

Interim Memorandum of understanding between the General Dental Council (GDC) and the members of the Joint Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry (JCSTD)

The purpose of the Memorandum

1. This Memorandum sets out the roles and responsibilities of each of the parties, replacing the Accord. It will be reviewed in light of the GDC's Strategic Review of Education and subject to further regular review, to take account of developments which may influence specialist training and listing in dentistry.
2. The parties to the Memorandum are represented in the JCSTD, which will continue to have a role in overseeing and co-ordinating the provision of specialist training in dentistry. The work of the JCSTD will ensure appropriate standards of patient care through promoting and encouraging complementary working of its members in supporting the GDC to regulate and quality assure specialist training in dentistry.

The dental specialties

3. The General Dental Council is the regulatory body of the dental profession in the United Kingdom and is responsible for protecting patients and the public interest. It has powers to set up lists of registered dentists who meet certain conditions and have the right to use a specialist title. The specialist lists indicate dentists who have met requirements for entry to the lists and have the right to call themselves a specialist in a particular specialty by virtue of their listing in that specialty.
4. At present, the GDC recognises the following specialties:
 - Oral surgery
 - Orthodontics
 - Paediatric dentistry
 - Endodontics
 - Periodontics
 - Prosthodontics
 - Restorative dentistry
 - Dental public health
 - Oral medicine
 - Oral microbiology
 - Oral and maxillofacial pathology
 - Dental and maxillofacial radiology
 - Special care dentistry
5. The lists indicate the registered dentists who are entitled to use a specialist title, but do not restrict the right of any dentist to practise in any particular field of dentistry or the right of any specialist to practise in other fields of dentistry.

Introduction

6. The GDC has reviewed the arrangements for training and listing of dental specialties and recommended that the existing arrangements between the GDC and the partners to the Accord be simplified with improved communication structures. The relationship the GDC wishes to have with the parties to this Memorandum is reproduced as Annex 1.
7. The JCSTD, with its constituent Specialist Advisory Committees (SACs), will continue to be advisory to the Surgical Royal Colleges through the Joint Meeting of Dental Faculties (JMDF) and to have roles and responsibilities in supporting specialist training in dentistry.
8. The SACs of the JCSTD will, through involvement in local quality management procedures, help to ensure consistency of arrangements for specialist training across the UK. Membership of the SACs makes provision for the involvement of Specialist Societies in the arrangements for specialist training in dentistry.
9. Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors are responsible for the quality management of specialist training programmes and posts, the appointment of trainees and the annual review of progress of trainees in training – currently the RITA (Record of In-training Assessment) process. In addition, Postgraduate Deaneries (the Deaneries) are responsible for ensuring that training programmes and posts are quality managed to agreed standards. As set out in Annex 1, the Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors make recommendations to the GDC for the award of a CCST (Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training).
10. Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors¹ have responsibilities for both dental workforce strategy and ensuring the delivery and quality management of dental training programmes within and between varied service environments in the context of complex commissioning and contractual arrangements.
11. The Dental Faculties, through their involvement with the JCSTD, will advise on the curricula and assessment for specialist training, will contribute to the quality assurance of specialist training, quality managed in deaneries and will advise the GDC on the assessment of applications for specialist listing.

Roles and responsibilities of the GDC

12. The GDC is responsible for:
 - a. Deciding suitability for specialist listing (including the award of CCST);
 - b. The quality assurance of specialist training and specialist listing; and in due course
 - c. Determining criteria for retention on the specialist lists, via revalidation.
13. In the framework for specialist training, the GDC will set principles for entry to specialist training as follows:

¹ Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors are integrated within the structures and functions of Strategic Health Authorities in England and in NHS Education for Scotland (NES). In Wales the Deanery is accountable to the Welsh Assembly Government and in Northern Ireland the Dean is part of the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency answerable to the Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

- Candidates will be eligible for consideration for entry into a specialist training programme if they:
 - are registered with the GDC; and
 - can demonstrate that they have the required, broad-based training, experience and knowledge to enter the training programme.
14. The GDC will develop flexibility in the recognition of previous training, experience and qualifications towards specialist training, in consultation with the parties to the Memorandum and others.
 15. The GDC will continue to seek the assistance of the parties to the Memorandum, whose respective roles will inform the development of curricula, and the coordination and quality management of training programmes so that the Council may continue to discharge its responsibilities outlined at paragraph 12.

Roles and responsibilities of the SDEB

16. The GDC has established the Specialist Dental Education Board (SDEB), reporting to the GDC Education Committee, to consider issues relating to the dental specialties and provide Education Committee with expert advice. The SDEB has no delegated decision-making authority, but will advise the Education Committee on the issues outlined below.
17. To fulfil its intended function, to include enhancing communications between the GDC and the parties to the Memorandum, while maintaining a clear distinction between the regulator and the providers, the SDEB will be responsible for:
 - a. developing a generic curriculum framework, to be used by the educational bodies in developing curricula for the individual specialties
 - b. approving the curriculum developed by the educational bodies, for each specialty
 - c. setting guidelines for the approval of training programmes and posts
 - d. establishing guidelines for the recognition of previous training, experience and qualifications towards the specialist training programme.
 - e. developing a framework for the assessment of applications for equivalence of non-UK specialist training; to be used by the educational bodies in undertaking the assessments
 - f. approving equivalence assessment of non-standard applications for specialist listing (assessment undertaken by the educational bodies)
 - g. considering all other matters relating to specialist training and listing within the GDC.
18. The GDC will seek advice from the SDEB to assure itself through external input, of the quality management and delivery of specialty training programmes by the postgraduate deaneries.

Roles and responsibilities of the members of the JCSTD

The Dental Faculties

19. The Dental Faculties, through their involvement in the JCSTD and the SACs, will continue to exercise a practical role in postgraduate education and training. This role will include:

- a. developing curricula, based on GDC requirements for training in the various dental specialties, and submitting curricula to the GDC for approval
 - b. liaison amongst the Dental Faculties, the Specialist Societies, the Dental Schools Council and the Postgraduate Dental Deans for the purpose of developing curricula for specialist training and related matters
 - c. devising appropriate assessments and examination regulations in the dental specialties
 - d. advising the GDC on applications for specialist listing based on claimed equivalence in accordance with the GDC guidelines
 - e. making recommendations to the GDC for the determination of entry qualifications
 - f. making recommendations to the GDC on the length and quality of training
 - g. making recommendation to the GDC on the recognition of previous training towards the specialist training programme.
20. All these activities would be carried out by the Dental Faculties under the authority of the parent College Councils and their Charters and with their partners through the JCSTD. The input of the Royal College of Radiologists and the Royal College of Pathologists with regard to the Additional Dental Specialties will continue to be recognised.

The universities

21. The universities – the dental authorities represented on the JCSTD through the Dental Schools Council (DSC) will
- a. develop curricula and examination regulations for the award of postgraduate degrees and university diplomas in the dental specialties, where appropriate contributing to the award of CCSTs
 - b. quality manage postgraduate degrees and diplomas through processes for academic quality assurance
 - c. provide advice, through the JCSTD on the specialist training of clinical academics in dentistry and the award of CCSTs to such individuals, together with advice on academic elements of training programmes in the specialties

The Specialist Advisory Committees

22. The SACs of the JCSTD, which should continue to include members from the Specialist Societies, will:
- a. be the focus and location for the aspects of the work of the Dental Faculties described in paragraph 19
 - b. keep a national register of trainees, including self-financed trainees and sponsored trainees. The register will include information on the trainees start and anticipated completion dates and progress through training
 - c. in conjunction with COPDEND, collate and analyse information from an annual survey of trainees. The results will be reported through the JCSTD;
 - d. be available to the GDC and the other parties to this memorandum to advise on practical aspects of specialist training
 - e. alert the GDC and the other parties to this memorandum to trends and important changes in the practice of the respective dental specialist

- f. be available to the GDC to advise, in partnership with the Dental Faculties on matters pertaining to prior training and learning and equivalence for the purpose of mediated entry or accredited prior learning for the specialist lists
 - g. be available to the Deaneries to advise on matters pertaining to prior training and learning in relation to the duration of specialist training
23. The constitutions of the SACs will be the subject of regular review to ensure that the membership of each committee is fit for purpose.
24. The Specialist Societies will continue to contribute to the provision of advice on the distinct specialties, and the further development of specialist training through the Societies' representation on the SACs of the JCSTD.

Roles and responsibilities of the Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors

25. The GDC has a separate Memorandum of Understanding with the Committee of Postgraduate Deans and Directors (UK) (COPDEND).
26. Through COPDEND, the Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors will be represented on the JCSTD. Individual Deans will have responsibility for the:
- a. approval and quality management of postgraduate training programmes in the dental specialties
 - b. quality management of specialist training programmes, according to GDC requirements, and with external input
 - c. appointment of trainers, trainees and training programme directors;
 - d. conducting of assessments
 - e. recommendation of the award of CCSTs to the GDC
27. Concerning self-financing and other non-NHS funded specialty training programmes aimed at the award of a CCST, the Postgraduate Deaneries will support the educational providers, with whom the trainees are contracted, in respect of appointments, programme provision, quality management and assessments to ensure commonality of standards required for the award of CCSTs.

Annex 1: Arrangements between the GDC and the partners to the Memorandum*

GDC Specialist Dental Education Board

- Reports to the GDC Education Committee
- Will develop a generic curricula framework for specialist training
- Will approve individual curricula for each specialty (proposed by the Faculties)
- Will establish Dental guidelines for the recognition of previous training, experience and qualifications
- Will set the framework for assessment of equivalence of non-UK specialist training and approve outcomes of such assessments by the Dental Faculties
- Will set guidelines for approval of specialist training posts

The Educational Bodies

- Will be responsible for developing specialty specific curricula advising on assessment requirements and for making recommendations on the recognition of previous training, experience and qualification (by collaboration between the Dental Faculties, the specialist societies, the DSC and the postgraduate dental deans)
- Will undertake assessment of equivalence applications for non-UK specialist training
- Will monitor educational standards and delivery of programmes in collaboration with deaneries
- Will provide expert advice and support on specialties

Postgraduate Dental Deans

- Will approve programmes with external advice
- Will be responsible for the management of specialist training programmes
- Will be responsible for quality managing programmes according to GDC guidelines
- Will appoint trainees
- Will conduct assessments of specialist trainees
- Will recommend CCST to the GDC
- Will work with providers of non-NHS funded speciality training programmes to ensure commonality of standards

* Based on Annex D of the GDC's Specialist Lists Review Group Report