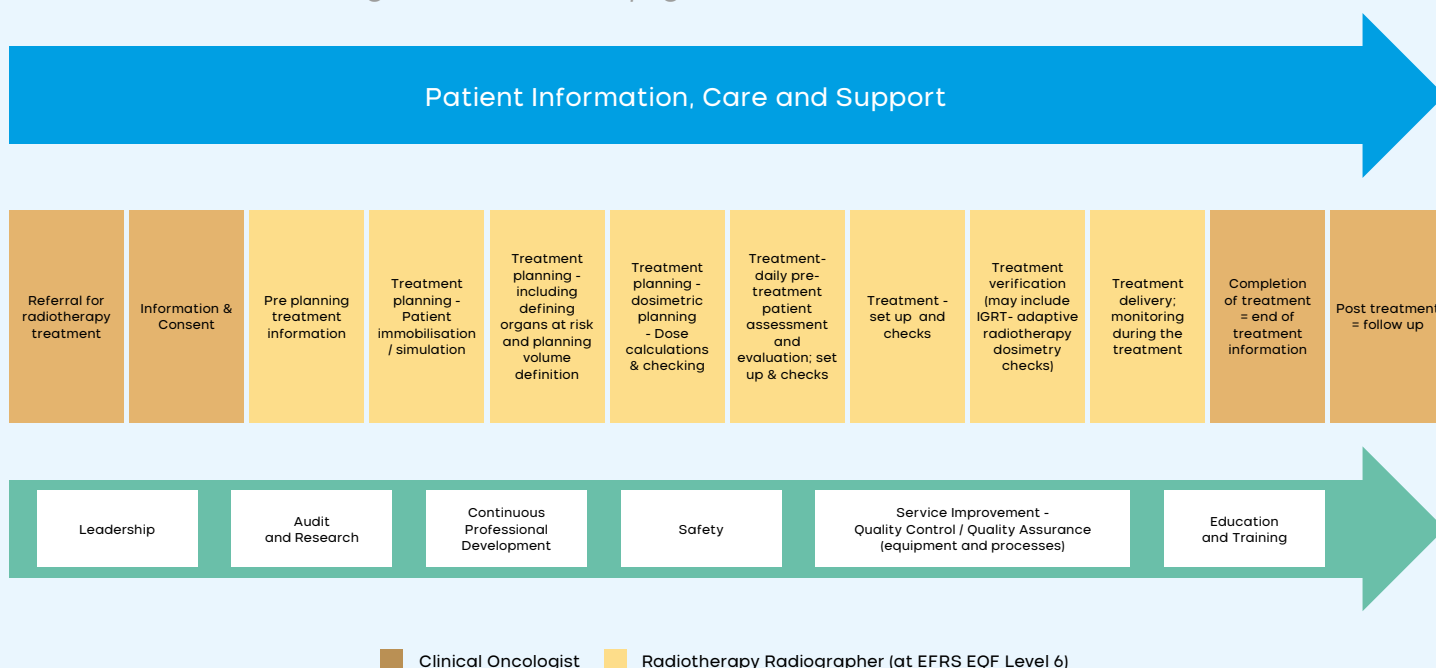
The most recent education statement from the EFRS recognises there is variation in education across Europe [2]. In order to support harmonisation of education and training through provision of benchmark knowledge skills and competences, the EFRS published the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) Level 6 (Bachelors) guidance for the profession [3]. The EFRS believe that EQF Level 6 should be the entry level to the profession across Europe and the EQF Level 7 (Masters) offers a framework to support advanced practice within the profession [3,4].

The EFRS EQF Level 6 and 7 both serve as a point of reference for use by professional bodies, educational institutions, employers, and other relevant bodies throughout Europe in developing education programmes, clinical training and supporting workforce skills mix / service design within radiotherapy services [5].

This short statement is produced with the aim of promoting to European stakeholders, the possible areas of practice of a radiographer in radiotherapy if the EQF benchmark education requirements are met. It demonstrates the possible breadth of practice across radiotherapy services at the entry level supported with evidence of clinical competence. This pathway supports understanding of the role of the radiographer in radiotherapy, helps support workforce planning within radiotherapy, and is underpinned by service leadership, through engagement in audit and research [6] informing service improvement, and in continuous professional development (CPD) of self and others through ongoing education and training [7]. If the recommendations made within the recently published EFRS Statement on Education are implemented effectively then all countries within Europe would be developing radiotherapy practitioners with the potential to develop and use their breadth of skills to support care safely across the entire radiotherapy pathway as shown in the following diagram [2].

The Radiotherapy Patient Pathway: a Radiographer's Role in Radiotherapy (at EQF Level 6)

A zoomed version of this diagram is available on page 4



This diagram describes a 'generic' patient pathway for external beam radiotherapy. Radiotherapy is delivered within teams, and integral to the radiotherapy pathway are clinical oncologists and medical physicists who provide expertise across the entire radiotherapy process.

The pathway may vary, for example, in relation to IGRT and adaptive radiotherapy. In addition to the direct activities relating to the patient, there are core requirements to support high quality service delivery. These are shown above (within the pink and green arrows). The radiographer in radiotherapy has a core role in all the areas listed above: audit and research; continuous professional development; safety, service improvement, quality control and assurance; leadership, and education and training at EQF Level 6.

In some countries, the practice of the radiographer in radiotherapy may be limited to very specific parts of this pathway, for example treatment delivery, but their skills acquired through their education and training will be broader if their education maps to the EFRS EQF Level 6. The EFRS is keen to promote that the stages within the blue boxes, are highlighted as being areas of practice which are underpinned by education training and competence within the EFRS EQF Level 6 for radiographers in radiotherapy, and areas where the practice could be developed in collaboration with the multi-professional team.

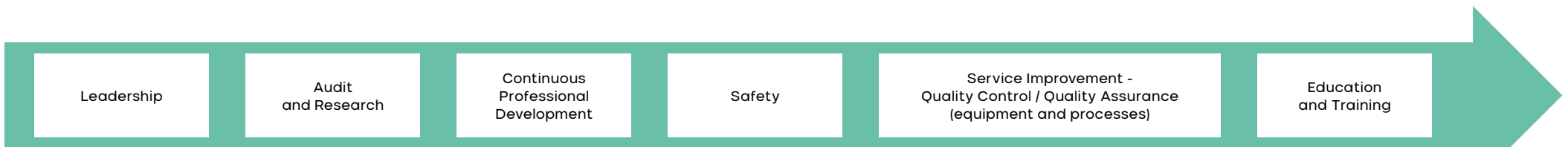
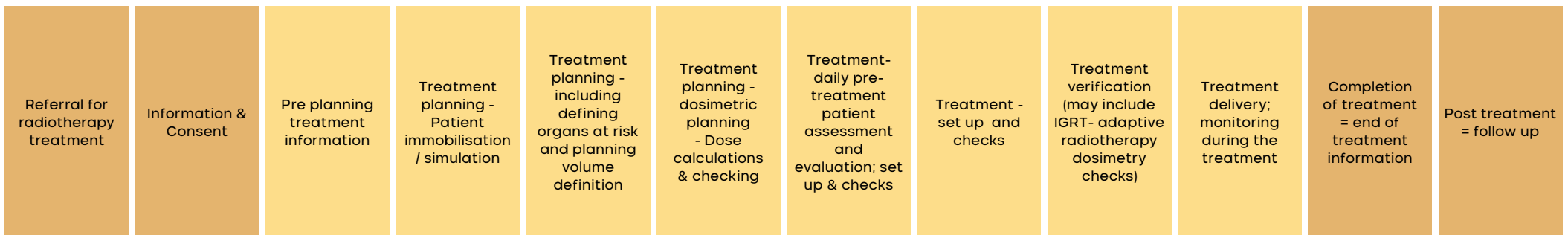
In addition development of radiotherapy radiographers skills in advanced roles at EFRS EQF Level 7 within specific areas of the identified pathway will help support higher level decision making, will support radiographers leading research and in continuing to develop the evidence base for radiographic practice and improved patient care, within the radiotherapy team.

References

1. European Federation of Radiographers Societies (2011). EFRS Definition of a Radiographer. Utrecht: European Federation of Radiographers Societies. Available from: <https://api.efrs.eu/api/assets/publications/348>
2. European Federation of Radiographers Societies (2019). EFRS Statement on Radiography Education. Utrecht: European Federation of Radiographer Societies. Available from: <https://api.efrs.eu/api/assets/publications/559>
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6. European Federation of Radiographers Societies (2016). EFRS Statement on Radiography Research in Europe: Strengthening evidence-based practice within the profession. Utrecht: European Federation of Radiographers Societies. Available from: <https://api.efrs.eu/api/assets/publications/82>
7. European Federation of Radiographers Societies (2019). EFRS Continuous Professional Development Recommendations and Guidance Notes. Utrecht: European Federation of Radiographers Societies. Available from: <https://api.efrs.eu/api/assets/publications/88>

The Radiotherapy Patient Pathway: a Radiographer's Role in Radiotherapy (at EQF Level 6)

Patient Information, Care and Support



Clinical Oncologist
 Radiotherapy Radiographer (at EFRS EQF Level 6)

This diagram describes a 'generic' patient pathway for external beam radiotherapy. Radiotherapy is delivered within teams, and integral to the radiotherapy pathway are clinical oncologists and medical physicists who provide expertise across the entire radiotherapy process.