

What does a Radiation Therapist do?

Radiation therapists are part of a specialized team that treats diseases, mostly cancers, in patients. They work with cancer specialists to plan and deliver treatment for patients by providing radiation therapy to patients' specific body parts as prescribed by a radiologist, using radiation therapy equipment. Their work duties include the use of CT scans, computer programs and clinical information to plan radiation treatment. They may make immobilization devices to help patients lie still during treatment and educate people about radiation therapy and its side effects. Good bedside manner is important in this role, as therapists build rapport and communicate with patients of all ages and backgrounds during treatment to make them feel comfortable during a difficult time in their lives.

Salary

Pay for radiation therapists vary depending on experience and responsibilities. Radiation therapists usually earn between \$51,000 and \$80,000 per year. Those with extra responsibilities can earn between \$83,000 and \$107,000 per year.

What subjects do I need to take at school?

- ❖ Biology
- ❖ Physics
- ❖ Maths
- ❖ English
- ❖ Te Reo Māori

How do I get into it?

To become a radiation therapist you need:

- ✓ a Bachelor of Radiation Therapy **or** another qualification recognised by the Medical Radiation Technologists Board. Three years of training is required
- ✓ to be registered with the Medical Radiation Technologists Board.

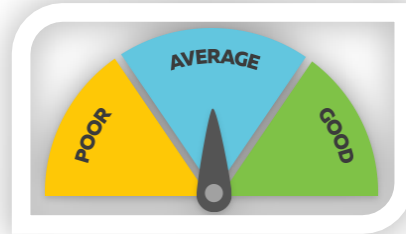
The Bachelor of Radiation Therapy is only available from the University of Otago's Wellington campus, and there are about 30 places on the course each year. You can increase your chances of being accepted on to the course by:

- ❖ Having strong NCEA Level 3 results, or at least one year's university study in science and psychology
- ❖ Showing an interest in, and knowledge of, radiation therapy.

Interpersonal skills

- ❖ Empathetic and understanding attitude
- ❖ Ability to work well under pressure

- ❖ Safety conscious
- ❖ Excellent communicator
- ❖ Problem solving



Will I get a job after training?

Chances of getting work as a radiation therapist are average, but better in larger cities. An ageing population increases demand for more health checks and scans or age- related diseases. Many radiation therapists leave New Zealand to get experience overseas. Radiation therapist appears on Immigration New Zealand's long-term skill shortage list, which means the Government is actively encouraging this career from overseas to work in New Zealand. Most radiation therapists work for public hospitals in the oncology (cancer) department.

Where can I find out more?

- **NZ Medical Radiation Technologists Board**
(04) 801 6250 Ext. 1 <https://www.mrtboard.org.nz/>