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Profile of the Faculty of Radiologists in Ireland:Promoting Education,Training and Research

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logists in Ireland. A full
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on the website of the
Faculty at: www.rcsi.ie*

The Faculty of Radiologists at the Royal College of Surgeons is the professional and academic body for clinical radiologists in Ireland. It offers specialist training and post-graduate examinations in radiology. The faculty's objectives are to advance the science, art and practice of radiology and its allied sciences and to promote education, study and research in radiology

History of the Faculty

In 1960 the Radiological Society of Ireland, established in 1932 to develop radiology in Ireland, set up a committee to examine the developing role of radiologists in education and training. It was decided to establish a Faculty of Radiologists, associated with the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

The new Faculty was primarily concerned with postgraduate training programmes and examinations in radiology. The first task was to design an examination structure. A Primary Fellowship examination consisting of radiation physics, pathology, surgery, radiological anatomy and medicine, and separate Final Fellowship Examinations in Diagnostic Radiology and Radiotherapy were established. The first examinations of the Faculty were held in May 1966.

An Irish training programme in radiology was then established. This was supported by the Irish Department of Health and was a landmark in the development of radiology in Ireland. Up to that time, an Irish graduate undertaking a career in diagnostic radiology had to obtain a training post in a recognised centre in the United Kingdom or North America. At that time there were a significant number of fellowship trained radiologists returning to Ireland from the UK and the US.

Now, for the first time, radiologists could be trained in Ireland. The Irish Radiology Training Programme was the first structured medical postgraduate medical training programme, in any discipline, in Ireland. The four-year course led to the qualifying degree of "Fellowship of the Faculty of Radiologists, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland" (FFRRCSI). This remains the qualifying examination for the Faculty.

Faculty Structures

The board of the Faculty of Radiologists is elected by all the Fellows of the Faculty. Each board member serves for a term of five years, one of whom is elected Dean of the Faculty for a term of two years. There are a number of board subcommittees including education, science, research, radiation protection, radiation oncology, continuous medical education, academic, and a general purposes committee. The education subcommittee is primarily involved in organising the Irish radiology training programme, the core function of the Faculty. The science subcommittee organises scientific meetings, seminars, training courses and continuous professional development (CPD) meetings.

The academic subcommittee includes the academic professors from all the university institutions. This subcommittee allows a beneficial liaison with the medical schools to promote the development of radiology as an undergraduate subject and to work with the universities in the area of postgraduate radiology education.

The faculty has also developed subspecialty interest groups within its structures including breast, nuclear medicine, interventional radiology and

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paediatrics. On a five yearly cycle the faculty inspects and accredits participating departments of radiology.

Irish Radiology Training Programme

Recent European Community rules for specialist accreditation now require five years of approved postgraduate education. In the past it was customary for trainees, on completion of three to four years on the Irish radiology training programme, to complete their further years abroad; mainly in the UK, USA, Canada, other European countries or Australia.

In 1996 the Faculty formally established a fifth year of training, involving rotations through subspecialty diagnostic and/or interventional radiology services. The curriculum of the Irish radiology training programme continues to evolve paralleling changes in the wider medical education curricula and changing education methods. The current programme allows optional participation in a number of universitybased postgraduate training courses. These courses, together with the evolving faculty programme, address such areas as communication, teaching methods, research methods, evidence based radiology, management skills and molecular imaging in a modular based format. The faculty recently also received agreement in principle from the Irish Health Service Executive to fund a fully digitised examination programme.

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