



GUIDANCE NOTES
FOR GENETIC TECHNOLOGISTS
ON SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION

APPLICATIONS

All applications must be made on the recognised VRC form. Applications can be hand written or typed. All forms should be completed in black ink and must be legible.

As the process of voluntary registration evolves it is necessary to modify the guidance notes, which must be read in order to ensure that your application fulfils the requirements. Check that you are using the latest version of the Guidance Notes, which can be found on the VRC website. Also read the Standards of Proficiency. These standards are used to scrutinise your application. It is necessary to fill out the application form as fully as possible to prevent delays in processing.

Once you have completed your application form submit one copy with a cheque for the non-refundable registration fee by post. The following charges will apply:

New applicants	- £45
Re-registration	- £20

Additional charges for incomplete applications will be made therefore please ensure that you check your completed application carefully before sending it to VRC. A table of charges is available on the VRC website. Please make cheques payable to VRC. The payment for renewal of your voluntary registration will be payable in September each year.

Submissions by email will not be accepted.

It is recommended that you keep a copy of the form for your own records and in case your submission is lost in the post.

CONTENT OF THE APPLICATION

The application and report is a record of training gained to demonstrate the attainment of personal competence across a range of activities which relate to the sections of the written report (see below, section 6). It does NOT refer to the activities of an individual section, department or organisation.

PROCESSING

The VRC meets quarterly. The time it takes to process each application is dependent upon the number of applications received. It is not possible to acknowledge receipt of applications.

All general administration related enquiries should be directed to the VRC Registrar.

Voluntary Registration Council

Executive Business Support
Suite 4, Sovereign House
22, Gate Lane
Boldmere
Sutton Coldfield
B73 5TT
Or: admin@vrcouncil.org;

Modality specific enquires should be sent to the AGTC Registrar:
AGTCregistrar@vrcouncil.org

ROUTES TO REGISTRATION (See Appendix 1)

The process of registration is designed to protect the public such that registered practitioners have relevant academic qualifications and have attained a recognised level of competence. There are currently two routes of entry to the Voluntary Register; however these will change once the education and training routes for the profession have been established:

- **Direct entry** – First degree in an approved subject or other suitable qualification approved by the Council and a minimum of 3 years relevant experience (or 5,000 hours if part-time) as a Genetic Technologist (AfC band 5 or higher) in an appropriate post approved by the Council, with evidence provided to support competent practice.

Or for staff employed since 1 January 2008:

- **Direct entry** – First degree in an approved subject or suitable qualification approved by the Council and a Certificate of Competence gained through the National Training Programme for Genetic Technologists in an appropriate post approved by the Council.
- **Grand-parenting** – A minimum of six years training and experience relevant to the work of a Genetic Technologist (or 10,000 hours, if part-time) with evidence provided to support competent practice, including a minimum of 3 years relevant experience (or 5,000 hours if part-time) as a Genetic Technologist (AfC band 5 or higher) in an appropriate post approved by the Council.

Or for staff employed since 1 January 2008:

- **Grand-parenting** – A minimum of 3 years experience relevant to the work of a Genetic Technologist (or 5,000 hours, if part-time) in addition to gaining the Certificate of Competence through the National Training Programme for Genetic Technologists in an appropriate post approved by the Council.

1. PERSONAL DETAILS:

Insert the title by which you are normally addressed (i.e. Mr, Mrs., Miss, and Ms, etc). Provide official documents (marriage certificate, decree nisi, etc) if the certificates in support of your application are in a name other than your present or previous surname.

The Council must be informed of any change of name.

The **address for correspondence** will be the one published in the Voluntary Register and should, where possible, be your work address as the information will be in the public domain. The Council must be informed of any change of address.

Modality applied for - In which discipline are you employed e.g. Genetic Technologist (Cytogenetics) OR Genetic Technologist (Molecular Genetics)

2. RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (See Appendix 2):

Documentary proof in the form of photocopies of certificates must be provided. If these cannot be supplied evidence of why they are not available should be submitted e.g. written statement from an examination awarding body, professional body or employer.

The VRC may contact you for further evidence if your certificates are lost and no duplicates or statements from the awarding body, professional body or employer are supplied.

For direct entry relevant educational qualifications are a 1st degree in an approved subject - for example genetics, biology, biological science, human biology, biochemistry, biomedical science, molecular biology or involving a human genetic related component.

If you have no such qualification you will need to record qualifications obtained at school/sixth form college e.g. O levels, GCSE, A levels, HNC, HND, etc.

If you obtained your degree from a university outside the UK and Ireland please contact the AGTC Registrar for additional information. If your certificates and supporting documents are in a language other than English or Latin please provide a certified translation.

Relevant professional examinations, including management, teaching and other qualifications may also be included.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES:

It is not a mandatory requirement to belong to a professional body, however, for the profession to be accepted by the Health Professions Council at least 25% of its members must belong to a professional body i.e. ACC or CMGS. You may apply through the British Society of Human Genetics www.bshg.org.uk. Your ACC or CMGS membership number can be found in correspondence from the BSHG. It is usually found on the envelope. It is a four-digit number in brackets after your name. It can also be found in the BSHG membership directory.

4. ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS:

Complete this section on a separate sheet and include relevant articles written for professional body journal or other journals, as well as published abstracts, from poster or oral presentations at meetings from the last 6 years.

Other Information - You may include any other information that you wish to draw to the attention of the Council. This may include involvement with your professional body, activities undertaken within a health region/area or within your hospital, for example training/teaching experience. Only include relevant information from the last 6 years.

5. PROFESSIONAL RECORD:

Please indicate any periods of employment and career breaks or other periods of absence greater than nine months in this section of your application. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

If you have been working for less than two years following a career break of greater than five years you will need to supply evidence of re-training and subsequent reassessment.

It is not necessary to send copies of in house documentation. Details should be included in your report in the section that describes your training and experience as a Genetic Technologist. Your referee(s) should confirm re-training and competence to practice after return to work from a break in service.

6. THE WRITTEN REPORT:

It should be written using the stated headings to establish your competence. It is not expected that you require information under every heading. It should be clear from the report that you have undergone training and include some record of gained competencies. **It is not necessary to submit your competency or training log.**

- a. **Technical:** The written report should demonstrate your understanding of Health & Safety, CoSHH, Risk Assessments and Safe Handling. It should also provide evidence of your (basic) knowledge about the function, operation, and routine and corrective maintenance requirements of laboratory equipment appropriate to the section(s) of the laboratory in which you work. It should show that you perform a range of duties to administer the technical genetic diagnosis process and/or management of such processes.
For instance, for Molecular Genetics these techniques include administrative and technical activity associated with sample receipt, and all activity associated with DNA and RNA extraction. It also includes the modification and amplification of DNA or RNA, and the detection of genetic variation.
For Cytogenetics, this includes sample acceptance and culturing, metaphase or interphase preparation, and staining or in situ hybridization for a range of sample types. It also includes analysis by karyotyping or in situ hybridization for a defined set of sample or referral types.
This section of the written report should also detail your understanding of the purpose of quality assurance and accuracy; set out the limits of your responsibility; your ability to work under limited supervision and your ability to rectify problems within a laboratory process.
- b. **Clinical:** The written report should demonstrate your general knowledge of specimen requirements, acceptance and priority, and include a basic

knowledge of common inherited disorders and/or cytogenetic abnormalities. The report shows your ability to use appropriate testing methodology and perform a range of genetic analyses in a highly proficient manner. Your report shows that you are aware of ethical issues surrounding genetic testing.

- c. **Communication** with colleagues, other Healthcare Professionals and external agencies involved in the technical genetic diagnosis process. The ability to present data and information both verbally and visually will be clear from the written report. It demonstrates your understanding of your laboratory's information management systems. The report should set out the limits to your reporting of standard test results. It also shows your understanding of the importance of patient confidentiality. Writing SOPs and training others can also be used as evidence for your communicating within a laboratory.
- d. **Managing and planning** your work activity and/or the work activity of others. Your report demonstrates that you understand your laboratory's management structure and your place within it. Supporting evidence is your ability to supervise junior members of staff, or visitors to the laboratory. Your report shows your undertaking Continual Professional Development (provide details in section 8 of the Application Form), and your awareness of Laboratory Accreditation, local Quality Management Systems. The report details your participation in staff appraisal, assessment and the Knowledge and Skills Framework.
- e. **Teaching and training.** The written report should detail your training and supervision of others less skilled in laboratory processes. It provides evidence of your attending meetings and presenting information in journal clubs, seminars and national meetings.
- f. **Research and development.** The report should evidence your participation in focused research and development activity and the evaluation and introduction of new techniques and equipment into the diagnostic service under the supervision of more experienced colleagues. Evidence can also include your attendance of appropriate local, regional and national meetings. Finally it should detail your participation in clinical audit under guidance from a Clinical Scientist colleague.

Evidence can be used under more than one heading. Please read through the AGTC Scope of Practice when compiling your written report.

7. DETAILS OF TRAINING RECEIVED:

Document all relevant training pertaining to your discipline and your role within your place of work.

8. PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS ATTENDED AND CPD ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN:

Document your attendance/participation at professional conferences, laboratory staff meetings, journal clubs, seminars, committees and activities that acquire Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits in this section.

9. REFERENCES:

Your Head of Department should provide a written reference. Also provide a name of a second referee who can be contacted, if needed. It is required that your reference is from a person who is already bound by statutory regulation of practice.

Please be aware if your Head of Department is not a registered practitioner you should supply a second reference from someone who has a good knowledge of your training and experience and who is either already on the Genetic Voluntary Register, or another state register.

If you have recently changed posts you will be required to supply a reference from your previous employer.

Your referee(s) should confirm training, and any re-training undertaken and your overall competence to practice as a Genetic Technologist and recommend you for inclusion on the Voluntary Register.

References must be on official headed paper (i.e. NHS, local Authority, etc), currently dated and signed.

Please Note: Only references dated within 6 months of the date the application has been received by VRC Administration will be accepted.

10. DECLARATION:

Please read the declaration and sign.

CHECKLIST (PLEASE TICK)

- The application form and any additional sheets**
- Reference(s)**
- Report**
- Cheque**
- Copies of professional certificates**

APPENDIX 1

CRITERIA FOR ENTRY TO THE REGISTER

1. Evidence of satisfactory assessment of competence, which will normally be carried out by an appropriate professional body acceptable to the Council, to a level determined by the Council

And

2. First degree in an approved subject or other suitable qualification approved by the Council and a minimum of 3 years relevant experience (or 5,000 hours, if part-time) as a Genetic Technologist (AfC band 5 or higher) in an post approved by the Council **Or** first degree in an approved subject and a Certificate of Competence gained through the National Training Programme for Genetic Technologists in an appropriate post approved by the Council.

Or

A minimum of six years training and experience (or 10,000 hours, if part-time) relevant to the work of a Genetic Technologist with evidence provided to support competent practice, including a minimum of 3 years relevant experience (or 5,000 hours, if part-time) as a Genetic Technologist (AfC Band 5 or higher) in an appropriate post approved by the Council **Or** a minimum of 3 years experience relevant to the work of a Genetic Technologist (or 5,000 hours, if part-time) in addition to gaining the Certificate of Competence through the National Training Programme for Genetic Technologists in an appropriate post approved by the Council.

And

3. Assessment of suitability for registration

And

4. Provision of a written undertaking to observe a high standard of professional conduct

And

5. A declaration of support for the Registration Council which is responsible for the register of Genetic Technologist.

Those individuals that are practising as Genetic Technologists but who do not fully meet the entry conditions for registration can be considered by the Council under grandparenting arrangements. These individuals may be required to provide further information/evidence and/or to attend for an interview.

APPENDIX 2

RECOGNISED ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE FOR APPLICATION TO THE VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION COUNCIL FOR GENETIC TECHNOLOGISTS

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS	ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE CARRIED OUT BY RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL BODY (PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS)
<p>1st degree in an approved subject - for example Genetics, Biology, Biological Science, Human Biology, Biochemistry, Biomedical Science, Molecular Biology or involving a human genetic related component</p> <p><u>Other qualifications which will be considered until new education and training routes are implemented, for individuals currently undergoing training or practising in service -</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BTEC/SCOTVEC ONC/OTEC/NC/HNC/HND or Dip HE in biological science related subject • CERT/Dip HE in biological science related subject • BSc/BA postgraduate diploma or equivalent qualification in biological science related subject • MPhil/MSc/MA in biological science related subject • PhD in biological science related subject <p>NOTE: These criteria will be subject to change</p>	<p>From April 2006 until 2009, OR until the first cohort exit from the proposed Genetic Technologist specialist qualification, a minimum three years experience (5000 hours) must be achieved including a recognized competence-based training programme. This experience should be accrued whilst in a recognized Genetic Technologist post/role.</p> <p>By acting as a referee the Head of Department/Laboratory is confirming that the applicant has reached the required level of competence and has achieved the minimum required experience, as determined by the ACC and the CMGS.</p>