
Bachelor of Science in Radiography in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

My main purpose of writing this article is to share my training experience in Radiography in the U.S.A., the requirements for admission, duration of the course, some courses taken alongside, the organisational set up and hierarchy in the department and the school.

ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP

A degree programme in radiography became a new phenomenon in 1976 in Philadelphia. Previously students graduated with a Diploma from the institution.

Other states such as California, Florida, Baltimore, New Jersey and Pennsylvania had been undertaking the degree programme for many years.

The Thomas Jefferson University is one of the institutions in Philadelphia which is predominantly a white school and a medical institution.

The University consists of two main divisions, the medical school and the school for Allied Health Sciences. The School of Allied health science is subdivided into five programmes and they are as follows, School of Radiography, School of Nursing, School of Cytology, School of Dental hygiene and the School of medical technology.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The requirement for admission and duration of course for baccalaureate degree in

Radiography requires completion of a secondary school, which is equivalent to West African School Certificate with background in science subjects, such as Anatomy & Physiology and chemistry. After that, the students are advised to register with one of the affiliated universities for Liberal Art courses such as mathematics, English, Psychology, Sociology, Chemistry, Biology, Anatomy and Physiology and Economics. In addition any foreign student must have taken and passed the English test for foreign students. Upon satisfying all these conditions with very good grades, the admission to the school of radiography would be granted. The duration for the course is four years, two years of which would be spent for liberal art courses and the remaining two years would be spent in the school of radiography.

COURSE CONTENT

Some courses taken side by side during the first year in the school of radiography, are as follows, Medical terminology, which is actually based on a system of technical terms, Anatomy and Physiology based on structure of animals and functions of living organisms or their parts, Professional ethics, which is a system of moral principles, Nursing Arts which involves patients' care, Radiographic Physics involves the understanding and manipulating of the machineries, Radiographic positioning involves the knowledge of how the anatomical parts can be placed on the x-ray films, Dark-room chemistry involves the Chemistry of how x-ray films should be handled and developed in the

dark-room, radiographic exposures which involve the technics and amount of x-ray exposure necessary for different anatomical parts. Upon completion of the first year, a comprehensive examination would be set for promotion to the second year.

During the second year, the courses taken are Radiation Protection based on understanding of how patients, x-ray personnel and people around the areas can be protected from the useful and scattered radiation, Radiation Biology also involved in the learning of how human cells can be affected by the radiation, special procedure also based on how some organs in the body can be x-rayed with special contrast media so that they can be well seen. Some other courses such as Statistics, Management, Communication, Teaching methods, Pathology which deals with the nature of disease, and quality assurance which is based on how some of the devices used in x-ray department can be tested.

The general set up of department or the teaching system is just fundamental in that, before the programme starts one to two days would have been scheduled for orientation for all new students and another day for introducing all parents to the school. When the classes have started all Allied health science students would be taking Anatomy and Physiology with the laboratory course together; Physics class would involve, the radiography students, medical technologist students and cytologist students. After a month in the school the radiography students would start their clinical rotation in the hospital and each one of the student would be assigned to a radiographic room under supervision of a qualified radiographer. Also for the benefit of the students the Audio Visual rooms are provided in the library where they could make use of slide tapes for any of their lectures even before or after each lecture. Also the students are advised to study in groups so as to benefit from each other. Group discussions are also advised.

THE HEIRACHY

The faculty of the School of Allied Health Science comprises the Dean, the Chairman, Instructors and the Students. The Dean, as the head of the Faculty is the person to whom all problems that may arise in any of the programmes would be taken. The present Dean,

has a Bachelor of Science degree with Master in Education and other honours in the field of education. Next to him is the departmental chairman, for allocating of students and assigning courses time-table. He is the first line for solving of department problems, before being directed to the Dean; the chairman of the radiology department, has a Master degree in Education with Bachelor of Science, and RT which simple means a Registered Technologist. Next to the chairman are the instructors with Bachelor of Science in Radiography *BSRT) or Bachelor of Arts with registered technologist (B.A.R.T)

END OF COURSE

As I said earlier on in one of the above paragraphs, the training programme in Bachelor of Science Radiography lasts for a period of four years, after which a graduation ceremony is arranged for all successful students who had met the passing grades and graduation requirements. After the ceremony students are awarded their school diploma as an indication of attending the institution. Here one has to bear in mind that his school diploma is not an indication that the student has qualified as a Radiographer.

To be a qualified radiographer, an external examination is set up, which consists of two sections of comprehensive and objective. In all there are two hundred and fifty questions to be done in three hours. For the passing grade, the student needs 75% average. The successful student is now entitled to use the initial of RT with his name.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the Bachelor of Science in Radiography had been a very advantageous academic exercise to some students who had attempted it and succeeded in completing the programme. Also it was a sort of lead way to their future and academic plans. Having this foundation one could go further to obtain the Master's degree in education or in Radiation Biology etc. Above all, my personal view about this degree programme is that, I was made to believe, with full courage in the future of my profession, that I will not be left out in serving my community; Above all, if the manipulation of the x-ray equipment is no longer possible, it will be my joy if the golden image of Radiography can be proclaimed.