

Guide to completing your period of adaptation

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General Guidance

You will be enrolled on the Register for the duration of your period of adaptation as a candidate for full registration. During this time, you are only entitled to practise your profession under the mentorship of an approved mentor, and only within an approved practice.

While undergoing your period of adaptation, you will be clinically responsible for the patients you treat. It is important to have patient safety at the forefront of your practise and you must only act within your scope of competence. This means that you will be obliged to comply with the Dental Council's Codes of Practice and guidance for the duration of your registration.

We will provide you with hard copies of all Dental Council guidance upon registration. We advise that you read through all this information carefully.

You are specifically asked to note the following:

Code of Practice regarding Professional Behaviour and Ethical Conduct (March 2022)

This code sets out the standards expected of you, as a registered dental professional in Ireland, regarding your engagements with your patients, your colleagues, and the general public. You are specifically asked to note Sections 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 of this code which state:

Your competence

4.5 *You must only undertake treatments that you are competent to complete safely and to a satisfactory standard.*

4.6 *If you do not have the necessary skills to carry out a recommended treatment, you should refer the patient to another dental healthcare professional who does.*

Treatment must be completed

4.7 *If you accept a patient for treatment, you must complete the agreed course of treatment safely and to a satisfactory standard.*

Code of Practice regarding Infection Prevention and Control (2015)

This sets out the standards of infection prevention and control that apply in general dental practise in Ireland. You are specifically asked to note that most dental practices require their staff to be vaccinated against a number of diseases, including COVID-19.

Section 1

1.3.2.1 Immune Status

Any employer whose employees are in contact with, or are at risk of being exposed to, a biological agent as a result of their work, must complete a risk assessment to determine which, if any, vaccinations are recommended for workers.⁴ The outcomes of such risk assessments may impose further obligations on employers such as, for example, arranging for relevant vaccinations for workers. It is recommended that staff know their immune status in relation to diseases they may be occupationally exposed to. Such diseases include:

- *Hepatitis B*
- *Tuberculosis (TB)*
- *Varicella (chickenpox)*

- *Influenza*
- *Measles*
- *Mumps*
- *Rubella*

Occupational exposure to blood or body fluids presents the risk of acquiring Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV) or HIV. All staff who are at risk through contact with blood and/or body fluids should be immunised against HBV, unless immunity has been previously established or vaccination is contraindicated. There is, at present, no vaccine to prevent HCV or HIV.

Finding a mentor

You are responsible for finding a dentist to mentor your practise. This is to allow you find a mentor who is located near to where you live.

You should review the 'guidance for mentors' for an idea of the types of practices you should approach when seeking out a mentor.

It is your responsibility to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Dental Council that you have the required competencies upon completion of your period of adaptation.

Your mentor is not your teacher. Their role is to provide you with a supportive practice environment to allow you develop your practise as a dentist and to demonstrate the required competencies.

You may be asked to provide feedback to the Dental Council on your experiences with your mentoring dentist.

During your period of adaptation

You should attempt to gain your required competences as soon as you begin your period of adaptation.

If you are having a difficulty demonstrating a required competency you should bring this to the attention of the Dental Council at an early opportunity.

Your registration will end if you do not complete your period of adaptation or if you do not demonstrate the identified competencies over the duration your period of adaptation, including any additional time-extensions granted

Contract of Engagement

While you are registered for the duration of your period of adaption you are entitled to carry out your full scope of practise in line with your competencies.

You are only entitled to work under the mentorship of your approved mentor and only in your approved practice for the duration of your period of adaptation.

Your mentor must offer to provide you with a contract of engagement that will compensate you appropriately and treat you fairly and equitably during your period of adaptation.

Fees

You are not required to pay the dental council fees to retain your name on the Register while you undergo your period of adaptation.

When you receive full registration, you will be obliged to pay an annual retention fee thereafter. Up-to-date information on fees can always be found on our website.

Insurance

You are responsible for ensuring that you have the proper authorisation to work in Ireland and that you are appropriately indemnified or insured before you begin treating patients. Your mentoring dentist can ask you to produce this documentation.

You are entitled to practise unsupervised during your period of adaptation, however, you are restricted to working in your approved practice until the requirements of your period of adaptation have been met.

During your period of adaptation, you are enrolled in the Register and, therefore, you will have the same ethical and clinical responsibilities as all other registered dentists.

Proving your English language competency

If you have received a period of adaptation to prove your English language competency you are required to achieve the required scores in a Dental Council approved English language exam.

Approved courses

OET: Occupational English Test

You must complete the OET for dentistry test.

<https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/healthcare-professions/dentistry/>

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

You must complete the academic IELTS test.

<https://www.ielts.org/about-ielts/ielts-test-types>

Required scores

Modules	OET (for Dentistry)	IELTS (Academic)
Listening	Minimum score of B	Minimum score of 7.0
Reading	Minimum score of B	Minimum score of 7.0
Writing	Minimum score of B	Minimum score of 7.0
Speaking	Minimum score of B	Minimum score of 7.0

Submitting evidence of your language competency

Once you have received the required scores, you must submit your original certificate to the Dental Council. You must submit one certificate by post. You must achieve all of the required scores in one sitting of an exam.

IELTS and OET certificates are verified by the registration department for their authenticity. You should submit your certificate at least 4 weeks before the end date of your period of adaptation.

Submitting an OET Certificate?

You will need to contact OET to authorise the verification of your results. The Dental Council will verify your certificate when it is received by post.

Didn't achieve the required scores on time?

If you have not achieved the required scores in an approved exam 4 weeks before your period of adaptation ends; you will need to contact the registration department by email.

You should include in your email copies of your attempts at sitting an exam or set out specific reasons as to why you could not complete an exam within the time provided to you.

The Dental Council will assess this information and make a decision to either

a) End your period of adaptation

If the Dental Council feel that you have not made a reasonable effort to complete an English language exam in order to obtain full registration then your period of adaptation will end and you will not be eligible for registration.

b) Provide you with an extension to your period of adaptation

If the Dental Council feel that you have made a reasonable effort to complete an English language exam, they may extend your period of adaptation up to six months. This additional time is provided for you to continue your attempts at proving your English language competency.

Proving your Professional Practise

If you have received a period of adaptation for professional practise, this means that the Dental Council have recognised your education and training for the purpose of registration, and you have met all the registration requirements but there is a concern over the duration of your professional practise experience.

Professional practise is unsupervised work experience gained after obtaining your primary qualification. If you are asked to complete this requirement over the course of your period of adaptation, it will generally be for one of the following reasons:

1. You qualified recently and have little or no professional practise experience
2. You have been out-of-practise for a significant amount of time
3. The Dental Council feel that you will benefit from a duration of mentorship to revisit your primary skills in dentistry

During this time, you are expected to familiarise yourself with the scope of practise for general dentists in Ireland. You are entitled to perform all aspects of your scope of practise.

Your mentor will be required to complete a character reference form (Appendix A). You will be required to complete a self-assessment form (Appendix B) during your period of adaptation.

Appendix A should not be seen as a list of treatments that you must perform over your period of adaptation. Instead, you should seek to explore each title and provide an explanation and/or comments as to your review of this area - specific to treatment in Ireland.

This can include:

1. details on treatments you have provided over the duration of your period of adaptation
2. an explanation of the similarities or differences you've found when comparing the treatment provided in Ireland to the treatment provided where you qualified
3. knowledge you have gained through observing another dental professional in Ireland
4. knowledge you have gained through professional reading or continued professional development
5. The findings from research you performed, such as reviewing professional literature or through discussion with your mentor

The self-assessment form will guide you through a time of reflection while practicing in a supportive mentored environment. You must ensure that you understand and are comfortable with all aspects of general dentistry in Ireland.

As a dental care professional, you must take responsibility over your continued professional development and your professional behaviour throughout your career.

The Dental Council feel that your engagement with this process will benefit you, not only at the beginning, but throughout your professional career in Ireland.

Submitting evidence of your professional practise

You are required to complete a self-assessment form (Appendix B) throughout your period of adaptation.

You must:

- 1) complete your self-assessment form (Appendix B) digitally so that it is easily read
- 2) print this document out when completed
- 3) sign this information off as being true and accurate
- 4) have your mentor sign your completed form
- 5) email the dental council a copy at info@dentalcouncil.ie
- 6) post the original signed document into the Dental Council offices

Your mentor is required to sign this self-assessment form off. Their signature is only required to state that they have read the information therein and to the best of their knowledge it is true and accurate.

In addition your mentor must complete the character reference form (Appendix A) and submit this to the dental council by post.

You should submit this evidence 4 weeks prior to your period of adaptation end date.

The Dental Council will review the details of your self-assessment and the character reference completed by your mentor and a decision will be made to either:

- a) **Provide you with full-registration**
If the Dental Council feel that you have made a reasonable effort throughout the course of your period of adaptation and there are no issues with regard to your professional behaviour, then you will receive full registration.
- b) **End your period of adaptation**
If the Dental Council feel that you have not made a reasonable effort to complete your self-assessment form and reflect on your primary dental skills, then your period of adaptation will end, and you will not be eligible for full registration.

Appendix A

Period of Adaptation Character Reference Form

This reference is to be completed by a candidate's approved mentor

Mentor's name	
Mentor's professional title	
Mentor's registration number	
Practice address	
Mentored dates	
Candidate's name	
Candidate's registration number	

I wish to confirm that I mentored the above candidate through the stated mentored dates. I further confirm that:

- The above-named candidate is of good character and, in my opinion, is fit to apply for full registration with the Dental Council
- The Dental Council should be aware of the following details related to the candidate's professional character:

Date:

Mentors signature:

Appendix B

A blank version of this form must be completed by the candidate for full registration, that has been placed on a period of adaptation for professional practice.

There is no specific word count that you must achieve but your explanations and comments under each heading should make it clear that you have reflected over each of these areas adequately.

The completion of this form is entirely your responsibility, and you should discuss this with any potential mentor before they agree to mentor you. Your mentor’s signature is only required to state that they have read the contents of your submission and to the best of their knowledge it is true and accurate.

Below you will see some examples of comments that we would expect to see in your submission.

To be completed by the Candidate
Candidate’s name: Candidate’s registration number: Mentor’s name: Mentor’s registration number:
Basic Life Support
Cross-Infection Control
Patient Assessment
Radiographic Technique and Interpretation
<p><i>Example: ‘The first case I assessed when I returned to practice was a young adult patient, who required an updated dental examination and bitewing radiographs. Having taken the bitewing radiographs, I noted a radiolucent area related to one of the teeth on the radiograph which I suspected was a carious lesion, but I was unsure. I asked my mentor to help me to review the radiograph and confirm my suspected diagnosis before the treatment plan was fully formulated for the patient. My mentor’s support and experience helped me to differentiate clearly between image artefact and dental pathology on the radiograph and following this I was confident in formulating a treatment plan for this patient.</i></p> <p><i>I didn’t notice a difference between the teachings here in Ireland and my own training regarding radiographic interpretation.’</i></p>

Diagnosing Oral Disease
Establishing and maintaining records
<p><i>Example: 'Following my first week of working under mentorship, I had a discussion with my mentor in relation to record keeping. My Mentor had agreed to review some of my clinical records for some of my patients and had noted that I hadn't documented the justification for some of the radiographs taken for patients following their clinical examination & radiograph. This was something I hadn't always recorded in my individual patient notes. My Mentor discussed with me the importance of legislation and European and Irish guidance which cover the use of ionising radiation in dentistry, which include the need to document justification for every individual patient exposure. As a result of this meeting, I was able to retrospectively document this for each patient. Following on from this I completed an online workshop on Dental Record Keeping from my Indemnity Provider to ensure that I was recording all relevant information. I also familiarised myself with the relevant legislation and guidance specific to Europe and radiation Ireland.'</i></p> <p>Dental Council information page: http://www.dentalcouncil.ie/g_ionisingradiation.php</p> <p>HIQA Guidance: https://www.hiqa.ie/sites/default/files/2020-09/A-guide-to-the-inspection-of-dental-services-providing-medical-exposure-to-IR_2.pdf</p>
Preparation of comprehensive treatment options
Local Anaesthesia
Prescription, dispensing and administering of medicinal products as part of dental treatment
Preventive Care
Periodontal Care

Operative Treatment
Endodontics
Tooth Whitening
Fixed Protheses
Removable Protheses
Implant Planning and Maintenance
Care of the Deciduous and Mixed Dentition
Orthodontic Diagnosis and Planning
Extraction of permanent and primary teeth
Oral Surgery

Write a Referral

Example: 'At the first visit the patient said the floor of their mouth was sore. They advised me that they drink three glasses of whiskey a day and smoke forty cigarettes. On examination I noted a white patch on the floor of the mouth, under the tongue. I wrote a letter of referral to the Oral Medicine unit with the relevant patient contact information, their history and clinical findings. An image of the floor of the mouth was included. I emphasised the urgency of the case and reinforced this with a phone call to the Oral Medicine Unit.'

Dublin Dental Hospital's Oral Medicine Unit:

<https://www.dentalthospital.ie/about/clinical-academic-divisions-and-hospital-departments/division-of-oral-and-maxillofacial-surgery-medicine-pathology-radiology/oral-medicine-unit>

I declare that I have taken time to reflect over the above areas of dentistry. I further declare that I completed this form and the information I have provided is true and accurate.

Candidate's signature:

I have read the information provided by the candidate, set out in this form. I have no reason to believe that the information herein is anything other than true and accurate.

Mentor's signature:

Date:

Version History

Version history	Publication/revision date	Title	Summary of changes
1.0	11 September 2022	Guide to completing your period of adaptation	
2.0	16 November 2022	Guide to completing your period of adaptation	Addition of professional practice section and update of insurance information