

TRAINING SPECIFICATION FOR POST GRADUATE TRAINING IN MEDICAL RADIATION THERAPY

1.0 PREAMBLE

Cancer services are one of the government's key health priority areas. New Zealand currently has a shortage of trained and practising medical radiation therapists. This shortage has lengthened waiting times for radiation therapy beyond the recommended threshold.

This specification outlines the training requirements for a postgraduate certificate in medical radiation therapy. The programme is designed as a refresher for trained medical radiation therapists who have been out of the workforce for a number of years, and need to update their knowledge and skills before returning to the workforce. It is envisioned that the postgraduate certificate will lead on to a postgraduate diploma in order to provide a basis to build on further advanced practice and provide an enhanced career pathway.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

A postgraduate certificate in medical radiation therapy will provide academic and clinical training in radiation treatment planning and delivery.

Training is offered on a distance-learning basis throughout New Zealand (ie not limited to education provider sites). The objective is to prepare medical radiation therapists (MRTs) to be well equipped to provide radiation therapy at an advanced level and to provide excellence in service delivery and patient outcomes.

The programme will be accessible to MRTs registered in New Zealand, independent of initial qualification or currency of practice.

The postgraduate certificate comprises two papers:- one covering contemporary practice in medical radiation therapy and a practicum paper, within a clinical practice setting.

2.1 Learning Environment

The programme will be vocational with a focus on both academic and clinical components. Applied research will take place in a clinical environment where the relevance of the clinical procedures to clinical care is understood.

2.1.1 Clinical Placement

Clinical placements are in settings where appropriate advanced clinical experience can be obtained.

The range of staff available to support/advise the trainee must include registered MRTs, radiation oncologists, medical physicists, specialist oncology nurses and other members of the oncology multidisciplinary team.

The range of cases available for the trainee will be such that by the end of training adequate experience has been gained as described in the programme outcomes. This would include access to specialist areas of radiation oncology; for example, paediatric and head and neck cases, which involve advanced radiation oncology modalities. This could be achieved through clinical alliances.

Trainees will be required to demonstrate appreciation of Maori health practices as applied to health service provision and to all aspects of clinical practice.

Normal lines of clinical service accountability and work place safety will apply to trainees.

Trainees will be required to be released from clinical duties to attend programme learning opportunities. This should be for a minimum of eight hours per week for 42 weeks to participate in:

- seminars and tutorials as part of the formal teaching process
- direct clinical supervision
- self directed study
- research

Clinical experience will focus on:

- analysis and application of research findings into practice
- further development of the trainee's expertise in the field of medical radiation therapy
- contributing to improvements in service delivery
- critical thinking and reflective practice
- accountability for professional radiation therapy practice at an advanced level
- case reviews

2.1.2 Formal Teaching Programme

A formal teaching programme delivered by appropriately skilled and experienced staff will be provided. This will consist of structured modules which provide and enable the trainee to access required resources. This will be achieved by a minimum of four hours per week directed learning for 42 weeks and will meet the curriculum requirements of the education provider. These four hours per week are considered to be part of the eight hours per week release from clinical duties in section 2.1.1.

Applied research activities should meet Health Research Council standards including consultation with Maori, where appropriate.

The formal teaching is to include:

- a critique of New Zealand Cancer Service delivery and interservice relationships
- a critical analysis of different models of radiation treatment planning and delivery
- a critical examination of historical and current national and international trends and research findings in the field of medical radiation therapy
- a critical appreciation of relevant legislative, ethical and professional requirements
- other topics identified as relevant to the trainee's workplace demands, requirements, current learning needs and changes to scopes of practice
- a critical appreciation of relevant technology and its application to contemporary practice

2.1.3 Access to Resources

To meet the outcomes of the programme the trainee requires access to:

- An academic teaching programme (distance learning, lectures, tutorials or other courses of study) and appropriate facilities and staff for this.
- Supervised clinical training situations with the opportunity for critical reflection on current practice with an evidence-based practice component.
- Equipment for radiation treatment planning and delivery appropriate to the level of clinical practice
- Adequate library facilities with relevant and up to date journals, text books, other relevant material and access to literature databases and on-line search facilities
- Group discussion facilities and case studies
- Support and guidance with techniques and tools for undertaking applied health research.
- A broad range of staff are expected to have input into the trainee's learning experience.

2.2 Supervision

2.2.1 Clinical Supervision

Each clinical training centre has a nominated local clinical supervisor who supervises all trainees at that site. Clinical supervision includes knowledge and skills-based experiential learning and critical reflective practice. The clinical supervisor's main role is to assist trainees to integrate theory and practice, drawing on current literature and research. This will require a minimum of two hours per week direct contact.

The supervisor must be approved by the programme co-ordinator and will demonstrate the highest professional and ethical standards. The supervisor is responsible for arranging the clinical experience but may devolve the supervision of

specific tasks to other suitably experienced and qualified staff, which may include members of a multidisciplinary team.

Supervisors are required to report to the programme co-ordinator, the progress of each trainee as required within the programme.

2.2.2 Educational Supervision

Educational supervision is provided by the education provider and overseen by the programme co-ordinator. This includes:

- Instruction on the contemporary theory and practice of medical radiation therapy
- Liaison with the clinical supervisors to ensure that the environment, resources and training are conducive to learning and meeting programme objectives
- Ensuring opportunities for reflective learning on clinical experience in the light of current literature and research
- Assisting the trainee to integrate theory and practice
- Assessing trainees at regular intervals for competence and progress
- Critical assessment of the trainee's standard of practice and insight regarding the need for assistance
- Acting as intermediaries in any case where dispute arises between the clinical supervisor and the trainee with respect to the programme

2.3 Programme Co-ordination

A postgraduate co-ordinator will organise the papers, academic tutors and supervisors, assessments and programme evaluation. They will liaise with the clinical sites and supervisors and the MRTB.

A programme steering committee will be established to monitor progress of trainees, and allow for the prompt resolution of any issues that may arise. This committee will comprise of one representative from each of: the education provider, NZIMRT, MRTB, clinical providers and trainee representative.

2.4 Expected Outcomes

2.4.1 Trainee Outcome

To be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate trainees have to fulfil all the programme requirements of the education provider, including the clinical component. The trainee will be assessed as possessing the skills required for clinical leadership and mentorship.

2.4.2 Service outcomes

- Increased flexibility and scope of medical radiation therapy practice

- Benefits from the application of research knowledge to medical radiation therapy
- Clear articulation of the radiation therapy perspective in the multi-disciplinary team
- Strong patient advocacy
- Improvement of retention of MRTs at an advanced level of practice

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Trainee Eligibility

To be accepted on to the post graduate certificate programme the trainee must:

- Be currently employed or have been previously employed as a registered medical radiation therapist by a New Zealand Cancer Service
- Hold an undergraduate qualification in medical radiation therapy together with a minimum of 12 months post graduate clinical experience, or
- Be a New Zealand registered medical radiation therapist with a qualification and experience equivalent to degree level

Any applicant who does not meet the above criteria will be considered for entry on a case by case basis, by the Clinical Training Agency.

3.2 Provider Eligibility

Providers must have access to a suitable training environment as described in section 2 and:

- An established undergraduate programme conferred in medical radiation therapy or a closely allied topic
- Recognised expertise and research competency in applied health research
- Established links with and access to clinical training centres as recognised by the MRTB
- Support of the health professional body (NZIMRT)
- Appropriate accreditation by NZQA or CUAP

4. LOCATION

The academic component will be provided by a registered education provider with the facilities for distance learning.

The clinical component for the programme will be provided under supervision in a public New Zealand Cancer Service.

Under the standard CTA contract, any subcontracting of the formal teaching programme and/or of the approved training locations can only occur with the CTA's prior written consent.

5. LINKAGES

Links should be established with

- New Zealand Cancer Services
- Medical Radiation Technologist Board
- New Zealand Institute of Medical Radiation Technology
- A recognised undergraduate programme in medical radiation therapy.
- Existing Master's health science programmes for stair-casing opportunities
- New Zealand branch of the Australasian Faculty of Radiation Oncology
- Maori
- Health and Disability Commission
- Other relevant health professional bodies and community agencies providing cancer related services

6. PURCHASE UNIT AND REPORTING UNIT

A trainee who meets the eligibility criteria in 3.1.

7. QUALITY STANDARDS

(to include the following)

7.1 Training Programme

The training programme will be regularly reviewed and evaluated by the committee described in 2.3 to ensure that the needs of cancer services are met.

The provision of this programme will define a clear career pathway for the advanced practice of medical radiation therapy.

The objectives of the training programme will be continually updated to match the advances in radiation oncology.

7.2 Educational Supervision

Support for distance learning will be provided and maintained.

Active links will be maintained with the clinical training centres.

7.3 Clinical Supervision

The supervisor's role will be well defined and outlined in the programme.

Clinical supervisors receive training and support to undertake the role. This should include teaching skills and access to current literature and research.

The minimum requirement for approval as a Clinical Supervisor is a Radiation Therapy qualification plus five years post qualification experience.

8.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

8.1 CTA Specific

This should be read in conjunction with Section E of the CTA contract document which specifies generic reporting requirements for all programmes provided under the contract.

Section 2.4 of the specification details the expected outcomes of the training programme purchased.

Reports as described in Section E of the CTA contract document require a summary of the programme. Section F of the contract requires that a quality plan is in place for the ongoing monitoring of the training provided. The summary should refer to the outcomes of this internal quality management and make reference to the programme specific quality standards in 7.0 above, particularly supervision.

8.2 Profession Specific

Providers will supply an annual report to Cancer Services, MRTB, NZIMRT, CTA including:

- Achievement levels and attrition of trainees by demographic spread
- Range of trainee's speciality interest
- Current area of research interest of both faculty and trainees
- Summary of outcomes of the programme quality monitoring that indicate proposed areas of programme change and development
- Issues of note raised by the programme steering committee

The purpose of reporting is to allow the profession, professional and regulatory bodies to have ongoing input into course development and to assist with national work force development and planning.