

# The Royal College of Radiologists Strategic Plan 2011–2013

May 2011

# Objects of the College

The objects of the College shall be to advance the science and practice of clinical radiology and clinical oncology.

...the College may exercise the following powers:

1. to further instruction and training in clinical radiology and clinical oncology, and to undertake regular audit of training and practice, where appropriate in association with other bodies;
2. to conduct examinations and award Certificates and Diplomas...
3. to diffuse information on all matters affecting medical science and in particular clinical radiology and clinical oncology ...
4. to encourage the development of clinical radiology and clinical oncology and to further public education therein;
5. to maintain the highest possible standards of professional competence and practice in clinical radiology and clinical oncology, and to act as an authoritative body for the purpose of consultation in matters of public and professional interest concerning clinical radiology and clinical oncology;
6. to promote study and research work in clinical radiology, clinical oncology and related subjects...

Extract from the Royal Charter of The Royal College of Radiologists

<http://www.rcr.ac.uk/content.aspx?PageID=24#Objects>

# Public profile, developing our technological capability and working with others: our strategic themes for 2011–2013

This Strategic Plan has three major themes.

■ ***Building the profile of our two specialties and of the RCR with the public and patients***

Patients and the public for the most part have a limited understanding of the specialties and the work of clinical oncologists and clinical radiologists. It is a primary objective of the RCR to educate and inform the public and patients and this will feature heavily in what we do over the next few years.

■ ***Developing our technological capability and resources to support our members and Fellows in delivering high-quality care***

We have embarked upon a major programme to modernise the way we work, embracing information and communications technology more fully so as to retain and build the involvement of members and Fellows. While the main changes will be signalled with the move to our new headquarters building, much is already under way to develop this capability.

■ ***Helping shape, as well as responding to, the changing structures and the growing fluidity of the practice of medicine in the 21st century***

The once-clear definitions around what is medical practice and what practice falls within a specialty or profession are becoming blurred. The rate of change is growing and we need to meet those challenges and support our members and Fellows accordingly in the services and care they offer to patients.

These themes thread the strategic aims of this Plan and will also underpin each Faculty's work plans which will be derived from this Plan.

# Background and context

This Strategic Plan has been developed in the context that:

- Both the College's specialties of clinical oncology and clinical radiology continue to develop in terms of technical innovation and in the demands placed upon the disciplines
- The NHS in all four UK countries is undergoing change – most notably in England
- The College needs to continue to build its profile with the public and patients and its influence through interaction with Government and other professional bodies
- The College needs to support its members and Fellows more fully and effectively as the demands on them change and grow.

The main roles of the College for its specialties remain unchanged:

- Setting and maintaining standards for patient diagnosis, care and management
- Proposing and influencing change and development in service provision for the benefit of patients
- Developing and shaping training, assessment and education
- Providing sound guidance, advice and support for those in practice.

This Strategic Plan builds on its predecessors and is the third strategic plan published by The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR). The first two Plans – covering the periods 2005–2008 and 2008–2010 – set out ambitious aims and developments for the RCR. In the most part, we have been able to fulfil those aims. In the period of the last Plan (2008–2010), there were significant achievements, notably:

- Defining the standards and a range of supporting tools for revalidation
- Reforming and improving the structures and processes for training in our two specialties
- Establishing a strong focus on standards for practice in both Faculties
- Reforming and relaunching our continuing professional development (CPD) scheme
- The establishment of interventional radiology as a subspecialty
- Defining the focus for, and the role of, the RCR in academic training in our two specialties
- Acquiring a new headquarters building for the RCR.

The context for preparing this Plan is one of considerable change and uncertainty in the world of UK healthcare. This includes:

- Expected severe, and perhaps prolonged, restrictions on the levels of public spending with potential implications for the delivery of healthcare and on medical training and education
- Major structural reform of the NHS in England
- The structures for and implementation of revalidation and the roles of Royal Colleges within revalidation

- Reducing ability of RCR members and Fellows to participate voluntarily in the work of the RCR, with the implications that has for the breadth and scope of the work the RCR can do.

Against that backdrop, we need to continue to build and communicate the value of the two specialties and the value of our work to patients and the public. The RCR develops and delivers a unique body of work, which was it not there, would be unlikely to be taken up by any other UK-wide body with such a broad perspective on our two specialties.

## Strategic aim 1. Promoting the work of the specialties and the RCR

We need to promote more effectively to the public and to patients the work of our members and Fellows and our specialties in what will be an increasingly competitive world of healthcare. Our two specialties are often of ready interest to the public, with cancer never far away from the headlines and imaging being a visually engaging specialty. At the same time, the RCR will only be successful if it engages with and supports its members and Fellows to deliver high-quality care to patients. It is, therefore, essential that the RCR adapts and changes to meet the needs of its members and Fellows and can continue to draw on their voluntary support and input which is vital to its work.

Until now, the RCR has confined its international work to the delivery of some Fellowship examinations held outside the UK and to regular liaison with its sister bodies overseas. Through the development of the Radiology Integrated Training Initiative (R-ITI), it has been possible to demonstrate the value of UK specialty training to other countries. For the future, there are many opportunities internationally, which the RCR will explore in a measured way given that resources are of necessity limited. In the period of the last Plan, the RCR achieved the introduction of an International Sponsorship Scheme for clinical oncologists wishing to undertake part of their training in the UK which has been a successful development.

### Our objectives

- We will significantly increase the public profile of our two specialties, the work of clinical oncologists and clinical radiologists and our role within that. This will be achieved via the media, networking and influencing decision makers.
- We will engage more fully and actively with new and existing Fellows to support them as they take up their consultant roles.
- We will promote careers in clinical oncology and clinical radiology.
- We will support members and Fellows in practical ways throughout their careers.

- We will hold Fellowship examinations overseas provided that this does not adversely affect the development and delivery of our UK examinations.
- We will deliver opportunities for clinical oncologists and clinical radiologists from developing countries to benefit from the resources available in the UK through RCR courses and meetings.
- We will explore the best ways to draw on and support existing initiatives to take specialty education and training to less developed countries.
- We will explore offering an International Sponsorship Scheme for overseas clinical radiologists.

## Strategic aim 2. Working with others

In order that the RCR's work reaches as many audiences as possible, it is essential that we form collaborative working relationships with other healthcare professions and bodies. We also need to explore ways of engaging others in our work. These developments are essential to offer more effective care for patients in the future.

### Our objectives

- We will strengthen links with other healthcare professionals with whom clinical oncologists and clinical radiologists work.
- We will work with the Royal College of Physicians of London to bring together the training and practice of clinical oncologists and medical oncologists for the benefit of patients. This will draw on the strength of both specialties ensuring that they continue to have their own individual identities.
- We will influence and offer expert advice to assist the delivery of new commissioning models for the NHS in England and monitor how those arrangements work. We will offer guidance to commissioners and members and Fellows for the benefit of patients.
- We will work at a high level to ensure that the value of the work the College does for the NHS is fully recognised so as to preserve the engagement and involvement of our Fellows and members in that work.

## Strategic aim 3. Public and patient involvement and public benefit

We have been one of the most developed among the medical Royal Colleges in involving patients in our work. Public and patient involvement was last reviewed in 2007 (with an interim update in 2009) and the next review is due in 2012. As a result of the 2007 review, patient contribution has been even more fully embedded in the work of our boards and committees and the numbers of lay representatives on the two Patients' Liaison Groups was increased as well broadening the contribution of patients overall. The

underpinning principle is one of meaningful patient contribution avoiding any suggestion of tokenism.

More recently, there has been a focus on the public with the successful launch in 2010 of the first free public lecture by the RCR.

### Our objectives

- We will develop the public benefit of the RCR through various means, including continuing and increasing the number of free public lectures.
- We will ensure the contribution of patients to the work of the RCR, achieved primarily through our two Patients' Liaison Groups, is effective and meets the strategic needs of the RCR.
- We will engage actively with members of the Patients' Liaison Groups in the redesign and redevelopment of the RCR's websites, including the goingfora.com website.
- We will carry forward the planned quinquennial review of patient and public involvement in 2012.

## Strategic aim 4. Training, assessment and education

Having made great strides in the last three years to modernise and improve the educational value of training in both our specialties, there is now an opportunity to build on that and to look more widely across the spectrum of education towards greater use and development of electronic resources. In part, this will require innovative solutions with the much reduced public funding available to the e-Learning for Healthcare programme since mid-2010.

### Our objectives

- We will develop the programmes of scientific meetings in both our specialties; in clinical radiology this will be achieved primarily through an enhanced Annual Scientific Meeting; in clinical oncology, this will be through collaborative working with others.
- We will develop the delivery of CPD and scientific meetings by the RCR through a variety of new media, including podcasts and online lectures, ensuring that their educational value is maintained and underpinned by a robust business model.
- We will continue to maintain and develop the existing Radiology Integrated Training Initiative (R-ITI) e-learning resource, complete work on the advanced radiotherapy training e-learning project (Radiotherap-e) and explore ways to carry forward the e-Oncology e-learning project.
- We will work collaboratively for the benefit of trainees with training schemes to ensure there is clarity of purpose between the College's policy setting role and the schemes' role in the delivery of training.

## Strategic aim 5. Academic development

The past two years has seen major reform in our focus on academic practice and training. Through engagement with the academic communities in both specialties, the barriers to progress have been identified and practical responses developed wherever possible. We are now concentrating on engaging trainees in research leading to careers in academic practice. The Specialty Training Boards in each Faculty now work with their communities and wider networks to realise these aims.

### Our objectives

- We will support existing research-active members and Fellows by means which include building the links between established academic communities.
- We will build the academic base of both specialties by supporting and encouraging trainees to take up research early in their careers.
- We will promote clinical oncology and clinical radiology as specialties in which to develop an academic career.
- We will work with others to create sustainable and suitable posts for academic clinical oncology and academic clinical radiology.
- We will continue to build the standing and academic value of our two scientific journals *Clinical Oncology* and *Clinical Radiology*.

## Strategic aim 6. Standards and guidance for practice

Our standard-setting role was a focus of the last Strategic Plan and much work has been done to align our standard-setting activities with the needs of practice and to encompass national standard-setting priorities. A particular achievement was the accreditation by NHS Evidence of the process to produce the radiological referral guidelines, *Making the best use of clinical radiology services*. The Professional Support and Standards Boards in each Faculty taking forward our standards and guidance work are now well established and this work remains a priority area.

### Our objectives

- We will develop, deliver and update as required standards, advice and guidance for both specialties that:
  - Are professionally led and developed
  - Are relevant to current and future practice
  - Assist members and Fellows to practise effectively
  - Support members and Fellows through changes in the NHS and in delivering on standards set by national and UK-wide bodies.
- We will seek accreditation by NHS Evidence of further RCR standards and guidelines work as appropriate.

- We will aim to publish the seventh edition of the radiological referral guidelines in accessible media and put in place structures that enable access as widely as possible throughout the UK and overseas.

## Strategic aim 7. Revalidation, remediation and support

During the prolonged and uncertain development of revalidation for doctors in the UK, we have established and maintained our aims to see a straightforward means of revalidating doctors introduced. These views have been influential among the various national bodies involved in the development and delivery of revalidation. During the period of the last Strategic Plan, the division of revalidation into recertification and relicensing was reversed. Revalidation pilots have taken place to which we have contributed. At the time of the development of this Plan, the final model for revalidation – and the role the RCR within it – is becoming clearer. In parallel, the RCR has begun work to explore what its role might be in assisting members and Fellows who have retraining or remediation needs as a result of revalidation processes to do so effectively and with practical, specialist assistance.

### Our objectives

- We will complete and deliver the RCR's strategy to introduce revalidation to provide:
  - A supportive mechanism for members and Fellows
  - A straightforward system that is not burdensome
  - The support and advice needed.
- We will develop ways to assist doctors in difficulties in our two specialties through standards, work associated with revalidation and assisting other bodies who support remediation, retraining and return to practice.

## Strategic aim 8. Resources, capacity and capability

In the period of the last Plan, the RCR concluded the main stage of its premises strategy by purchasing a new headquarters building in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The building requires extensive refurbishment and improvement to make it fit for the multiple needs of the RCR. While this is an important project and one that needs to be carried through with appropriate care and planning, it is also essential that we do not stand still in the period before the anticipated move to the new premises in the early part of 2013.

### Our objectives

- We will deliver a fit-for-purpose new RCR headquarters at 63 Lincoln's Inn Fields on time and within budget.

- We will maximise income from the sale of 38 Portland Place.
- We will ensure the RCR provides the means to continue to engage with members and Fellows increasingly by electronic means.
- We will redesign our website to make it the online resource of choice for members and Fellows and a ready source of advice and information for patients and carers.
- We will develop our information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, software, hardware and support resources to meet current and future needs.
- We will access and secure increased funding support for new or growing activities so as not to increase the financial burden on members and Fellows. This will include funding for the successful joint research fellowships with the Medical Research Council and Cancer Research UK.
- We will introduce a legacy policy to provide funds for the future development of the RCR.

## Conclusion

As with its predecessors, the aims in this Plan are ambitious. It has to be recognised that the RCR has limited resources and prioritising these aims may be necessary. Success against the aims here might best be judged by the progress the RCR makes in building the profile of our two specialties and of the RCR with the public and patients – at all levels including our profile with key influential individuals and bodies, and with the public more widely.

The Faculties and RCR Officers will develop work plans to realise the aims set out in this Plan. Progress will be monitored regularly and reported on annually.

Developing and implementing strategy is, of course, a continuous process and all those who read this Plan are invited to comment on progress and offer further ideas for the future.

Approved by Council: 25 March 2011

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**Citation details:**

The Royal College of Radiologists. *Strategic Plan 2011–2013*. London: The Royal College of Radiologists, 2011.

ISBN: 978-1-905034-50-5 Ref No. RCR(11)1 © The Royal College of Radiologists, May 2011

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