



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals



Guide to Registration

CORU – A Guide to Registration

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What is CORU?

CORU is Ireland's first multi-profession health regulator. Its role is to protect the public by promoting high standards of professional conduct, education, training and competence through statutory registration of health and social care professionals.

CORU was set up under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005.

It is an umbrella body, made up of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council and 12 Registration Boards, one for each profession named in our Act.

Who will be regulated?

Some professions such as doctors, nurses, dentists and pharmacists have been regulated for many years. CORU has been established to regulate many of the other health and social care professions who provide services to the public.

These professions are:

- clinical biochemists
- dietitians
- medical scientists
- occupational therapists
- orthoptists
- physiotherapists
- podiatrists
- psychologists
- radiographers
- social care workers
- social workers
- speech and language therapists

How will CORU regulate the professions?

To regulate the 12 professions, CORU will:

- set the standards that health and social care professionals must meet

- ensure that the relevant educational bodies deliver qualifications that prepare professionals to provide safe and appropriate care
- maintain and publish a Register of health and social care professionals who meet our standards
- ensure that registered professionals keep their skills up to date by promoting continuing professional development
- run Fitness to Practise hearings into the conduct and competence of a registrant.

What is the Health and Social Care Professionals Council?

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council has 24 voluntary members and a Chair, initially appointed by the Minister for Health.

Each of the professions is represented on the Council. There are also members from the education sector, patient advocacy groups, the voluntary sector and representatives of public and private sector organisations who are concerned with health and social care.

The Council has a “lay majority”. This is internationally viewed as the best way of ensuring the public is protected.

The Council:

- oversees and co-ordinates the work of the Registration Boards
- enforces standards of practice for registered professionals including codes of professional conduct and ethics
- operates Fitness to Practise
- makes decisions and gives directions relating to disciplinary sanctions on registrants.

What is a Registration Board?

Each profession has its own Registration Board which is responsible for the registration of members of the profession. Two years after the establishment of a Registration Board, three representatives of the professions will be elected to the Board and one of these will be nominated to Council.

Each Board has 13 members and, like the Council, each has a lay majority.

The Registration Board is responsible for:

- establishing and maintaining the Register of members of that profession
- assessing and recognising qualifications gained outside the State
- approving and monitoring education and training programmes relevant for entry to the Register
- setting the code of professional conduct and ethics
- setting the requirements for continuing professional development.

Am I required to register?

Only people on the Register will be legally allowed to use their professional title.

What are the benefits of registering?

There are many benefits to registering with CORU:

- if you are registered with CORU you can legally use the title of your profession

- members of the public will now have greater confidence in your profession. They will know that your professional standing and qualifications have been independently verified
- you will be supported in your work through a code of professional conduct and ethics which is developed in consultation with the professions
- it also protects the reputation of the professions by having a formal disciplinary procedure for dealing with professionals who do not meet the standards expected of them.

What is the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics?

The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics is developed by your Registration Board and is specific to your profession. The code is developed following consultation with the general public, members of the profession, their representative bodies and employers.

The code sets out the standards of conduct, performance and ethics which you must apply during the course of your work.

How do I apply for registration?

There are currently two routes to registration.

1. The first is aimed at existing practitioners and is referred to as grandparenting. This two-year, transitional period is necessary to give existing practitioners sufficient opportunity to apply for registration and satisfy the Registration Board that they meet the requirements.

Under this process, you must complete the application form which is available at www.coru.ie and satisfy the Board that you:

- have been engaged in the practice of the profession for the required period

- hold the relevant qualifications or have successfully completed a test of competency
- can be deemed fit and proper to practise the profession
- pay the required fee.

A Garda vetting application form must be completed as part of this process and can be downloaded from www.coru.ie.

2. For new entrants to the professions in Ireland, who hold approved qualifications (graduates, those who have been practising abroad or those returning to the profession) they must:
 - complete the application form
 - demonstrate they are fit and proper to practise the profession
 - satisfy the Board that they have sufficient knowledge of the language necessary to practise the profession in Ireland. This may include undertaking a language test
 - pay the required fee.

New entrants with qualifications from abroad must first have their qualifications recognised by CORU before they are eligible to apply for registration.

For the full details on applying to register with CORU, check our website www.coru.ie.

What if you have been registered with a regulatory or professional body in another country?

If you have been registered with a regulatory or professional body in another country you must provide evidence of good standing. You will also need to provide additional information including police clearance for each country you have been resident in for a period of 6 months or more.

How long will the process take?

Following the receipt of an application, CORU will begin the process of assessing, verifying and reviewing the information provided to establish if the applicant meets the criteria for registration. The timeframe envisaged for this is 16 weeks and all applicants will receive an acknowledgment from CORU once their application has been received.

This acknowledgement will provide evidence of an individual's engagement in the registration process until they receive formal notification of the Board's decision regarding their application.

Once registered, all registrants will receive a certificate of registration, valid until their annual renewal date.

What is Fitness to Practise?

Fitness to Practise is about finding out if a registrant is unfit to practise and, if he or she is unfit, taking the appropriate steps to remedy the situation.

When a registrant who is unfit to practise in their profession continues to practise, they put the safety of the public and the reputation of their profession at risk.

CORU will not be able to deal with complaints about certain matters occurring before Fitness to Practise is introduced. However, CORU is still concerned with matters that occurred in the past and it is important that registrants provide all information to CORU when applying for registration.

Applicants for registration must satisfy CORU that they are a "fit and proper person". Failure to give CORU relevant and accurate information could affect a person's registration.

How will Fitness to Practise operate?

The Preliminary Committee will examine all complaints received. A Fitness to Practise hearing will only take place if the committee is satisfied that there is a case to answer. This will help protect against trivial matters or complaints which are vexatious, made in bad faith or without substance proceeding to a full hearing. The committee can also decide to refer the complaint for mediation.

We will inform the professions and the public about the opening of Fitness to Practise and our website will provide information about the process.

What will happen if a complaint is made about a registrant?

If a complaint is made to CORU about a registrant, they will be informed that we have received a complaint and given the opportunity to respond.

The complaint will be examined by the Preliminary Committee and the registrant will be able to make written submissions to the committee answering the complaint that has been made.

If the committee decides that there is a case to be answered, they will either refer it on to mediation or a hearing will be held before a Conduct or a Health Committee. The registrant will be able to attend the hearing and be represented at it.

If a finding is made against the registrant, they will have the right to make a submission to Council on the sanction to be imposed.

The public and employers will be able to check the Register online to see if an adverse finding has been made against a particular registrant.

How will Continuing Professional Development (CPD) operate?

Once a health and social care professional registers, they have a duty to ensure their knowledge, skills and performance are of a high quality, are up to date and are relevant to their practice. This continuing professional development (CPD) is part of a practitioner's professionalism and is required under their code of professional conduct and ethics.

During the grandparenting period, a Registration Board does not specify what or how much CPD a practitioner must do. It is up to the professional to decide for themselves what CPD is appropriate to keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date.

Once the grandparenting period is over and eligible existing practitioners have registered, the Registration Board will introduce a CPD scheme for its profession. This scheme will set out the CPD requirements for registration. It will specify how much CPD a professional must engage in and the evidence they must provide to support this. The scheme will also set out a timeframe in which a professional must fulfill these requirements.

CORU's values include transparency and openness and our CPD model is developed in accordance with these. Professions, employers and professional bodies contribute to our policy development process.

What is CORU's role in relation to the approval of education programmes and qualifications?

One of the functions of a Registration Board at CORU is to satisfy itself that education and training programmes provided by institutions in the State are of a suitable standard for candidates for registration.

Registration Board approval means a programme has met the required standards in the areas of education, training, assessment, examinations and the practice education for the purposes of registration.

An education provider or institution must apply to a Registration Board to have its programme approved.

A Registration Board will review the programme to make sure:

- it meets its criteria for approval for that profession
- those graduates who successfully complete the programme are able to meet the standards of proficiency for registration in their profession.

Each education programme will be monitored for its continuing suitability and, at least once every five years, the Registration Board will engage a full review of the programme.

Once a programme is approved, the qualification arising from it becomes an approved qualification.

Graduates of an approved programme will then be eligible to apply to join the Register through the standard application route.

What happens to the information I send to CORU?

CORU will treat any information or documentation provided by you as strictly confidential. We are registered with the Data Protection Commissioner and must abide by the commissioner's rules. Your details are stored on a restricted database and access is strictly limited.

How much will it cost?

Depending on whether you are a graduate, applying from abroad or are an existing practitioner the fee to register will vary.

Check out www.coru.ie for more details.

When should I register?

There will be a notice on www.coru.ie, advertisements in national publications and all employers will be alerted when your register opens.

What happens if I don't register?

If you do not register, or fail to renew your registration each year, the consequences are serious:

- you cannot use the title of your profession. If you continue to work using a protected title and have not registered you may be prosecuted and can be fined up to €5,000, imprisoned for up to six months or both
- some employers may insist on registration as part of your contract of employment. Failure to register may put your job at risk
- there may be implications for your professional indemnity insurance.

Can I update my details on the Register?

You are required to inform CORU of any changes to the information held about you. You will be able to view the Register and update your details online at www.coru.ie.

How do I renew my registration?

Your registration renewal date is printed on your certificate of registration and you can sign up to receive email reminders. You will also be reminded by post one month in advance of the renewal date.

What happens if I don't renew my registration each year?

Failure to pay the annual retention fee means you will be removed from the Register and will not be able to use your professional title. To restore your position on the Register, you must apply for restoration and pay the restoration fee and the annual retention fee.

You can however apply to take your name off the Register, for example, if you take a leave of absence from employment. This is regarded as a voluntary removal from the Register and you should alert CORU in advance. Further detail on voluntary removal and restoration to the Register following voluntary removal is available on www.coru.ie.


In all cases you cannot work using your professional title unless you meet all necessary requirements for restoration to the Register.

Find out more?

More information is available on www.coru.ie.

If you have any questions you can call 01 2933160 or email registration@coru.ie.

This Booklet contains general information. It is not advice on any particular matter. You should not act or refrain from acting on the basis of any material contained in this Booklet, without seeking further appropriate advice as necessary.



CORU, 13-15 The Mall, Beacon Court, Bracken Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18.

T: 01 2933160 **F:** 01 2933170 **E:** info@coru.ie

www.coru.ie