



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE ADMISSION OF DENTAL STUDENTS

- 1. Selection for Dental School implies selection for the dental profession.** A dental degree entitles the new graduate to register with the General Dental Council (GDC) provided their fitness to practise is not impaired. Consequently there is a need to select those with appropriate attributes for training and entry into the profession, and to consider professionalism and fitness to practise issues when selecting students.
- 2. The aim of the admissions procedure is to select those with the greatest aptitude for dental training from those with high academic ability.** Candidates are expected to have a high level of academic attainment however this does not necessarily indicate that a student is suited to a career in dentistry. Understanding science is core to the understanding of dentistry, but dental schools generally encourage diversity in the subjects offered by applicants and will publish the range of acceptable subjects together with the typical offers that will be made. Dental Schools will also publish details of any admissions test(s) applicants are required to take. Dental Schools' admissions policies will take account of the personal attributes and academic abilities needed in a dentist as set out in *Standards for Dental Professionals*<sup>1</sup> and the capacity to achieve the outcomes set out in *Preparing for Practice Dental Team Learning Outcomes For Registration*<sup>2</sup>.
- 3. The practice of dentistry requires the highest standards of professional and personal conduct.** Where significant concerns exist regarding applicants' behaviour or probity it is in the interests of such students and of the public that they should not be admitted. Applicants should be made aware that dental students have certain additional responsibilities to other students outlined in *Student Fitness to Practise*<sup>3</sup>, and because of this, different standards of professional behaviour are expected of them.
- 4. Applicants are required to pass a number of checks prior to enrolment.** Dental schools will inform candidates of the purpose, implications and timing of these checks. Applicants are required to undergo an enhanced criminal records check prior to enrolment, which will identify spent and unspent convictions, cautions, admonishments (Scotland), reprimands and warnings. In addition, dental schools will also ask applicants to make a positive declaration as early as possible, so that the individual circumstances may be considered in a timely fashion. Not all convictions will result in being barred from the profession.
- 5. Failure to declare information that has a material influence on a student's fitness to practise may lead to termination of their dental course.** Honesty and integrity are considered to be essential attributes for the practising dentist and by extension the dental student. If it were to come to light that a student failed to declare something relevant to their fitness to practise as a dentist it could indicate a lack of honesty and integrity.
- 6. The practice of dentistry requires the highest standards of professional competence.** Dental students are expected to demonstrate **all** outcomes required by the GDC before they graduate<sup>2</sup>. An impairment or health condition may make it impossible for a student to meet the outcomes required by the GDC at the point of graduation. However, in most cases health conditions and disabilities will not be a bar to becoming a dentist, as reasonable adjustments can be made to the method of learning and the assessment by which the student demonstrates the required outcomes. Health matters will be considered separately from the selection process, and may be informed by an occupational health or equivalent assessment with advice from the relevant university disability support service. This process would be run in parallel with the general admissions decision-making process. Applicants should declare a history of any physical or mental disorder. Individual circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice from dental schools as early as possible to facilitate timely consideration.

7. ***The primary duty of care is to patients.*** Dental Schools and dental students have a duty of care to patients. As all dental students will carry out exposure-prone procedures (EPPs) as part of their training, they must be free from infection with blood-borne viruses (BBVs). As part of their admission on to a dental course, they will need to demonstrate satisfactory levels of immunity. Each Dental School has their own procedures for achieving this. The guidance: *Medical and dental students: Health Clearance for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV and Tuberculosis*<sup>4</sup> provides more detail on the Dental Schools' and dental students' responsibilities in relation to health clearance.
8. ***Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of what a career in dentistry involves and their understanding of, and suitability for, a caring profession.*** Applicants may draw on relevant work experience and on their research into a career in dentistry to demonstrate this understanding. Some Dental Schools may require work experience as part of their admission process.
9. ***Dental Schools have agreed that the selection process for dental students will be transparent, involving procedures that respect obligations under relevant diversity and equality legislation.*** Dental Schools will make available to prospective applicants details of their admissions policies and explanations of the admissions process via their websites and the Entry Profiles on the UCAS Course Search website. Dental Schools welcome diversity among their applicants. Dental Schools will engage with admissions practices and other activities, which support widening access to the dental profession.

February 2012

---

<sup>1</sup> Standards for Dental Professionals (May 2005) General Dental Council

<sup>2</sup> Preparing for practice. Dental team learning outcomes for registration (2011) General Dental Council

<sup>3</sup> Student Fitness to Practise (April 2010) General Dental Council

<sup>4</sup> Medical and Dental Students: Health Clearance for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV and Tuberculosis (2008) Medical Schools Council, Council of Heads and Deans of Dental Schools, Association of UK University Hospitals and Higher Education Occupational Physicians Group