

Policy on Returning from Overseas Practice

Background

The Register of Clinical Technologists (RCT) was set up in 2000 to provide a voluntary register which would protect the public by setting standards for the training, competence and conduct of clinical technologists. Once accepted onto the register, after completing an approved training course or through an equivalence route, registrants are required to pay an annual renewal fee and confirm each year that they are carrying out continuing professional development (CPD) and that they will abide by the RCT Code of Professional Conduct. The names of all registrants in good standing with the register (that is, having paid registration fees and not having been removed from the register following disciplinary proceedings) appear on a searchable online register on the RCT's website (www.therct.org.uk).

Scope

The Return from Overseas Practice policy applies to all registrants returning to work in the UK from a period overseas.

Explanation

All registrants who leave the UK to work overseas in a relevant post and subsequently return to the UK, must complete a 'Return from Overseas Practice Notification form' on their return.

Financial

In order to maintain registration whilst overseas, registrants must renew their registration annually and continue to work in a relevant post, maintain CPD and uphold the RCT Code of Professional Conduct. Alternatively they may apply for a Career Break for the duration of their time overseas. If a career break is granted, fees are not payable for the duration of the career break.

Our requirements for returners

If registrants choose to work overseas for less than two years they can begin practising again within the UK without having to meet any additional requirements set by us, providing that the renewal fee has been paid each year and they submit the relevant return from overseas practice notification form. We believe that this is flexible enough to accommodate registrants who take some time to work outside the UK in a relevant post, without compromising public protection and our role in upholding standards.

- 0 – 2 years out of practice – no requirements
- 2 – 5 years out of practice – 30 days of updating
- 5 years or more out of practice – 60 days of updating

Period of updating

The period of updating knowledge and skills can be made up of any combination of supervised practice, formal study or private study. Our only requirement is that any private study makes up no more than 50% of the total period.

For example, if 30 days of updating are required this could be completed by:

- 30 days of supervised practice; or
- 10 days of supervised practice, 10 days of private study, and 10 days of formal study; or
- 15 days of private study, and 15 days of formal study.

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This is not an exhaustive list. The above are just examples to show how our requirements are flexible enough to accommodate registrants' requirements.

Supervised practice

'Supervised practice' is practising under the supervision of a registered professional. A supervisor must:

- be on the Register of Clinical Technologists or the HCPC Register; and
- have been in regulated practice for at least the previous three years and not be subject to any fitness to practise proceedings or orders, i.e. they must not be cautioned or subject to 'conditions of practice'.

There are no detailed requirements regarding the level of supervision needed or the tasks to be undertaken. This is best negotiated directly between the registrant and the supervisor on the basis of individual learning needs. We do require that the supervisor should only supervise those activities which are within their own Scope of Practice. This is so that the supervisor can provide relevant input and guidance and also to ensure that both the registrants and the supervisor are practising safely and effectively. This means that the period of supervised practice could be undertaken, for example, in teaching, management or research or wherever the supervisor practises their profession.

Formal study

'Formal study' is a period of structured study which is provided by a person or organisation. This can include distance learning or e-learning or any other type of course or programme that is relevant to the registrant's practice.

Types of formal study that may be chosen could include:

- 'return to practice' programmes run by educational institutions or other bodies;
- relevant 'continuing professional development' courses;
- relevant modules or elements currently included in programmes run by educational institutions; or
- programmes offered by professional bodies.

The RCT do not approve return to practice courses because we believe that the registrant is best-placed to determine which courses are most appropriate and which types of formal study will best update their skills and knowledge so that they can re-enter practice safely.

Private study

'Private study' is a period of study which the registrant structures. Private study could use resources including:

- websites;
- library books; and
- journals.

Private study may be a particularly useful option if where the registrant plans to return to a field

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which is extremely specialised or where there may be limited opportunities for formal study or supervised practice. It may also prove useful if they live in an area where it is difficult to gain a period of supervised practice or if they need to fit the updating period around other demands on their time such as another job or caring responsibilities. However, registrants should be aware that private study can only make up a maximum of half of your total period (e.g. 15 of the 30 days' updating or 30 of the 60 days' updating).

Structuring your period of updating

The RCT recognises that updating required will be individually tailored. The areas of the registrant's profession that they need to update will depend on:

- the area in which they intend to work when they begin practising again;
- their prior experience;
- any relevant skills they gained whilst out of practice; and
- any relevant developments in their profession during the time when they were out of practice.

Registrants do not have to do their period of updating full-time: they can complete it part-time if they wish. For the purposes of completing their forms we regard one day as being equivalent to seven hours.

Registrants do not have to complete the entire period of updating at once. They can carry out part of their period of updating then have a break then come back and complete the rest. Our only requirement for the timescale is that all of their updating should be completed within the twelve months before they apply for registration. We believe that this strikes a balance between operating a flexible system which recognises that returners are more likely to have family and caring commitments and recognising that if updating is undertaken over a much extended period of time then the opportunities for development are limited.