



Katy Eager Nash

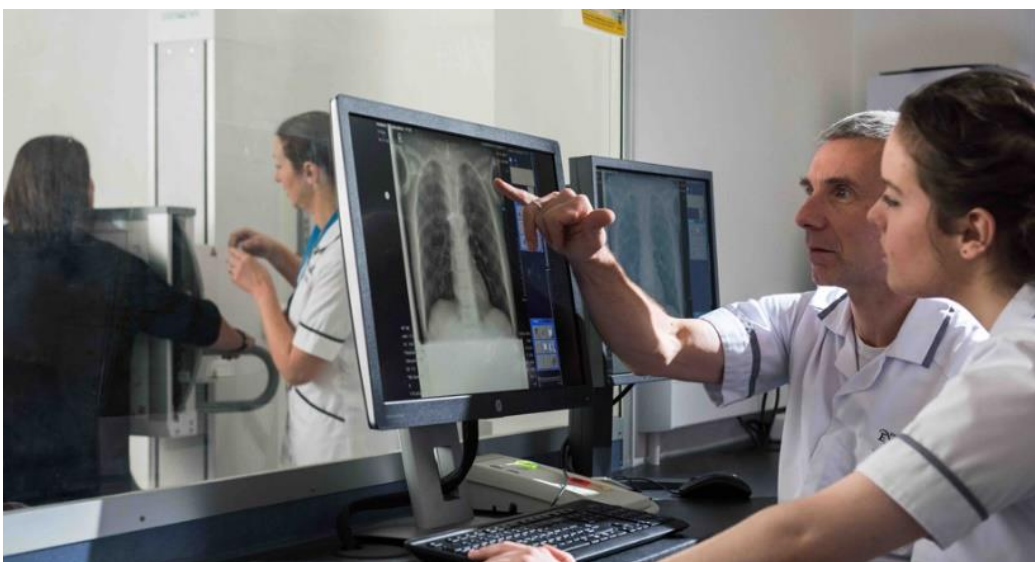
Medical Imaging Degree followed by a career in Ecology



Since leaving John Masefield Sixth Form in 2015 with A-Levels in Biology, Geography, Psychology and BTEC Sport I've had a fascinating 9 years! I went on to study **Medical Imaging at the University of Exeter**. After two years of working as a diagnostic radiographer for the NHS, I studied for a Masters in Sustainability and Ecology at the Centre for Alternative Technology. Since then, I worked at Goldstream Provincial Park on Vancouver Island, Canada, as a naturalist and park interpreter.

I really enjoyed all of my A-Levels at John Masefield's Sixth Form, but I **found myself quite torn with which subject to carry through to university**. It was great to talk this through both at JM6 and with peers; after convincing myself there wouldn't be too much maths involved in a biology related degree, I decided to pursue this avenue and looked into biological sciences and a couple of healthcare professions. I decided on medical imaging (diagnostic radiography) because I liked the certainty of finishing the degree with a qualification that could lead me into a highly sought-after job at the end of it. Not a great deal of Russell Group Universities offered Medical Imaging, but after seeing the University of Exeter's campus, there was no doubt in my mind that that's where I wanted to be! Exeter have recently reduced their entry requirements to A-level grades BBB, including a science.

Training to be a radiographer was full on, with far more contact hours than many other courses, and one practical placement each year at a hospital site across Devon, Cornwall or Somerset, each lasting four months. The lectures covered a broad range of topics from anatomy and physiology to the physics of X-rays. **The placements were invaluable in learning the practical skills** I would need upon qualifying and were an opportunity to make great friends. Despite not being qualified to diagnose patient's injuries and illnesses from x-ray images or take things like CT, MRI and Ultrasound scans by the end of the degree, there were many opportunities to learn in depth about these modalities, both in the classroom and on placement. One of the great things about training to be a radiographer was the fact that we were in great demand! Like many of my friends, I secured a job at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital as a radiographer about seven months before



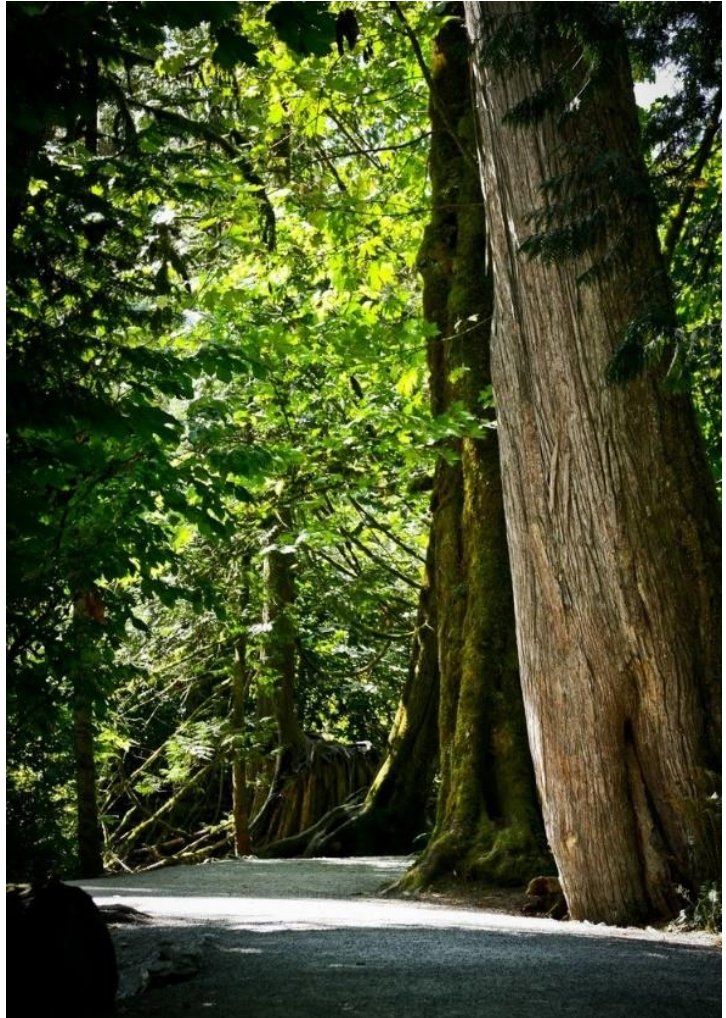
I had finished my degree, and was fortunate enough to work with a close friend from my course.

I spent two years working as a radiographer, the majority of which was during the COVID-19 pandemic. The job was both demanding and rewarding and every day

offered something new. A lot of our time was spent taking x-rays for A&E patients, but we regularly took x-rays on wards and attended theatre cases for operations such as hip replacements. Two favourite aspects of the job included working collaboratively with a range of different professions such as doctors, physios, nurses, and therapists on a daily basis, alongside teaching students who were on placement at the hospital. My two least favourite parts of the job were attending trauma calls in resus, where patients were in a life-threatening condition due to events such as a car crash, along with 12 hour night shifts! Regardless of where x-rays were needed in the hospital, each day was always exciting and I learnt numerous skills that I will carry with me throughout all of my future jobs.

After two years at the hospital, I was finding that working inside every day, where there were very few windows was taking its toll on me, so I decided to branch into another side of biology and study for a **Masters in Sustainability and Ecology**. I got accepted onto [The Centre for Alternative Technology's](#) programme to study mostly at distance, with optional in person learning weeks once per module. Modules varied, from restoration ecology to the science of sustainable food production. There were many opportunities to collaborate with students on other Master's courses and the degree came to a close with a 5-month research project of my choice.

Since graduating, I have worked at **Goldstream Provincial Park on Vancouver Island, Canada** as a naturalist and park interpreter. Goldstream park is an old growth temperate rainforest that sees thousands of visitors a month. I help to educate these visitors about the nature within the park, through guided nature walks and interpretive school programmes.



I'd love to encourage future JM6 students to look at their degrees or apprenticeships as the next step to your future. Life after the sixth form can take different routes as mine has, but getting your A-levels is key to opening up so many more doors than without them. Go for it!