

## Policy on Health and Conduct Declarations

The aim of the Register of Clinical Technologists (RCT) is to protect the public by setting standards for the competence and conduct of clinical technologists, so ensuring that they are 'fit to practise' in their profession.

Competence is assured by setting educational standards for entry to the Register, and requiring Registrants, through their Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct clause 4 (see P&P document 01-21-10 0409) to keep their knowledge and skills up to date through continuing professional development (CPD). Registrants are required to confirm each year when they re-register with the RCT that they have undertaken CPD during the preceding year. An audit of a randomly-selected set of CPD records is undertaken each year to check on compliance with this requirement.

Good conduct is assured by publicising and requiring compliance with the Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct, including an annual declaration of compliance on re-registration.

The Code includes a requirement for Registrants to 'ensure that the well-being, interests and dignity of patients are promoted and safeguarded at all times' (clause 1). Under this clause, Registrants should consider whether any health condition they have, or change to their health, affects their 'fitness to practice' and should therefore be declared in the best interests of their patients.

This policy covers the RCT's requirements for Registrants to declare their health status and confirm their good conduct, both on initial application for registration and throughout the period of their registration; and the actions that will be taken if necessary following such declarations.

### Declarations on health and conduct

#### **Health**

When a person first applies to join the Register, they are asked to sign a declaration to confirm that they do not have a health condition that would affect their ability to practise their profession. Applicants only need to declare information about a health condition if they believe their health may affect their ability to practise safely and effectively. If an applicant does not provide accurate information in their application, or fails to provide all the relevant information, and this comes to light, this will be dealt with through the Fitness to Practise Procedure (formerly known as the Disciplinary Procedure) and they may be removed from the Register.

Once registered, registrants are asked to confirm that their health does not affect their ability to practise when they renew their registration each year.

Registrants only need to declare changes to their health that affect their ability to practise when they apply for, or renew their registration, but they may choose to inform the RCT about changes to their health at any other time if they wish to.

#### **Conduct**

Applicants are asked to fill in a self-declaration as part of their initial application to join the Register about their past conduct. In this declaration they must declare whether they:

## Policy on Health and Conduct Declarations

- have ever been convicted of a criminal offence or received a police caution or conditional discharge for a criminal offence other than a 'protected caution'\* or 'protected conviction'\* (i.e. one that would be filtered out from a DBS check).
- have ever been disciplined by a professional or regulatory organisation or their employer or educational establishment; or
- have ever had civil proceedings other than a divorce or dissolution of a civil partnership brought against them (e.g. lawsuits brought to claim compensation or for breaking the terms of a contract).

While a clinical technologist remains on the RCT, they have a responsibility to inform the Register immediately about any convictions or cautions they receive while registered. They must also inform the Register of any professional, regulatory or disciplinary proceedings taken against them by a professional body, a regulator, educational body or their employer. Any such proceedings should be reported as soon as the outcome is known, and the Registrant should not wait for the annual re-registration declaration to declare these.

If an applicant does not provide accurate information in their application or subsequently, or fails to provide all the relevant information, and this comes to light, this will be dealt with through the Fitness to Practise Procedure and they may be removed from the Register.

### Handling declarations

Information on health or conduct issues declared by existing registrants will be passed to the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) of the RCT to be dealt with under the Fitness to Practise Procedure, a copy of which is posted on the RCT website for registrants and the public to consult.

Information on health or conduct issues declared at the time of application will be considered by the registration assessors, who will make a recommendation to the RCT Management Board about whether the individual should be admitted to the Register (if all other requirements have been met). The registration assessors will consider whether, on the basis of past conduct, the applicant is likely in future to be able to meet the standards in the Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct and so should be allowed to register.

### Driving offences

Fixed-penalty motoring offences (such as speeding, breach of load restrictions, use of mobile phone while driving) do not need to be declared. Other convictions should be declared.

### What is a protected caution\* or protected conviction\*?

In May 2013, the government introduced a filtering system that allows certain minor cautions and convictions to be removed or filtered from standard and enhanced DBS certificates. A protected caution or conviction is eligible for filtering and does not need to be disclosed for jobs that are subject to standard or enhanced DBS checks.

For full information on which cautions and convictions are protected, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance>