

LDS Candidate Communications – Summer 2025

Changes to the LDS Examination

Introduction

The General Dental Council requires all education and assessment providers to align its assessments to its new *Safe Practitioner Framework* for all undergraduate courses beginning from [September 2025](#).

In order to meet with this requirement, from **Spring 2026**, the Licence in Dental Surgery will transition from assessing the learning outcomes set out in *Preparing for Practice* to assessing the learning outcomes set out in the *Safe Practitioner Framework*. The structure and format of the LDS Part 2 will also change.

How is the Part 2 changing?

As part of this transition, the structure of the LDS Part 2 will change, to ensure that it can best assess the new *Safe Practitioner Framework* outcomes.

This change will provide:

- Clearer delineation between the assessment aims of the two components that make up the Part 2
- Greater clarity for candidates about what exactly is being assessed by each component
- Efficient and effective coverage of the *Safe Practitioner Framework* learning outcomes.

The Part 2 will continue to have a 2-part structure, but this will be made up of the following elements:

- A 12-station OSCE assessing communication and patient-facing clinical skills
- A 6-case Structured Clinical Reasoning examination assessing diagnosis and treatment planning

The new Structured Clinical Reasoning examination will replace the current Unseen Case Examination and will be assessed through direct candidate and examiner interaction. This will replace the four patient-facing unseen cases that are currently assessed through examiner observation.

This new structure separates the assessment aims of the Part 2 into two broad categories:

- skills that are best assessed observing candidates in a patient-facing scenario
- skills that are best assessed through a 1-1 interaction with an examiner.

The former will be assessed in the OSCE, with the latter being assessed in the new Structured Clinical Reasoning Case exam.

This delineation will also allow the Part 2 to cover a wider range of skills and learning outcomes, particularly candidates' reasoning skills and those outcomes in *Safe Practitioner Framework* relating to 'Professionalism' and 'Self-management'.

What will the new Part 2 assess?

The following table summarises the assessment constructs of each of the new Part 2 elements:

Component	Format	Assessment aims
Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)	12 x 7 minute stations Each station involves a communication-based interaction with a simulated patient, observed by an examiner	'Communication and Clinical Skills' Applied clinical knowledge Clinical skills (radiograph interpretation, prescription writing, obtaining consent etc) Patient communication History taking Diagnosis Spoken medical emergency response Principles of safe practice
Structured Clinical Reasoning Cases (SCR)	6 x 20-minute cases Each case is structured as follows: • 10-minutes preparation time, for the candidate to review the case • 10-minutes structured clinical discussion on the case with the examiner	'Diagnosis & treatment planning' Selecting and interpreting investigations Diagnosis Treatment planning Clinical reasoning and judgement Peer communication Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of: • Oral health/population-based healthcare • Ethical and legal principles • Principles of safe practice

Candidates will continue to be required to pass both components of the examination at the same sitting in order to pass overall.

The OSCE and new SCR examinations will continue to be delivered in the same week on two separate days, with a 'rest day' for candidates in between to allow for calibration and set up of the exam circuit.

When will the change happen?

The first diet of this new format Part 2 examination, assessing the *Safe Practitioner Framework*, will be delivered in Summer 2026.

The first diets of the Part 1 and Part 3 assessing the *Safe Practitioner Framework* will take place for exams from May 2026 onwards. The structures of these examinations will not change.

Diets between now and these dates will be unaffected and will continue to follow the current format.

Will the Part 1 and Part 3 change?

The format of the Part 1 and Part 3 examinations will not change. However, the GDC require that these examination parts also be aligned to and assess the content in *Safe Practitioner Framework* and so candidates sitting these examinations from May / June 2026 should ensure that they are familiar with the content of the new curriculum.

What if I have already passed the current Part 1 or Part 2?

The new examinations will be open to first time candidates and those who have already passed one or more parts of the examinations, as well as to re-sit candidates.

This means if you have passed the current format Part 1 or Part 2 before Summer 2026, you will not be required to resit these to be able to progress to the new Part 2 or Part 3.

Further Information

We will release more information about the new Part 2 examination in January 2026, along with a guide on how to prepare.

We will also release a Blueprint of all three examination parts mapped to the *Safe Practitioner Framework*.

In the meantime, candidates aiming to sit examinations from May or June 2026 should ensure that they are familiar with the learning outcomes and behaviours required by *Safe Practitioner Framework*, which can be found on the [GDC's website](#).