

# Diagnostic radiography



## **2. Background and Objectives of Study**

Student retention is widely seen as a threat to the nation at large as it creates not only an economic burden to the government but also to the institutions. It establishes loss of wellskilledpersonsexpectedto enter the labour force and has animmense impact in student welfare as well. Yorke (2000) describes predisposing factors which resultin drop outs as; wrong pick of course, frustration with environment, failure to cope with workload, no support from within, fiscal issues as well aspersonal matters. Recent research by SCoR (2007) has revealed that retentionrates in diagnostic radiography have steadily decreased in the past four years and this brought up heaps of issues of concern to higher education. Therefore guidelines by the SCoR were put in place to try and improve retentionin institutions but the question is; has enough been done to implement those guidelines so as to eliminate the attrition rates. There is an overlook into the matter and institutions are suffering from the outcomes of retention. Thus, it is necessary to find the root of the problem, which comes down to having a look into students' views on the course itself. This might give the HE an insight on how to tackle the problem knowingly aware of the exact factors that they are dealing with.

Retention of students is not only the universities role but also of the student contribution in the programme, therefore the overall aim of this study is to identify, recommend and target support needed to aid retention and also to find out student insight as they progress in radiography courses and how this has an influence in retention.

Most of this research will be based on a study carried out by Yorke and Longden (2004), as it covers first year experiences into higher education thus it might be useful in relating overall students' perspicacity of higher education with how radiography students feel about their course. The only differences being that both 1st and 3rd year diagnostic radiography students are to partake in the study.

### **3. Methods**

Research on the selected area embraces the survey research design. As a quantitative method it is perceived in a sense of being steadfast as it involves collection of statistical data on study variables, (Sim & Wright, 2000). Use of this design came down to it being simple and well known, with the amount of satisfactory information one can acquire from opinions and perspectives of individuals, on current issues. A large amount of data would be easier to obtain as it would be from a widely dispersed geographical sample group. As a qualitative method, a survey explores reasons of trends in behaviour and attitudes, perception and actions of individuals, more reasons to carry out this research with this method. A survey is relatively cost effective thus making it easier to conduct the research, (Neale, 2009).

There is however need for choice of the research instrument for data collection. An open ended questionnaire would be a useful tool to get the desired information in a logical way (ref). They will be distributed face to face to individual students by telephone, via post and emails to the Radiography Departments.

Radiography students to be investigated are in the UK. Only 24 universities provide Radiography (diagnostic), hence a larger sample size of the whole population would be essential but only 9 universities (approximately 279 students) will be sampled, each school as a representative of each province in the UK. Altman (1991) discusses the random sampling method as appropriate to use as it lessens preconceived notions of the results as most of the universities have a likely chance of being selected for the research reducing biases. A random sample will be achieved by drawing up the sample groups into cohorts. A survey of each cohort (intake, 1st year and 3rd year) will be conducted to explore issues that may be specific to each particular year of study, for example 1st year home sickness or financial issues in final year students,

#### **4. Location of study and access arrangements**

The study will be limited to universities in England and Wales. Admittance to the universities would be through the school faculty ethics and their Heads of department.

#### **5. Personnel & Cost Factors**

As a first time researcher need for personnel's, such as a supervisor and advisors, to help in the undertaking of the study is essential in a sense that they have more knowledge in the field of research and therefore will be able to steer the research in the right direction, (Barnard & Seale, 1998). No costs are to be considered in this manner as these supporters are volunteers to give out assistance where applicable. As the sample size of this study is relatively of a great cohort, the cost is going to be considerably high.

Equipment to be used in the research will include paper sheets for construction of the hard copy questionnaires, as well as the ink (£20) needed to print out the questionnaires. They will need to be dispersed in envelopes (stamped) via the post office which cost around a total of £0.74. To travel to the different universities travel costs have to be considered, nevertheless emails could be used as a means of reducing travel cost. Overall it gives an approximation of about £376 to carry out the research.

## **6. Ethical Considerations**

Issues that may arise in conjunction with conducting this research include getting access to participants along with student enrolment and dropout records. Approval on these issues would be achieved through the School Ethics Committee under the department of radiography, in the universities under study.

Other issues might be of acquiring data from students. This involves confidentiality, consent and free willed partaking. All these issues will be addressed accordingly through the assurance of anonymity in staging of results, utter confidentiality in data compilation and privacy, although sometimes this will not be possible especially when the partakers are to be considered at various intervals of research, (Polit & Hungler, 1995).

Introductory letters, and consent forms were possible will be issued to be sure that a mutual agreement of involvement is met, (Trochim 1999). Due to taking part in this research individuals might experience potential distress, therefore support arrangements will be put in place.

Is NHS R & D approval required? Yes

No

If which Trust/s will be required to give approval?

Is NHS Ethics Committee approval required? Yes

No

If Yes, state the name of the REC to whom you will be applying.

**7. Project Milestones and Timescales**

Activity	Start Date	Completion Date
Await approval from ethics committee and Research practice panel	10.01.10	05.10.10
Construct questionnaires	10.01.10	06.20.10
Ethical	10.01.10	10.06.10
	10.08.10	10.12.10
	10.11.01	11.03.11
	10.11.08	11.05.08
	10.12.11	

review and

data

collection

Data

analysis

Discussion 02.

& 11

conclusion 01.

s 03. 09. 05.

Completion<sup>11</sup> 11

of written 09.

research 05.

Design of 11

poster and

article

Submission

of article

and poster