



National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Dental Care Professionals: Fitness to Practice
(SCQF level 6)

Unit code: HE3D 46

Superclass: PF

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Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit has been designed to introduce learners who wish to undertake a Dental Nursing or Dental Technology qualification to the key aspects of professional guidance and legislation that ensures their fitness to practice as a Dental Care Professional (DCP).

Learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of the specified professional standards and principles and be able to apply these to their own practice.

This Unit is appropriate for trainee Dental Care Professionals (DCPs).

Outcomes

- 1 Explain the range of legislation, regulation and professional guidance that ensures fitness to practice and appropriate and safe dental care for patients.
- 2 Explain areas of concern that may affect an individual's fitness to practice.
- 3 Describe how regulatory body guidance and legislation directly relates to the role of a DCP.

Credit points and level

1 National Unit credit at SCQF level 6: (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6)

National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the Unit

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, learners would normally be expected to have some knowledge, understanding and skills relating to human physiology. This could be demonstrated by learners attaining:

- ◆ Biology or related science at SCQF level 5
- ◆ *Problem Solving* at a minimum of SCQF level 4

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes for this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Outcome 1

Explain the range of legislation, regulation and professional guidance that ensures fitness to practice and appropriate and safe dental care for patients.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Explain the term 'fitness to practice'.
- (b) Explain the role of the General Dental Council (GDC) in ensuring fitness to practice.
- (c) Describe key aspects of current legislation, regulation and professional guidance that have a direct impact on dental care provision.
- (d) Identify how legislation, regulation and professional guidance ensures appropriate and safe dental care for patients.

Outcome 2

Explain areas of concern that may affect an individual's fitness to practice.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe criminal convictions or cautions that would affect fitness to practice.
- (b) Explain how drug and alcohol misuse could affect fitness to practice.
- (c) Describe the personal behaviours, including social media use, dishonesty and fraudulent activities that are unacceptable in terms of fitness to practice.
- (d) Describe an individual's obligations in terms of personal health including mental health issues.

Outcome 3

Describe how regulatory body guidance and legislation directly relates to the role of a DCP.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Outline how the regulatory body guidance and legislation informs the standards and behaviours of a DCP.
- (b) Describe the importance of ensuring that patient safety and care is maintained at all times.
- (c) Outline the process to be followed when raising a concern (duty of candour).

National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence Requirements for this Unit

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Outcome 1

Learners should:

- ◆ explain the term 'Fitness to Practice'.
- ◆ outline the remit of the GDC.
- ◆ identify the roles covered by the term 'Dental Care Professional'.
- ◆ list the areas of dental care directly relating to legislation and professional guidance.
- ◆ describe two key aspects of two pieces of current legislation and two pieces of professional guidance that ensure appropriate and safe patient dental care.

Outcome 2

Learners should identify:

- ◆ three criminal convictions or cautions which would affect fitness to practice.
- ◆ one reason drug and alcohol misuse could affect fitness to practice.
- ◆ one example of each of the following which could affect fitness to practice:
 - social media misuse
 - dishonest or fraudulent activity.
- ◆ three obligations a DCP has in terms of personal health including mental health issues.

Outcome 3

Learners should identify:

- ◆ three examples from DCP practice that directly complies with Regulatory Body Guidance.
- ◆ one example from DCP practice that directly complies with current legislation.
- ◆ one example from DCP practice that demonstrates how patient safety and care is maintained at all times.
- ◆ the process to be followed when raising a concern (duty of candour).



National Unit Support Notes

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Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Fitness to Practice is fundamental in all health care professions.

Outcome 1 covers the legislation and professional standards and guidance that ensures Dental Care Professionals are 'fit to practice'.

The **General Dental Council (GDC)** regulates dental care professionals in the United Kingdom. It keeps an up-to-date register of all qualified dentists and other dental care professionals such as: dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental nurses, dental technicians and clinical dental technicians. It was established in 1956 to set and maintain standards in UK dentistry, with the aims of protecting the general public from unqualified dental professionals.

The General Dental Council also has stated aims to promote confidence in dental professionals and to be at the forefront of health care regulation. The GDC is tasked with ensuring that all dental professionals maintain up to date knowledge, controlling the quality of dental education in the country, ensuring a proper quality of care is given to the patients, and helping any patient who has questions or complaints. It is meant to act as a bridge of communication between the government, public and the dental professionals.

The GDC has nine ethical principles of practice which inform the practice of DCPs.

- 1 Put patients' interests first
- 2 Communicate effectively with patients
- 3 Obtain valid consent
- 4 Maintain and protect patients' information
- 5 Have a clear and effective complaints procedure
- 6 Work with colleagues in a way that is in patients' best interests
- 7 Maintain, develop and work within your professional knowledge and skills
- 8 Raise concerns if patients are at risk
- 9 Make sure your personal behaviour maintains patients' confidence in you and the dental profession

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Standards for the Dental Team applies to:

- ◆ Dentists
- ◆ Dental Nurses
- ◆ Dental Hygienists
- ◆ Dental Therapists
- ◆ Orthodontic Therapists
- ◆ Dental Technicians
- ◆ Clinical Dental Technicians

The professional standards that underpin safe practice are:

- ◆ listen to your patients.
- ◆ treat every patient with dignity and respect at all times
- ◆ be honest and act with integrity.
- ◆ take a holistic and preventative approach to patient care which is appropriate to the individual patient.
- ◆ treat patients in a hygienic and safe environment.
- ◆ treat patients fairly, as individuals and without discrimination.
- ◆ put patients' interests before your own or those of any colleague, business or organisation.
- ◆ have appropriate arrangements in place for patients to seek compensation if they suffer harm
- ◆ find out about laws and regulations that affect your work and follow them.

Maintaining up to date knowledge is called Continued Professional Development (CPD) and is designed to ensure that individuals:

- ◆ provide good quality care based on current evidence and authoritative guidance.
- ◆ work within your knowledge, skills, professional competence and abilities.
- ◆ update and develop your professional knowledge and skills throughout your working life.

Current legislation and regulation can directly affect dental care provision, eg Patient Consent and Safeguarding, Health and Safety in the workplace, etc centres should expand on the examples provided where necessary.

- ◆ Data Protection Act 1998 underpins how patient data and information must be handled
- ◆ The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ensures the health and safety of everyone in a workplace — employees, patients, etc
- ◆ Equality Act 2010 informs practice Equality and Diversity policies
- ◆ COSHH Regulations 2002 is the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health and states general requirements on employers to protect employees and other persons from the **hazards of substances** used at work by **risk assessment**, control of exposure, health surveillance and incident planning. There are also duties on employees' to take care of their own exposure to hazardous substances.

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- ◆ RIDDOR is the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 — these cover the duties on employers, the self-employed and people in control of work premises (the Responsible Person) to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses).

Learners should be guided to recognise the connections between how published guidance, legislation and regulation inform fitness to practice and how this in turn ensures patient care and safety.

Outcome 2 is related to areas of concern which could affect fitness to practice. Learners should be encouraged to discuss situations and scenarios where these might occur outside working hours.

Criminal convictions or cautions that would affect fitness to practice include:

- ◆ Theft, including shoplifting
- ◆ Serious driving offences
- ◆ Financial fraud
- ◆ Possession of illegal substances
- ◆ Child abuse or any other abuse
- ◆ Child pornography
- ◆ Physical violence

The misuse of drugs and/or alcohol and how this could affect fitness to practice:

- ◆ Drink driving conviction
- ◆ Alcohol/drug consumption that affects clinical work or environment
- ◆ Dealing, possessing or misusing drugs even if there are no legal proceedings

Personal behaviours, dishonesty and fraudulent activities that are unacceptable in terms of fitness to practice:

- ◆ Assault
- ◆ Physical violence
- ◆ Bullying
- ◆ Abuse
- ◆ Cheating in exams or logbooks
- ◆ Passing off others' work as one's own
- ◆ Forging a supervisor's name on assessments
- ◆ Falsifying research
- ◆ Financial fraud
- ◆ Fraudulent CVs or other documents
- ◆ Signing in for other students at lectures
- ◆ Advertising as a registrant before you have qualified
- ◆ Failure to raise concerns about your own or others behaviour, health or work
- ◆ Breach of confidentiality

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- ◆ Failure to keep appropriate records
- ◆ Misuse of social media - posting information including photographs and videos which would bring you, colleagues and/or the profession into disrepute
- ◆ Misleading patients about their care or treatment
- ◆ Culpable involvement in a failure to obtain proper consent from a patient
- ◆ Failing to adhere to cross contamination/infection procedures
- ◆ Sexual harassment
- ◆ Inappropriate examinations or failure to keep appropriate boundaries in behaviour
- ◆ Persistent rudeness to patients, colleagues or others
- ◆ Unlawful discrimination
- ◆ Failure to co-operate with support advised if an issue is raised with your work or behaviour or student fitness to practice proceedings
- ◆ Uncommitted to work
- ◆ Neglect of administrative tasks
- ◆ Poor time management
- ◆ Non-attendance

Obligations in terms of personal health including mental health issues that can affect fitness to practice:

- ◆ Failure to seek medical attention or other support
- ◆ Refusal to follow medical advice or care plan including monitoring/reviews
- ◆ Failure to recognise limits and abilities

Outcome 3 allows learners to directly relate practice to the overarching guidance, regulation and legislation. If learners are working or in placement in a dental environment it would be beneficial to encourage them to relate the guidance, regulation and legislation to their own job role.

Aspects of practice include:

Patient management

- ◆ Treating all patients with equality, respect and dignity
- ◆ Explaining the impact of medical and psychological conditions in the patient
- ◆ Monitoring, supporting and reassuring patients through effective communication and behavioural techniques
- ◆ Advising patients on oral health maintenance
- ◆ Recognising the need for and making arrangements for follow up care as prescribed by the operator
- ◆ Describing the role of the dental nurse and other members of the dental team in the patient management process
- ◆ Always putting patient's interests first and acting to protect them
- ◆ Practicing with integrity and being trustworthy
- ◆ Respecting patient's dignity and choices
- ◆ Protecting the confidentiality of all patient information

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- ◆ Recognising and respecting every patient's perspective and expectation of their dental care and the role of the wider team taking into account issues relating to equality and diversity

Patient and public safety

- ◆ Using the working and clinical environment in a safe and efficient manner
- ◆ Performing effective decontamination and infection control procedures
- ◆ Complying with current best practice guidelines
- ◆ Recognising and managing medical emergencies

The process to be followed when raising a concern (duty of candour).

This means that dental care professionals must:

- ◆ tell the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family) when something has gone wrong.
- ◆ apologise to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family).
- ◆ offer an appropriate remedy or support to put matters right (if possible); and explain fully to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family) the short and long term effects of what has happened.

The inappropriate use of social media should be highlighted to learners, in particular:

- ◆ maintaining and protecting patients' information by not publishing any information which could identify them on social media without their explicit consent.
- ◆ maintaining appropriate boundaries in the relationships you have with patients.
- ◆ complying with any internet and social media policy set out by your employer.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

The learning and teaching of Dental Technology and Dental Nursing is most effective when concepts, principles, and theories are set in a relevant context, eg by making reference how these are applied in practice, perhaps through the use of case studies. Workplace experience is not mandatory but is strongly recommended.

The Outcomes and associated Performance Criteria may be delivered and assessed in any order. Centres must ensure however that evidence is gathered to meet all requirements set out in the Statement of Standards.

Learning and teaching approaches should include lectures, individual and group work reinforced by handouts, eg (recent media articles).

Student-centred practical exercises and the use of case studies and role-play should be incorporated when appropriate to reinforce teaching.

Learners should be signposted to relevant websites, the links provided are correct at the time of publication, centres should ensure that up to date and current information is provided to learners.

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The GDC
<http://www.gdc-uk.org/Pages/default.aspx>

GDC Standards for the Dental Team
<http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Standards/Pages/standards.aspx>

Health and Safety at Work Act
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/hswa.htm>

COSHH
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/>

RIDDOR
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/>

Data Protection Act
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

Evidence is required to demonstrate that the learner has achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria. The use of observation (checklist) is recommended if the learner is in the workplace/work placement.

Outcome 1 may be assessed by a report, produced under open-book conditions, covering all of the Evidence Requirements and designed to ensure the learner has developed their underpinning knowledge and understanding of the legislation, regulation and professional guidance that ensures fitness to practice.

Outcome 2 and 3 may be assessed together by a range of multiple-choice and short answer questions designed to cover the Evidence Requirements of these Outcomes and ensure that the learner can apply the legislation, regulation and professional guidance to practice.

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Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There will be opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills in *Communication* (Oral and Written skills) and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* (Accessing Information), *Working with Others* (Working Co-operatively with Others) and *Problem Solving* (Critical Thinking) throughout this Unit.

There may also be opportunities to develop broader transferable skills in time management and working to deadlines, interpersonal skills such as listening, teamwork and study skills and personal development, eg self-confidence and self-motivation.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for learners

Unit title: Dental Care Professional: Fitness to Practice

This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is for you if you are interested in accessing a training course for Dental Care Professionals (DCPs), eg Dental Nursing or Dental Technology. The Unit may also be of use to those seeking employment as an operator in a local decontamination Unit (LDU).

This Unit is essential for all trainee Dental Care Professionals, you will learn what Fitness to Practice is and how to practice this in the dental environment and what to do if you observe areas of concern.

Fitness to Practice is fundamental in all health care professions. Dental Care Professionals are governed by the General Dental Council (GDC) guidelines and standards.

In this Unit you will learn about the standards of conduct, performance and ethics expected of a DCP. As well as the professional guidance and ethics, you will also develop your knowledge and understanding of the legislation and regulations relevant to safe practice, eg Health and Safety and Data Protection.

There are three Outcomes to complete, by the end of the Unit you will be able to:

- 1 Explain the range of legislation, regulation and professional guidance that ensures fitness to practice and appropriate and safe dental care for patients.
- 2 Explain areas of concern that may affect an individual's fitness to practice.
- 3 Describe how regulatory body guidance and legislation directly relates to the role of a DCP.

There will be opportunity for group discussion, individual research and case studies. You will be asked to evaluate your own behaviours in terms of Fitness to Practice and identify areas of concern and their implications to patients and other Dental Care Professionals.

Assessment is varied, you may be asked to complete a report and answer a range of questions — if you are in a workplace or work-placement then you may also be assessed by observation of practice.

You will have opportunities to develop aspects of the Core Skills in *Communication* (Oral and Written skills) and *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* (Accessing Information), *Working with Others* (Working Co-operatively with Others) and *Problem Solving* (Critical Thinking) throughout this Unit.

There may also be opportunities to develop your broader transferable skills in time management and working to deadlines, interpersonal skills such as listening, teamwork and study skills and personal development, eg self-confidence and self-motivation.