New Direction in Education and Training for Mammography

In an unparalleled shift in education in the Medical Radiation Sciences, Charles Sturt University, in collaboration with BreastScreen Australia, the Australian Institute of Radiography and the Department of Health and Ageing is now offering the Graduate Diploma of Mammography through the School of Dentistry and Health Sciences in Wagga Wagga. The new program is the first of its kind in Australia to educate and train a new category of radiation worker - the Mammographic Technologist - and Charles Sturt University is the sole provider of this Diploma.

The course has been developed specifically to combat a workforce shortage in mammography which will be seen to have the greatest impact on BreastScreen Services throughout Australia. Like other areas of the allied health workforce, the shortage of skilled workers has arisen as radiographers age and retire, leaving a significant skills gap. This skills gap, combined with the ageing population, is increasing demand on services such as BreastScreen, and this has been a key driver for the development of the Charles Sturt University Graduate Diploma of Mammography.

To support the BreastScreen workforce this postgraduate course will train those from outside the profession to become Mammographic Technologists, providing a pathway for graduates of health and science courses to develop the knowledge and clinical skills to perform mammography.

Program Leader for the Graduate Diploma of Mammography is Dr Kelly Spuur. She is a radiographer, with extensive experience in screening and diagnostic mammography and a Senior Lecturer in Medical Radiation Science.

Dr Spuur said, “Having a well-educated, high-quality workforce is essential to the continuation of the BreastScreening program and the early detection of breast cancer through the BreastScreen services.

“The Graduate Diploma of Mammography has been designed to achieve both aims. It involves a high level of support from our clinical partners with all subjects having an integrated model of theoretical and practice-based learning to optimise competence and confidence in the techniques of mammographic imaging.

“The Diploma is a totally new direction in education in the medical radiation sciences and I am very excited to be involved in the new program which will benefit all Australian women.”

The Graduate Diploma of Mammography is offered by distance education supported by residential school learning, simulated and supervised mammography skills learning and practice. It can be completed over one calendar year.

Any persons interested in more information concerning the Graduate Diploma of Mammography or in becoming a clinical partner for the Diploma should contact the University or e-mail the Program Leader k.spuur@csu.edu.au.

Kelly Spuur

Dr Kelly Spuur, Program Leader for the Graduate Diploma of Mammography

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