

## FAQs for Final Year Dental and DCP Students (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020)

### These FAQs:

- Have been prepared for students in the final year of a UK programme (degree or other award) that will allow eligibility for General Dental Council (GDC) registration as a Dentist or a DCP (such as a Dental Therapist).
- Are general comments and your own School will be able to confirm programme specific details.
- May be subject to change, particularly if further restrictions are imposed, as the impact of COVID-19 is re-evaluated with time.

### **1. Who is working together to ensure fairness to students and maintenance of standards in the current pandemic?**

- Key UK stakeholders have come together to share their expertise and experiences to maintain standards and fairness to students. These stakeholders include:
  - The GDC: the regulator who sets the standards and protects the public.
  - Dental Schools Council (DSC): this brings together those Dental Schools responsible for programmes leading to GDC registration.
  - UK Committee of Postgraduate Dental Deans & Directors (COPDEND): this brings together the Postgraduate Deans/Directors who are responsible for training posts after GDC registration.
- The key stakeholders have issued a joint statement:
  - [Joint statement on arrangements for dental and dental care professional students and recent graduates, while restrictions are in place to control the spread of COVID-19.](#)
- Each School is also governed by the regulations (requirements and standards) set by its own University.
- The cooperative working of the three stakeholders above is of benefit to all students, irrespective of whether they go on to work in the UK & Northern Ireland, or elsewhere in the world.

### **2. The joint statement contains the following sentence: “Therefore, students will need to have met all of the learning outcomes for their chosen dental profession.”**

#### **Why is this sentence in bold?**

- The sentence is in bold type because it is important.
- The GDC sets the standards that need to be met by anyone studying in the UK to become a Dentist or Dental Care Professional (DCP).
- The GDC has processes to ensure that students in all the UK Schools are meeting these standards before successful conclusion of each student’s programme.

**3. Are all final year students going to automatically finish their programmes and then immediately be eligible to go on the GDC Register?**

- No. Each School has processes in place to decide whether each student is ready or not to complete their programme successfully as a result of attaining all the learning outcomes, as laid out by the GDC, and completing their 'Finals' examinations.

**4. How does a School decide if I am ready to sit 'Finals'?**

- Each School has its own processes that take account of a wide range of information gathered over the students' time in the programme; this informs a School-based decision about whether each student can progress to 'Finals' or not.

**5. Does the early end to student clinics mean that I am not ready to sit 'Finals' examinations?**

- For the majority of students, the early end to delivering clinical care will not affect their progression to 'Finals' examinations. This reflects the wide range of information a School considers.
- On the balance of all the information available, the established processes in some Schools may lead to a decision that a student is not yet ready for 'Finals'. For Schools with this approach, these decisions are made every year (i.e. when there is no pandemic). The number of students who require additional development before sitting 'Finals' is typically very small and is not expected to be particularly different this year.

**6. Because my final year is finishing in a different way than planned, will my qualification be as good as those normally awarded?**

- Yes. The standards you will have to reach to be a 'safe beginner' will be the same as those required in previous years by your University and for registration by the GDC.

**7. Will there be 'Finals' assessments/examinations before the end of my programme?**

- Each School will be delivering any required Finals assessments / examinations deemed necessary for each of its programmes.

**8. Will 'Finals' be different from normal?**

- Yes. The current public health situation means that 'Finals' has to run differently.
- Although 'Finals' will be different, these assessments retain the same purpose as before to demonstrate that the GDC learning outcomes have been met.

**9. Can 'Finals' be run differently and still be as good as normal?**

- Yes. It is the demonstration that the GDC learning outcomes have been met for your programme that is the key point; there are different ways of collecting all the required evidence across each programme.

**10. Can 'Finals' be run remotely (on-line)?**

- Yes. There are ways to run assessments 'on-line' and many education providers already do this.
- On-line 'Finals' examinations will be widely used in the next few months across many programmes and not just those linked to Dentistry.
- On-line 'Finals' mean that students can expect not to have to travel back to their University to sit assessments.

**11. When will I know how 'Finals' will run in my School?**

- Your School will announce this.
- It is likely that there will be a staged release of information by your School as it works through the details with all the key stakeholders (e.g. University, external examiners and GDC).
- Patience will be required. All Schools are very aware of the unsettling nature of this change, but all changes being planned are with consideration of fairness to students and maintenance of standards.

**12. What happens if I am unable to sit 'Finals' because of my own situation?**

- Schools are very aware that there are many reasons why a student may not be able to sit 'Finals' at the planned time. Examples might include:
  - Illness;
  - Caring for others;
  - Internet problems.
- Schools are considering options for how these challenges may be managed so that students can be given a fair chance, whilst recognising that there will be limitations within the current disruptive context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Students should keep their School informed of any issues that might affect their ability to fairly sit the assessments.

**13. When I move into my first job, how will it be clear what are my areas for further professional development?**

- All new registrants should have insight into areas of clinical practise that they need to develop.
- To add to the self-reflection of the individual new registrant, a summary portfolio to share with senior colleagues at the first place of work will support the new registrant to take forward their professional development in a focused way. The detail included can be expected to vary depending on the situation of each individual.

**For further information:**

- If there are any general points that will benefit from clarification, then please get in touch via: [admin@dentschoolscouncil.ac.uk](mailto:admin@dentschoolscouncil.ac.uk)
- For School-specific points, contact your School directly.

***Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020***