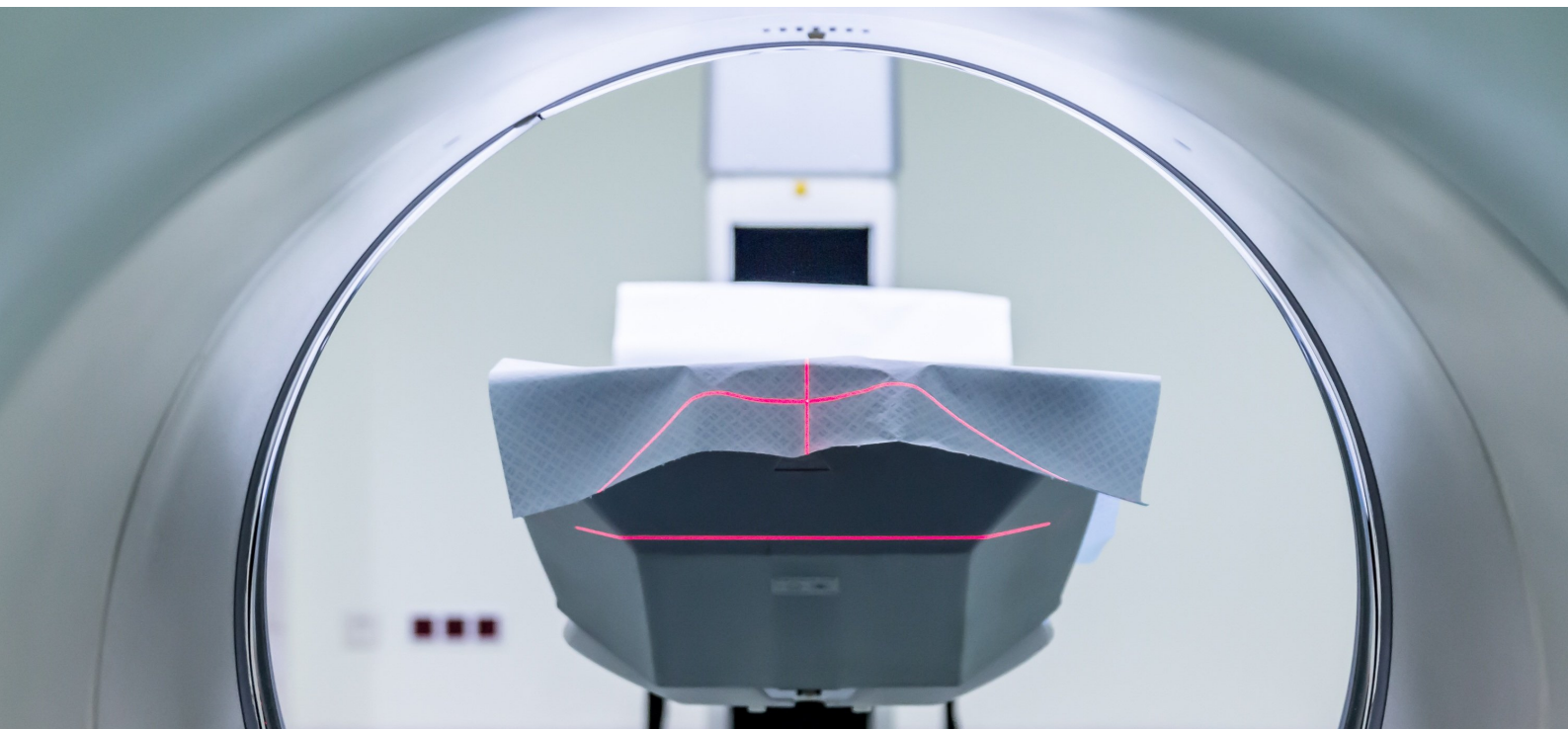


CASE
STUDY

LEVEL 6 DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHER (DEGREE)

We spoke to Rachael Bradford who is a final year apprentice Diagnostic Radiographer at the University of Exeter. Keep reading to find out about Rachael's experiences of undertaking this apprenticeship.



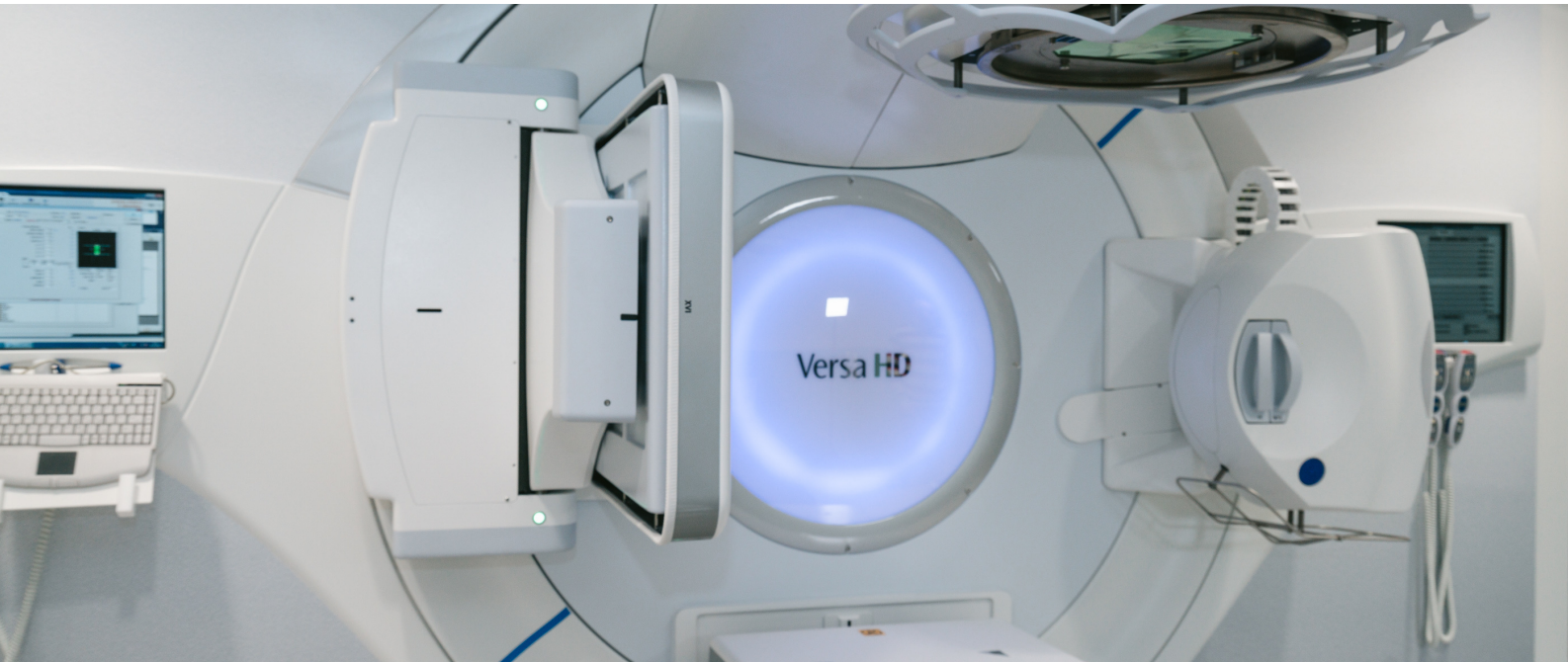
Why the degree apprenticeship rather than the traditional University based undergraduate route?

I am a mother, an armed forces wife and have financial responsibilities that each have prevented me from studying via the traditional undergraduate route. The degree apprenticeship has enabled me to chase my dreams of holding a professional qualification whilst living, learning and earning in the city I call home.

The blend of time spent clinically and 'off the job' studying has negated the headache of long placements in different locations that comes with the undergraduate route. I can balance all the demands on my time. The predominantly distance-learning model provides flexibility to the pace and order of my learning.

What this route has meant to me

I have spent over a decade working at my trust and the apprenticeship has paved the way to progress from a non-registered role into a registered one. There is a clear development route from where I started as a band 2, to a band 5 and my professional qualification shall only continue to open doors to more opportunities. Not only have I made lifelong friends, but I have also built many working relationships across the modalities and raised the profile of the apprenticeship. The course has cemented my passion for patient centred care, facilitating learning and the NHS as a whole. Above all, I have been able to act as a role model to my daughters and show them that working hard, enjoying what you do and to never be afraid to challenge yourself can bring huge rewards.



Challenges

It goes without saying that the Covid-19 pandemic bought a whole new frontier of challenges to an already difficult task of being part of the trailblazing cohort. We did however benefit from the whole university having to rapidly diversify to delivering course content online, making lectures more interactive and enjoyable. Apprentices are additional to the undergraduate learners in departments and getting fair exposure to clinical experiences or assessments conducted can be tricky. The hardest element has been explaining the differences between the degree apprenticeship and undergraduate routes and tackling the misconception that it is 'the easier route'.

Opportunities

The apprenticeship has given me the opportunity to study with other like-minded people from across the country who were in a similar situation to me. They wanted and could achieve more but responsibilities outside of work held them back. I have been inspired by a committed and passionate lecturing team who actively respond to feedback. I feel so fortunate and proud to be able to say that I studied as one of the first diagnostic degree apprentices in the country and wherever my career may take me, I hope many more people are given this opportunity too.

[Click here](https://haso.skillsforhealth.org.uk/) to learn more about the Level 6 Diagnostic Radiographer (Degree) (HCPC 2013)