

THE COLLEGE OF  
RADIOGRAPHERS



Dear Member or Applicant

**Re: National Voluntary Register for Sonographers**

As you may be aware there was a joint working party in place between the Society & College of Radiographers (SCoR) and the United Kingdom Association of Sonographers (UKAS) to pursue the application for sonographers to be regulated by the Health Professions Council (HPC). UKAS merged with the College of Radiographers on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009.

Currently there is no independent regulatory body for health care practitioners using ultrasound. There is, however, growing demand from sonographers to be regulated both for the protection of the public and to uphold education, training and experience in this field. In order to protect the title of 'sonographer' and to be able to be recognised as a profession by a regulatory body, a single voluntary register of suitably trained and experienced health care ultrasound practitioners was established by the SCoR and UKAS and opened in April 2007.

A detailed application has since been made to the Health Professions Council to protect the title of 'sonographer'. In October 2009 HPC Council recommended to the Secretary of State for Health that sonographers should be regulated, subject to two points relating to possible alternative arrangements being considered. There are still several stages to complete, however, and it may be several years before regulation is achieved. The voluntary register will continue to support this application and all sonographers are therefore encouraged to join.

If you wish your name to be included on the public voluntary register of sonographers please read the accompanying information and complete and return the application form to the SCoR.

Entry onto the voluntary register will be free to current members of the SCoR. We encourage all sonographers involved with ultrasound in the fields of clinical practice, education, research, management and applications, irrespective of whether they are current members of SCoR, to apply to join the voluntary register. It is, however, necessary to charge individuals wishing to apply to join the register who are not members of SCoR an initial fee of £75.00. Arrangements for subsequent re-registration on the voluntary register will be confirmed later with the expected first date for re-registration being in April 2011, at which time a re-registration fee will be payable.

If you have further queries regarding the voluntary register please do not hesitate to contact the SCoR either by letter or by e-mail to [valeriea@sor.org](mailto:valeriea@sor.org) or [nigelt@sor.org](mailto:nigelt@sor.org). Please note that acceptance on to this voluntary register does not in itself authenticate competence or fitness to practice.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Gill Dolbear'.

Gill Dolbear  
President of the Society of Radiographers

October 2009

## Frequently asked questions

### Q What is a regulatory body?

A regulatory body such as the Health Professions Council (HPC), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and General Medical Council (GMC), is a body whose principal function is to establish and ensure the maintenance of standards of education and training; conduct, performance and ethics for members of the relevant profession. Such bodies are governed by legislation and the HPC was established under the Health Professions Order 2001<sup>1</sup>. The main aim of the regulatory bodies is to protect the health and well being of people who use the services of the health professionals registered with the body.

### Q Why do health professionals need a register?

Registration with a regulatory body ensures that health care professionals on their register have met a certain level of training or experience, that they have standards for their professional skills, behaviour and health. Anyone using a protected title must be registered with the relevant body; for example, *Physiotherapist* is a protected title and those using it must be registered with the HPC<sup>2</sup>.

### Q What is a protected title?

Protected titles such as *Radiographer* or *Midwife* may only be used by practitioners eligible for entry onto the relevant statutory register by virtue of their education, training and experience. This can also be done through a grand-parenting route for a limited period when a profession first becomes statutorily regulated. Registrants with the HPC should maintain their skills and competences by continuing professional development (CPD) and keep an up-to-date and accurate record of their CPD activities<sup>3</sup>

### Q What details can members of the public expect to see about me on the national voluntary register for sonographers?

Similar to the HPC register, the information that can be accessed by the public will be your name, general work location and scope of practice. Only key personnel from the SCoR will be able to access your full details and strict data protection rules and protocols are in place to ensure that your personal information is not divulged to others.

### Q Where will the voluntary register for sonographers be kept?

The joint register will be hosted by the SCoR and can be accessed through the public section of their website. [www.sor.org/public/ult/ult\\_search.php](http://www.sor.org/public/ult/ult_search.php)

### Q Who can register?

Any health care practitioner involved in the practice, education and research of ultrasound can apply to be registered\*. This includes sonographers, radiographers, midwives, clinical scientists, technicians, researchers, educationalists, service managers and application specialists involved with medical ultrasound. Exceptions are those individuals who are practising medicine and are currently regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC). \* **Acceptance on this voluntary register does not authenticate competence or fitness to practice.**

**Q I am currently a member of SCoR, what do I need to do?**

Current members whose practice includes medical ultrasound are eligible to register. However they will be required to complete and sign the attached form as consent. Members of the UKAS voluntary register were automatically transferred onto the joint voluntary register on the 1st May 2007, unless they indicated to the contrary.

**Q I am not a member of the SCoR, can I still register?**

Yes, you can register using the forms available on the public section of the SCoR website. All practitioners are encouraged to join; this will strengthen and further support the pursuit of regulation and the protection of the title 'sonographer'.

**Q I am currently employed as a sonographer, but do not have a recognised ultrasound qualifications. Can I still apply to join the register?**

Yes, you can apply to join the register. All applications will be considered on an individual basis. Potential registrants will be required to provide additional information such as evidence of CPD, and a portfolio of education, training and experience that equates to a recognised qualification and fitness to practice.

**Q Will there be a charge?**

Current SCoR members will not be required to pay a registration fee to be entered onto the register. For individuals who are not members of the SCoR, there will be a charge of £75.

**Q. I only practice ultrasound for a part of my job, and am already registered with the HPC. Do I need additional registration?**

The voluntary register is for practitioners in ultrasound. Whilst voluntary registration is not necessary for individuals already registered with the HPC (or the NMC), this additional registration of sonographers should help strengthen support for pursuit of regulation for all ultrasound practitioners. If a decision is made to regulate the practice of medical ultrasound there are likely to be a number of ramifications for current and future registrants, including the need to address questions such as whether to seek entry to two separate parts of the statutory register.

**Q. I am currently registered with the HPC/NMC, do I have to withdraw my registration with them if I apply to join the voluntary register?**

No. If you are currently registered you should maintain that registration. This additional voluntary register is intended to demonstrate how many current registrants are engaged in the practice of ultrasound thus strengthening the case for registration of sonographers as a separate professional group.

**Q. Is there a fee for my name to be maintained on the voluntary register?**

There is a fee at the time of re-registration for those who have not maintained membership of the Society of Radiographers

**Q If my circumstances change in the future and I no longer want to be part of the voluntary register, can I withdraw from it?**

You can request to have your details removed by giving one month's written notice of resignation from the voluntary register.

**Q. Who do I contact to join the voluntary register of sonographers?**

The application forms may be found on [www.sor.org](http://www.sor.org)

**Contact address:**

Approval and Accreditation Department  
The Society and College of Radiographers  
207 Providence Square  
Mill Street  
London  
SE1 2EW

**References**

All the below can be accessed on [www.hpc-uk.org/publications](http://www.hpc-uk.org/publications)

- 1 The Health Professions Order 2001. February 2002 No. 254
- 2 The benefits of registration. April 2004
- 3 Continuing professional development and your registration. July 2006