

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATION

Volunteering arrangements for dental and dental care professional students

In the current public health crisis, dental and dental care professional students are keen to help their colleagues working in the NHS and social care, alongside their local communities. The Dental Schools Council (DSC), with input from COPDEND and the General Dental Council (GDC), initially planned to issue guidance for those students wishing to volunteer in the NHS. However, feedback from the profession suggests that there is not an urgent need for volunteers in clinical settings. As such, this document addresses how students can volunteer in non-clinical settings.

It is important to note that this guidance may not apply to all students. Local pressures differ in different parts of the country and some students may be required to volunteer in the NHS on a paid basis. For example, students who are military reservists may be required to volunteer. Students should discuss these issues with their dental school, in the first instance. For those dental and DCP students who are volunteering in clinical settings, the Medical Schools Council has provided more detailed guidance for these volunteers.

Broad principles

1. Dental students and dental care professional students' first responsibility is to their continuing education. They must not jeopardise their readiness to qualify in the future by taking on too many additional responsibilities. Students should negotiate their hours of volunteering based on the principle that their continuing education is to be their first priority.
2. DSC advise that students should volunteer no more than 16 hours per week and no more than 8 hours per day. Student volunteer night shifts should be avoided. National rules around rest periods and breaks should be made clear to volunteers. All volunteering roles should be time-limited, with the length of commitment made clear in advance of signing up.
3. Host organisations should be supportive to student volunteers and must not permit them to undertake tasks beyond their competence.
4. Host organisations must ensure that volunteers have appropriate induction, training and supervision in their volunteer role, including training in the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where necessary.
5. Dental schools will endeavour to maintain lists of all students volunteering and will support their wellbeing.
6. Dental and dental care professional students must not undertake dental care outside of their supervised course.
7. Volunteering is optional and will not negatively affect students who do not wish to take part. Students should be able to leave volunteering roles if they wish. If this is the case, they should provide an agreed period of notice.
8. Before volunteering, all students must request permission and seek approval from their parent dental school to do so.

Advice for graduates

1. Once qualified graduates are free to take up paid employment or volunteer, without consulting their dental school or the postgraduate deanery area in which they have been placed.
2. The London Postgraduate Dental Deanery runs a summer school and therefore if you are going to a placement in London this should be included in your plans.

Sources of support and advice

1. The Medical Schools Council has issued [guidance](#) for those volunteering in clinical settings within the NHS.
2. [Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak](#). This document was written by WHO to offer guidance to different population groups relating to their psychosocial needs.
3. Advice on [managing your mental health](#) from Student Minds.
4. Advice on [coronavirus and your wellbeing](#) from the mental health charity MIND.
5. Advice on [dealing with bereavement and grief](#) from Cruse Bereavement Care.