

**The Royal College of Surgeons of England
Faculty of Dental Surgery**

**Guidelines for appointment to Hospital Practitioner Grade
in the dentally based specialties**

1. INTRODUCTION

Appointments to this grade were made in a number of specialties and the Faculty was invited to nominate assessors to serve on advisory appointments committees. Assessors acting on behalf of the Faculty for Hospital Practitioner appointments were generally from within the Region/Deanery concerned but from a different HA/Trust from that in which the appointment was being made.

Since the introduction of the Staff Grade and with significant changes in the contractual terms and conditions of service for general medical and general dental practitioners there have been progressively fewer new appointments to the Hospital Practitioner grade. Concurrently there have been changes in the nature of Clinical Assistant contracts (see 2.3 below).

The following advice is issued for the guidance of those who may still be called upon to act on behalf of the Faculty.

2. THE POST

2.1 Planning for the post

The assessor should be satisfied that appropriate consultations have taken place to ensure that the post is suitable for the Hospital Practitioner Grade, as well as taking account of the relevance to the duties of the post of the applicants' training and experience. The assessor must also be satisfied that the holder of the post will not be performing duties which carry consultant responsibilities in relation to either training or patient-care. In particular:

- should the post more appropriately form part of a consultant's duties? Liaison with LMWAG would be appropriate.
- is there a potential adverse effect on the training and education for trainee staff working in the unit?
- Is there a specifically named consultant to whom the appointee would be responsible and is there planned provision for this in each case where patients are being treated.

2.2 Training and qualifications of applicants

Applicants should be Principals in general dental practice [Associates as well as Principals come within the definition of principals in general dental practice to whom the grade is open as described in HSC(IS) 179 Paragraph 6] who have been fully registered for at least 4 years. The regulations for the grade in *HC(79)16* state that they should be able to demonstrate:

- *at least 2 years' whole-time hospital experience in a specialty or specialties appropriate to the Hospital Practitioner appointment in question, or*
- *comparable experience in a part-time hospital appointment or appointments (preferably gained recently over not more than 5 consecutive years), or*
- *any combination of appropriate whole-time and part-time experience (preferably gained recently over a period of not more than 5 consecutive years), which provides comparable experience to 2 years' whole-time, or*
- *that they hold an appropriate specialist diploma and have had experience as a part-time Clinical Assistant (or general dental practitioner/dental officer under paragraph 107 of the Terms and Conditions of Service of Hospital Medical and Dental Staff) over a total period of 5 years appropriate to the appointment in question.*

Applicants must be well experienced in the particular techniques which they will be required to perform. It is recommended that they hold an FDS/FFD or MFDS/MFD and/or appropriate specialist diploma or degree. This should be mandatory where there is a training commitment. Evidence of a record of adequate Continuing Professional Education should also be provided.

2.3 Relationship with appointments of Clinical Assistant

Clinical Assistants are part-time practitioners with contracts based on NHDs equivalent to 3.5 hours worked flexibly. Since 1988 the maximum number of NHDs for which a clinical assistant could be contracted is 5 (ie 17 hours) unless the practitioner is an unrestricted principal (or associate in the general dental services) in general practice in which case the maximum is 9. Prior to November 1988 the maximum number of NHDs was 9 and those already in post on 31 January 1989 could continue on the same terms for the duration of the post.

There is no security of tenure for clinical assistants under national agreements although some protection is offered by employment legislation.

Clinical assistants are all paid at the same rate for each NHD for which they are contracted; there is no incremental scale.

3. APPOINTMENT

The Faculty feels strongly that each applicant for a post of Hospital Practitioner, whether applying for a new post or for regrading, must go through recognised appointment committee procedures.

Posts were formerly approved on the advice of a Regional Manpower Committee however it is now open to employing authorities to make appointments according to the service requirements of the individual Trust. The views of the LMWAG (if active) and in particular the representative of the dental specialties may be sought. In general posts are advertised unless special dispensation has been granted by the DH. Applicants are selected by an advisory appointments committee the constitution being laid down in HC(79)16/1979(PCS)20

Appointments are not fixed term and are salaried. An appointment may be held until retirement or until the practitioner ceases to be a principal in general practice. Those hospital practitioners who derive their greatest source of NHS income from their work as a hospital practitioner retain the right to appeal to the Secretary of State against dismissal under para 190 of the TCS.

Contracts are based on NHDs defined as equivalent to 3.5 hours flexibly worked. Hospital Practitioners may be contracted to a maximum of 5 NHDs. They are responsible to a named consultant and cannot have independent charge of hospital beds.

The terms of tenure are the same as for consultants.

It will be the duty of the Faculty Assessor to ensure that these criteria are observed in the planning for such posts and at the advisory appointments committee. In any case in which the Assessor feels that an unsuitable appointment is being proposed he should register his dissent and should contact the Dean of the Faculty as soon as possible.

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