

THE SOCIETY AND COLLEGE OF RADIOGRAPHERS

THE PUBLIC VOLUNTARY REGISTER OF SONOGRAPHERS

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS, VOLUNTARY REGISTRANTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

POLICY AND PROCESSES.

MARCH 2019

The Public Voluntary Register of Sonographers (PVRS) is administered by the College of Radiographers, 207, Providence Square, Mill Street, London, SE1 2EW

Definition of ‘sonographer’ for the purposes of this voluntary register.

“A healthcare professional who undertakes and reports on diagnostic, screening or interventional ultrasound examinations. They will hold as a minimum qualifications equivalent to a postgraduate certificate or diploma in medical ultrasound, BSc (Hons) clinical ultrasound or an honours degree apprenticeship in clinical ultrasound that has been accredited by the Consortium for the Accreditation of Sonographic Education (CASE). They are either not medically qualified or hold medical qualifications but are not statutorily registered as a doctor in the UK”.¹

Aims and Scope

The PVRS has two main aims

- 1) To help to protect the public in an area of diagnostic imaging and screening practice where there is no specific requirement for the healthcare professional carrying out diagnostic, screening or interventional ultrasound examinations to be statutorily registered.
- 2) To support the application made by the College of Radiographers for ‘Sonography’ to become a regulated profession and ‘Sonographer’ and ‘Ultrasonographer’ to become protected titles. This application was supported by the United Kingdom Association of Sonographers (UKAS) which merged with the College of Radiographers on 1st January 2009. Statutory regulation of sonographers remains the policy and ambition of the College of Radiographers in accordance with the recommendations of the then Health Professions Council (HPC) to the Secretary of State for Health in October 2009.

The PVRS is a voluntary register for sonographers and is not a statutory register. It is also not a Professional Standards Authority accredited register. Accredited registers are discussed in the Department of Health publication ‘Enabling Excellence, Autonomy and Accountability for Healthcare Workers, Social Workers and Social Care Workers’¹ and have subsequently been developed by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care.²

The College of Radiographers is a professional organisation and is not a statutory regulator. As such it has limited powers with respect to the degree to which it can protect the public when compared to those of a statutory regulator.

For the avoidance of doubt, where a healthcare professional is able to be statutorily registered with, for example the Health Professions Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council, then it is expected that those individuals maintain their statutory registration in addition to entry to the PVRS.

Advice to Employers, Voluntary Registrants and Members of the Public.

- 1) Entry to the voluntary register requires completion of an application form and agreement that the sonographer will comply with the requirements of the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics and the Standards of Proficiency associated with the register.
- 2) The CoR has the powers to remove the name of a voluntary registrant from the register and to impose other sanctions as an agreed condition of voluntary registration.
- 3) Entry on to the PVRS is not a guarantee of competence or fitness to practice. It does not remove the need for employers to ensure, as part of the recruitment process, that an applicant has the necessary skills and experience to perform the role for which they are applying.

Advice from NHS Employers can be found at: <http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/retain-and-improve/standards-and-assurance/professional-regulation/medical-radiography-and-ultrasound-workforce>

- 4) Entry on to the voluntary register does not indicate that an individual sonographer has the right to work in the United Kingdom. This must be determined by employers and potential employers.
- 5) Employers and potential employers must obtain the necessary safeguarding and criminal records checks. These are not undertaken as part of the voluntary registration process.
- 6) While all care is taken in the voluntary registration application process formal (legally notarised) validation of a voluntary registrant's identity or qualifications will not necessarily have been made.
- 7) The expectation is that HCPC requirements for English proficiency will be need to be met for those whose first language is not English but employers have a responsibility to confirm this for themselves as well. <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration/getting-on-the-register/international-applications/>
- 8) Voluntary registration does not provide any professional indemnity insurance cover. This must be obtained via the employer, a relevant professional body, or purchased from an insurance company or medical defence society or organisation.
- 9) Voluntary Registrants who are not also statutorily registered cannot act as a referrer for clinical imaging examinations involving the use of ionising radiation. When also statutorily registered, the professional involved must be entitled to act as referrer under the Ionising Radiations (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2006 and be authorised to do so.
- 10) Voluntary Registrants who are not also statutorily registered cannot act under Patient Group Directions for the administration of drugs and medicines, or train to become supplementary

prescribers. They are allowed to act under Patient Specific Directions (PSD) but those requiring them to act under a PSD must ensure they are competent to do so safely.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

The term 'Voluntary Registrant' applies to those sonographers whose names are entered on to the PVRS.

Voluntary Registrants may also hold statutory registration, for example as a clinical scientist or radiographer with the Health and Care Professions Council or as a midwife with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

It is not a requirement to be a member of the Society and College of Radiographers although Voluntary Registrants are encouraged to join.

All voluntary register applications must be made via the 'on-line' forms available at <https://www.sor.org/practice/ultrasound/register-sonographers>

There are two routes to entry on to the register. Those holding recognised UK qualifications will need to complete Section C of the application form and all others will need to complete Section D.

All examination results must have been ratified by the relevant examination board for the University and course concerned.

All new applications and renewals will be subject to approval.

Details of current charges (where applicable) can be found in the Fees Schedule which is published separately.

Applications will be subject to scrutiny by a Review Panel which will decide the following:

- i) The application is accepted.
- ii) The application is rejected
- iii) Further information is required before the application can proceed
- iv) The application is accepted subject to specified terms and conditions.

The CoR's decision is final and there is not an appeal process available. Where an application is rejected the review panel will provide advice should they wish to make a subsequent application. Any subsequent application will be treated as if it were a new application.

Registration with the PVRS will normally be for a period of two years after which renewal of registration will be required. Voluntary registrants will be asked to confirm that they are practising in accordance with the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics and Standards of Proficiency at renewal and may be asked for evidence of CPD.

Voluntary Registrants may request that their name is removed from the register.

A Voluntary Registrant's name and the geographical location of their workplace will appear on www.sor.org and can be searched for by members of the public.

Voluntary Registrants must agree to inform the Administrator of the Public Voluntary Register of Sonographers if they become subject to any disciplinary action or practise requirements imposed by a statutory regulatory body and accept that an annotation may be made on this voluntary register also.

If an application has not completed within six months of the date of application it will be deemed to have not progressed and a new application will have to be made.

The primary method of communication with voluntary registrants will be by e-mail. No more than one reminder for any given action requested will be sent.

References

1) Enabling Excellence. Autonomy and Accountability for Healthcare Workers, Social Workers and Social Care Workers. Department of Health. Feb 2011.

2) Professional Standards Authority, accredited voluntary registers
<http://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/accredited-registers>

March 1st 2019