



Newsletter

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VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION – “WHATS IN IT FOR ME”

As VRC Chair I am quite used to flying the VRC banner in an attempt to illicit support from a wide variety of organisations. Up until fairly recently no one had actually asked the question “what’s in it for me”? When you think about it, it is a very obvious question for an individual to ask and therefore worthy of consideration.

In the first instance I must state that the benefits of registration to both the profession and the individual are interlinked. It is also clear that the reverse is also true and perhaps the easiest way to demonstrate this is via a direct comparison.

| Benefits to the Profession | Benefits to the Individual |
|--|---|
| Clear operating standards defined by the development of Standards of Proficiency and Scope of Professional Practice. | Clear well-defined areas of operation creating a clear role and clear expectations. |
| Code of Professional Conduct ensures that those within the regulated profession are operating to acceptable professional standards. | As an individual, once you have agreed to operate to the standards detailed in a professional code of conduct you can truly call yourself a professional. |
| The registration process concentrates on ensuring that those who are registered are fit to practice. Training, education and qualification are an integral part of that process. | The development of well defined standards and requirements in respect of training, education and development. Being registered (even voluntarily) has an impact in Agenda for Change terms. |
| Increases the status of the profession. | Increases the status of the individual. In a regulatory sense it puts you on the same level as those professions already regulated i.e. Biomedical Scientist, Physiotherapist, etc. |

One of the major effects of Voluntary Registration is to focus attention onto key areas within a profession, principally training, education and qualification. All of these are essential in ensuring that those who are registered are competent practitioners.

Terry Johnson - VRC Chair



Newsletter

Issue No.3



The more we can find out about the causes of people's deaths, the more likely we are to help prevent it happening to others. And when a death is unexpected, it can be important for legal and other reasons to discover the cause. Anatomical Pathology Technologists (APTs) care for the deceased, support bereaved relatives and friends and assist pathologist in conducting post-mortem examinations, it may sound macabre, but in fact it is absorbing work that can have important consequences and prove deeply satisfying.

The Association of Anatomical Pathology Technologists (AAPT) has been formed with support from the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) and the Royal Institute of Public Health (RIPH). The AAPT is an association for Anatomical Pathology Technologists who work in both hospital and local authority mortuaries. The AAPT is committed to working with the appropriate authorities and organisations to help ensure and improve the professional, educational and practical standards for Anatomical Pathology Technologists thus raising the standard of deceased patient care.

The objectives of AAPT are, and continue to be at the centre of all of the associations work:

- To enhance the role and professional standing of APTs
- To represent the AAPT on the RIPH Board of Education and examinations for APTs.
- To pursue State Registration for APTs through the Health Professions Council (HPC).
- To liaise and share information with other professional organisations closely linked with mortuary services and end of life care.
- To standardise APT work and make their roles and grades comparable across the UK.



Newsletter

Issue No.3



The AAPT council continually strive to achieve these objectives and more. In 2006 the AAPT and the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH) disbanded its joint working group, the RCPATH subsequently invited the AAPT to sit on its work force advisory committee. The AAPT have also forged links by representing APTs with organisations such as the Department of Health, Skills for Health, Federation for Healthcare Scientists, The Home and Foreign & Commonwealth Offices, the Human Tissue Authority, the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death and the National Bereavement Partnership amongst other interested groups. Much of the work started with these and other organisations is still ongoing.

The development of the Healthcare Science National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Anatomical Pathology (AP), as part of the Chief Scientific Officer's overall HCS NOS project has provided a sound basis for competency assessment and harmonisation of standards within the profession. The NOS have also provided the basis for developing the APT scope of practice, a requirement for a professions inclusion to the Voluntary Registration Council (VRC).

Regulation of APTs is essential to protect the public and ensure the confidence of those that have no choice but to trust that their deceased partner, parent, child, relative or friend is being cared for and kept safe at the end of their life by a qualified and competent Healthcare Scientist.

Since the opening of the VRCs register APTs have been slowly applying for inclusion, the AAPT continue to support the work of the VRC and are confident that through this mechanism the AAPT will be in a position to apply for statutory regulation of the profession in the not too distant future.

James Lowell

Vice-Chair – AAPT

VRC - Anatomical Pathology Modality Registrar

Newsletter

Question and Answer... David Shepherd, Chief Anatomical Pathology Technologist.



❖ **What does achieving registration with VRC mean to you?**

The most important part of being registered to me is the fact I can now call myself a professional. On the whole Anatomical Pathology has never been taken seriously by other healthcare professionals such as Nurses, and Biomedical Scientists not because we work with the deceased, but because we have never engaged with them on a perceived par in professional terms. We are now on the right path for professional equality.

❖ **How did you find completing the application form?**

I found the form to be quite large at first, but once you go through it a few times to see exactly what is being asked of you it becomes less daunting. I basically completed a section of the form each night and it took me approx a week. The report was the most time consuming section, however it was rewarding to actually document all of the duties and tasks that I undertake as part of my professional practice.

Why did you apply for registration so quickly?

The last two APT conferences have had a large focus on the importance of registration and the future of Anatomical Pathology Technology. I feel passionately about the VRC, it isn't going to go away and I wanted to get behind it from the start and show my support and encourage others to apply.

❖ **How do you think that voluntary registration can help the public?**

Since becoming an APT I have always been shocked at the varying degree of standards, practices and attitudes around the country. With VRC registration comes a professional code of conduct that must be adhered to. This means the public can be assured that anyone caring for there deceased relative and or helping them as a bereaved person meets set professional standards and in turn offers them the protection they deserve.



It is important to remember that you do not have to belong to a Professional Body to apply for registration via VRC.

Application forms are available via the VRC website <http://www.vrcouncil.org/>
Or directly from

Executive Business Support Ltd
Suite 4, Sovereign House
22 Gate Lane
Boldmere
Sutton Coldfield.
B73 5TT

T: 0845 838 6267
F: 0121 355 2420
E: vrccouncil@execbs.com
W www.vrcouncil.org

The fee for a new application is £45. To view the full list of charges please visit the website or see below.

VRC has been set up to provide a stepping-stone for healthcare science professions aspiring toward formal regulation via the Health Professions Council (HPC).

VRC is delighted to accept applications for registration from the 6 following professions

Anatomical Pathology Technologists

Cytotechnologists

Critical Care Technologists

Genetic Technologists

Diabetic Retinal Screeners

Ophthalmic Science Practitioners

| Fee | Details | Amount |
|---------------------------|--|---------------|
| Registration | Initial Application | £45.00 |
| Incomplete Registration | Minor Omittances For example documents or cheque are unsigned | £20.00 |
| Incomplete Registration | Major Omittances For example, the application is returned by the assessor requesting further information | £35.00 |
| Renewal Fees | | £25.00 |
| Late Renewals | | £50.00 |
| Registration Reactivation | | £50.00 |
| Replacement Certificates | | £5.00 |