

Thinking of Radiation Oncology?

Radiation oncology is a medical specialty that involves the controlled use of radiation to treat cancer and some non-malignant conditions – either for cure or to reduce pain and other symptoms. Radiation therapy (also called radiotherapy) is the term to describe the actual treatment, which is used to treat almost all cancers. Around half of all cancer patients would benefit from radiation therapy at some point in their cancer journey. It is a specialty that will appeal to clinicians with an interest in having direct contact and meaningful relationships with patients and their families, and in being a key player in their overall care.

Overview of Radiation Oncology

Radiation oncology is an intellectually challenging and exciting career with a range of opportunities in the public and, increasingly, private sectors as well as in the academic sphere. It incorporates the best aspects of direct clinical management of patients of all ages with a highly effective and technologically interesting treatment modality.

Radiation therapy, delivered by radiation oncologists, is a proven, effective treatment for cancer and can be used alone or with other treatments. Radiation therapy uses highly precise doses of radiation to damage or destroy cancer cells; usually delivered in controlled measures over a number of weeks. Radiation therapy is highly sophisticated and targeted, using state of the art imaging modalities to make each treatment tailored for the individual.

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiology (RANZCR)-trained radiation oncologists are highly regarded by other health professionals and bodies in New Zealand, Australia, and internationally. They are sought-after for overseas training fellowship positions, which usually involve a significant clinical or laboratory research component. The RANZCR training programme and curriculum are designed to meet the ever-evolving modern requirements and skills of the specialty, and have been praised for being of world-class modern educational standard by analogous training bodies in other countries, as well as by the Australian Medical Council.

Training Process

All training positions in New Zealand are appointed centrally through the Faculty of Radiation Oncology New Zealand training network based out of the RANZCR branch office in Wellington.

Duration of vocational training is five (5) years. There are two major phases of training.

- Phase 1 can take between 18 -24 months and includes a 6-month foundation period.
- Phase 2 extends for the remainder of the training programme through to a minimum time of five (5) years.

The exact length of each phase is determined by the trainee's progress and achievement of certain milestones, not a predetermined time period.

Training settings:

Trainees are based in one of six accredited radiation oncology centres in New Zealand. During their training they will rotate between different teams within the department in which they are based. There is also a 12-month rotation to another centre during the five-year course of training. Due to its size, trainees who begin training in Southern DHB have a maximum of two years training before having to move permanently to another centre. The National training network will facilitate this. The training process is designed to ensure exposure to the full range of radiation oncology techniques.

Personal qualities required to be a Specialist

Radiation oncology is a specialty that will appeal to clinicians with an interest in having direct contact and meaningful relationships with patients and their families, and in being a key player in their overall care. Essential skills for a radiation oncologist are:

- Excellent communication skills, above all with our patients.
- Ability to work in a close and collaborative fashion with multidisciplinary teams.
- Have skills in management and be highly professional.
- Practice evidence-based medicine, taking part in research and other academic pursuits, including teaching.

Specialty Training Programme Information

Medical College

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists ([RANZCR](#)) is the academic body responsible for setting the standards of the training and assessment required to allow registration as a radiation oncologist

Fellowship/Qualification

Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (FRANZCR).

Recognition of Prior Learning

No information available.

Entry requirement

To be accepted into the College's training programme, a candidate must:

Have appropriate basic medical qualifications:

- be a graduate of a medical school recognised by the Medical Council of New Zealand and the RANZCR Board of Directors (or have successfully completed the NZREX for overseas medical graduates in New Zealand); AND
- Be fully registered as a medical practitioner by the registering authority recognised by the RANZCR Board of Directors, in the state or country in which the RANZCR training programme is conducted; AND
- Have completed at least two full years in an approved hospital as an intern/resident.

As a general rule, the College encourages experience in a broad spectrum of clinical disciplines prior to undertaking radiation oncology training.

Selection criteria

Essential:

- Able to be registered with the Medical Council of New Zealand
- Minimum of two years clinical experience post-graduation
- Shows dedication to and interest in pursuing a career in radiation oncology
- Good inter-personal and professional communication skills
- High standard of academic performance

Desirable:

- Shows personal commitment to continuing professional development
- Satisfactory professional referee reports
- Satisfactory reports from previous and current employers
- Shows an interest in and commitment to research

Examination requirements

The Phase 1 and Phase 2 examinations are barrier assessments; that is, you must successfully complete the Phase 1 examination along with the requisite in-training assessments before you can proceed to Phase 2 of the training programme and the Phase 2 examination.

Resident Medical Officer (RMO) Information

Demand for vocational Training Posts

Year	Number of applications for training year	Number of applicants for training year selected
2016	9	7
2015	8	7
2014	7	4
2013	3	3
2012	3	3
2011	7	7
2010	2	2
2009	1	1

RMO training registrar positions contracted

Northern	Midland	Central	South Island	Total
6	2	4	3	66

(September 2016 RMO census)

Regions

Northern:

Northland, Waitemata, Auckland, Counties Manukau DHBs

Midland:

Lakes, Tairāwhiti, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Taranaki DHBs

Central:

Hawke's Bay, Wanganui, MidCentral, Wairarapa, Capital and Coast, Hutt Valley DHBs

South Island:

Nelson Marlborough, Canterbury, South Canterbury, Southern, West Coast DHBs

Senior Medical Officer (SMO) Information

Year	Number of NZ New Fellows
2016	NOT AVAILABLE
2015	5
2014	2
2013	1
2012	4
2011	1
2010	4
2009	4

Average Age of SMOs	Number registered with the Medical Council	% of international medical graduates in the workforce
49	66	54

Number by Region (September 2016 SMO census)

Northern		Midland		Central		South Island		Total	
FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount
14.6	15	0.0	0	14.4	16	12.2	14	41.2	45