

Working life (clinical radiology)

This page provides useful information on the working week as well as any on-call and other commitments, along with information on who you will work with. The attractions and challenges of the job are also in this section.

Radiology is a consultant-led specialty and they are responsible for reporting most imaging procedures and performing most interventional procedures.

A working week usually involves some teaching of junior staff, diagnostic and interventional procedures and managing at least one multidisciplinary team meeting.

Scans are sometimes undertaken to see if a cancerous tumour has returned, which is an anxious time for parents and medical staff.

Although you will spend a good proportion of your week writing imaging reports, radiologists also have lots of contact with people. You will deal with a wide range of specialist doctors, radiographers and other healthcare professionals across the spectrum. As well as image reporting you will also report on cases and provide follow-up afterwards.

Certain aspects of the job have more contact with patients than others. If you are working in [ultrasound](#) ^[1], fluoroscopy or breast imaging you are likely to work with patients more regularly. Interventional procedures also involve direct patient contact. A normal working week usually offers a mix of all these things, although this can vary according to your chosen special interests.

Consultants are often on-call in many district hospitals where there are no specialty trainees so there can be lots of out of hours work. This demand could increase in the future, with the proposed move to 24/7 imaging seven days a week.

On-call work can be particularly busy, particularly if you have to travel between sites. You will be working under pressure, often undertaking different emergency procedures, writing reports and communicating the results to medical colleagues. On-call commitment can vary, but is often between one in seven and one in eight.

Most radiologists find that a good work-life balance is possible and a report by the Royal College of radiologists in 2015 found that 22% of consultants work part-time.

The EU [Working Time Directive](#) ^[2] limits the working week to 48 hours. It is also possible to

work part-time once you are consultant, or to train on a less than full-time basis [3].

"Radiologists have a vital role to play in diagnosis". Dr Jackie Hughes is a consultant radiologist at Addenbrooke's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in Cambridge.

Read Jackie's story [4]

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**Who you will
work with?**

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Clinical radiologists work as part of large multidisciplinary teams within a hospital.

You will work with:

- radiographers
- vascular and nuclear medicine technologists
- medical physicists
- midwives
- other doctors
- medical students

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**Attractions and
challenges of
the role**

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collapse**

Clinical radiologists play a vital role in helping to obtain accurate diagnoses quickly. The job is therefore very rewarding, since many conditions including cancer can often be identified, diagnosed and treated much more swiftly and effectively than in the past. This is in part due to the constantly evolving technologies and highly advanced equipment within radiology.

The work also offers lots of variety and there is always something new to learn. Contrary to popular opinion you will have lots of contact with people including a wide range of medical staff and patients throughout your hospital. The amount of contact with patients does vary though, according to your role and specialty.

There are growing demands on the clinical radiology team. The main pressures on clinical imaging services are the increased numbers of investigations and the growing complexity of the imaging techniques.

Clinical radiology is a very popular specialty. The job is very varied and interesting and you will have an excellent chance of obtaining a consultant role at the end of your training. Radiologists also enjoy a good work-life balance.

Once you are a consultant clinical radiologist you will be leading and managing your team.

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Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Ultrasound>

[2] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Working_Time_Directive

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/less-full-time-training-doctors>

[4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-radiology/real-life-story-dr-jackie-hughes>