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ISSUE 3

## HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR!

Christmas comes around more quickly every year, or so it seems. I would like to start by wishing all our registrants a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year from all at the VRC.

## ACCREDITED VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION

There is currently no new route to statutory regulation with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or other appropriate body. Following the release in 2011 of the command paper *'Enabling Excellence: Autonomy and Accountability for Health and Social Care Staff'* the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) - the body which oversees the bodies providing statutory registers - was tasked by the government to establish an approach of 'right touch regulation' for these non-statutorily regulated groups in the form of an Accredited Voluntary Register (AVR). They did this in 2012 and to date have accredited 9 voluntary registers.

Unfortunately the VRC is a relatively small register and any move to AVR with the PSA would be both cost and process prohibitive. We responded as such to the PSA who acknowledged our concerns and invited the Academy to look into a solution.

The solution the Academy is working towards is a sponsorship arrangement that will give the VRC the opportunity to share existing structure, policies and procedures as well as gaining an economy of scale with regards to the cost. The Academy is also the uniting voice of all Healthcare Science professionals in the UK; therefore we hope that any arrangement between the AHCS and the VRC will strengthen our case in any future move towards statutory regulation.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013 the Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS) launched its consultation on the draft standards for its register; the consultation closes on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014. The aim of the consultation is to ensure that the standards that have been developed are reasonable, appropriate and necessary to ensure safe and effective practice by Healthcare Science Practitioners.

Members of the VRC Executive along with representatives from other voluntary registers representing non-statutorily regulated Healthcare Science Professionals have worked together with the Academy over the summer in order to draft these standards. The VRC remains engaged with the Academy and we plan to formally respond to the consultation to ensure that any mechanism to move towards Accredited Voluntary Registration will not detract from, but strengthen our end goal of statutory regulation. As well as helping to develop these standards, we have been talking to the AHCS about how this would work for the VRC with minimal impact and maximum benefit to our members.

Please keep an eye on our website and newsletter during 2014 for more details as they become available.

<http://www.ahcs.ac.uk/2013/12/practitioner-register-standards-consultation-launched/>

**Michelle Fenlon, Chair**

## Renewals 2013

I am delighted that we have had another successful round of membership renewals. Many thanks to those of you who responded without delay – your new certificates have been issued. For those of you who have allowed your membership to lapse, please contact [vrc@execbs.com](mailto:vrc@execbs.com) to discuss re-activation.

To date we have a total of 304 registrants from the 4 professional groups that are represented by VRC. This number is steadily growing, our membership increasing by 13% over the past 2 years. We strongly encourage all those eligible who have not yet registered to do so during the coming months, as we hope that 2014 will bring some changes to our status as a voluntary register.

## CONSTITUENT GROUPS

### ACGS: (formerly CMGS and ACC)

The first annual AGCS Spring meeting will be held in Birmingham on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014. Please see the AGCS website for further details as they become available, <http://www.acgs.uk.com/news-events/events/>

### AOSP:

VRC are working closely with AOSP and OIA to increase representation on VRC and ensure that close links are maintained, more details will follow as they become available.

### BATB:

Next year's BATB Annual Conference will be held in Liverpool on 13th, 14th and 15th May 2014.

### AAPT:

Please see new qualifications update below.

### CPD 2014

Please know VRC shall be carrying out their next CPD Audit in October 2014. Please ensure you are maintaining your CPD portfolio. A random selection of VRC registrants shall be requested to provide CPD submissions at that time.

### AGM 2014

Please know that the next VRC Annual General Meeting shall be held at Lichfield HQ on 19 February 2014 at 10 am—11 am. Please contact VRC if you wish to attend [vrc@execbs.com](mailto:vrc@execbs.com)

## AAPT

2013 is the tenth year anniversary for the Association of Anatomical Pathology Technologists (AAPT)

The AAPT was established in 2003 to provide a voice for Anatomical Pathology Technologist (APT'S) or as they were known back then Mortuary Technicians or MTO's. The association has grown into a strong voice in its first ten years; a strength that is demonstrated in its very popular annual conference, now in its ninth year.

The 2013 conference was held at the Strathmore Hotel Luton; a variety of subjects were covered including Infection risks to Mortuary workers; The death of Marilyn Monroe and the realities of Post Mortem CT scanning.

The conference has become a prime CPD and networking event for all APT's including delegates from Europe.

A very exciting announcement this year is the introduction of a new fit for purpose qualification pathway for APT's that meets the requirements for the MCS practitioner training program. The first step in the pathway is the level 3 Diploma in Anatomical Pathology Technology replacing the Certificate in Anatomical Pathology Technology. Successful learners can progress to the level 4 Diploma followed by the foundation degree in Anatomical Pathology Technology and BSC in Healthcare science (Anatomical Pathology).

The AAPT continues to raise the profile of the profession and has published a number of best practice guidelines available through the website. The AAPT council actively encourages its members and all Anatomical Pathology Technologist to participate in continued personal development and hosts regional CPD events as well as the biannual CPD award.

**Katherine Tomkins - APT**

## BATB Annual Conference 2014

Next year's BATB Annual Conference will be held in Liverpool on 13th, 14th and 15th May 2014. The venue will be the NHSBT Liverpool site with opportunities to have a tour of the "state of the art" tissue bank facility.

There are several reasonably priced hotels within walking distance and we wanted to let everyone know the dates in advance so that you can take advantage of early booking (range £29 - £89 approximately depending on time of booking).

Holiday Inn Express

[http://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/liverpool/lplap/hoteldetail?cm\\_mmc=GoogleMaps-\\_-ex-\\_-GBEN-\\_-lplap](http://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/us/en/liverpool/lplap/hoteldetail?cm_mmc=GoogleMaps-_-ex-_-GBEN-_-lplap)

Hampton by Hilton

<http://hamptoninn3.hilton.com/en/hotels/united-kingdom/hampton-by-hilton-liverpool-john-lennon-airport-LPLJLHX/index.html>

Premier Inn <http://www.premierinn.com/en/hotel/LIVJLA/liverpool-john-lennon-airport>

Crowne Plaza <http://www.ihg.com/crowneplaza/hotels/gb/en/liverpool/lplcp/hoteldetail>

All the hotels are close to the venue however there is a huge choice of hotels in Liverpool City Centre too. We will have an active social calendar too (of course) which will be in the City Centre with coach travel provided to the events.

The programme for the conference will include the Education and Training Day on 13th May 2014 with both the "Introduction to Tissue Banking" and preparation tutorials for the Specialist Certificate for Cell and Transplantation Science. There will be a Novice Investigators presentation prize plus a Poster prize.

The programme will have something for everyone, we will be running workshops on donor selection, there will be a regulatory update from the HTA plus new and emerging technologies. Please start to think about what you would like to present in the free sessions - further information will be available soon about deadlines for abstracts.

We look forward to welcoming you to Liverpool in 2014!

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

**\*\*\*\*\* It is important to remember that you do not have to belong to a Professional Body to apply for registration via VRC. However; by becoming a member of a Professional Body you are showing your professionalism, supporting your profession and the standards that must be adhered to \*\*\*\*\***

Application forms are available via the VRC website <http://www.vrcouncil.org.uk> or directly from the address on the next page. Current Fees for new registrants remains at £65 and renewals fees £40.

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

Anatomical Pathology Technologists \* Genetic Technologists \*  
Ophthalmic Science Practitioners \* Tissue Bank Technologists\*

**Contact us**

**Voluntary Registration Council for Healthcare Science  
c/o Executive Business Support,**

**Headquarters**

**City Wharf, Davidson Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire,  
WS14 9DZ**

**Tel: 0845 838 6267 Fax: 0121 355 2420**

**Email: [vrc@execbs.com](mailto:vrc@execbs.com)**