

Compulsory continuing professional development (CPD) for dental care professionals (DCPs)

Consultation paper

Introduction

1. The purpose of CPD is to assure the public that all dental professionals on our registers are keeping up-to-date. Our decision to introduce compulsory CPD for dentists back in 2002 was widely supported by our stakeholders, for example the government, professional associations, the royal colleges and consumer groups. Now that the professionalism and critical role that dental care professionals undertake has been recognised through registration for the whole dental team, we want to hear your views on our proposals for compulsory CPD for dental care professionals.
2. It has long been the intention that once we began to register the whole dental team alongside dentists, dental hygienists and dental therapists, we would introduce a compulsory CPD scheme for dental care professionals to run in parallel to the existing compulsory CPD scheme for dentists.
3. The compulsory CPD scheme for dentists is explained in full in the enclosed booklet *Continuing Professional Development for dentists*. You can find additional information about the dentist scheme on our website at www.gdc-uk.org.

CPD as a step towards revalidation

4. As well as the need for all dental professionals to keep up-to-date by carrying out CPD, it is now widely acknowledged that maintaining knowledge is one important part of protecting the public but that patients also need to be assured that their dental professional's performance and behaviour meet the standards required to keep up their registration with us. For this reason, we are developing a scheme called **revalidation** which will require all dental professionals not only to keep their knowledge up-to-date but also to demonstrate on a regular basis that they are fit to practise in the field in which they perform. Implementing a compulsory CPD scheme for dental care professionals as well as dentists is the first step in building towards a revalidation scheme for all our registrants. We will consult separately on our revalidation proposals for dental professionals next year.

Our current proposals

5. We are proposing to introduce compulsory CPD for DCPs in 2008, after the transitional period for DCP registration has ended (this means the period during which dental nurses and dental technicians can register with us on the basis of experience rather than qualifications).

The CPD scheme for DCPs

6. We define CPD as 'study, training courses, seminars, reading and other activities undertaken by a dental professional, which could reasonably be expected to advance his or her development as a dental professional'.

7. We envisage that the CPD scheme will be up and running for DCPs in 2008. The scheme will run on the same principles as the scheme for dentists. The only differences we are proposing are:

- the number of hours of CPD that DCPs undertake should be lower than dentists to start with; and
- a minor difference in the core CPD subjects undertaken by dental technicians (see below).

We recognise that CPD provision for DCPs is currently developing. For this reason we are recommending that for the first five-year cycle DCPs carry out 150 hours of CPD in total. After this time we intend to review the hours total.

8. This will mean that all DCPs would do 150 hours of CPD over a five-year period to stay on the register. Of the 150 hours, at least 50 hours would need to be verifiable CPD.

Verifiable CPD is CPD which:

- has concise educational aims and objectives – the activity should have a clear purpose or goal;
- clear anticipated outcomes – the participant should know what (s)he can expect to gain as a result of taking part in the activity;
- quality controls – participants should have the chance to give feedback, with a view to improving quality.

and

- for which the participant gets and keeps a certificate (or other type of documentary proof) proving that they took part in the activity. The certificate should come from the activity provider or organiser, and should show the number of hours spent on the activity.

9. The remaining 100 hours DCPs would complete could be non-verifiable (or general) CPD. Non-verifiable CPD is CPD which may not meet all of the verifiable requirements but that still adds to your continuing professional development as a dental professional. Non-verifiable CPD may include activities such as reading journals, background research and private study.

10. We have, this year, made some recommendations for core subjects all dentists should study for a minimum number of hours in each 5-year cycle as verifiable CPD. We are recommending that DCPs study the same core subjects as dentists every 5-year cycle. These subjects are core knowledge areas for all dental professionals. They are:

- Medical emergencies (at least 10 hours per 5 year cycle)
- Disinfection and decontamination (at least 5 hours per 5 year cycle)
- Radiography and radiation protection (at least 5 hours per 5 year cycle)

We are also recommending that all dental professionals who work in a clinical or laboratory environment should also carry out CPD (verifiable or non-verifiable) in:

- Legal and ethical issues
- Complaints handling

Exception for dental technicians

11. Since radiography is not within the dental technician curriculum, we propose that dental technicians would more usefully carry out CPD in dental materials and equipment (a minimum of 5 hours per cycle) than radiography and radiation

protection. In all other respects we are recommending that dental technicians carry out the same core verifiable CPD subjects as other dental professionals.

12. This is the only difference in core subjects that we are recommending between the dentist and DCP CPD scheme, and in line with our previous consultation findings, in which 87% of respondents agreed that dental technicians should not have to undertake CPD in radiography. In addition to the core recommended subjects, we are recommending DCPs involved in the care of patients (see below) should undertake CPD in legal and ethical issues and complaints handling (in line with the scheme for dentists).
13. For full information on the proposed CPD requirements, please read the enclosed document *Continuing Professional Development for dentists*, as a guide. The only differences between the DCP scheme we are proposing and the dentist scheme are as outlined above.
14. We would be grateful for your views on the questions set out on pages 4 to 8.

Who are you?

In order for us to understand the context in which you are replying to this consultation, please indicate the perspective from which you are replying.

I am replying as a (please tick the boxes that apply to you)

- | | |
|---|---|
| Member of the public | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dental Professional: | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clinical Dental Technician | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dental Hygienist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dental Nurse | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dental Technician | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dental Therapist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dentist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Orthodontic Therapist | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dually qualified | <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify)..... |
| On behalf of a professional association | X (Please specify)Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain |
| On behalf of an education provider | <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify)..... |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> (Please specify)..... |

What do you think?**Number of hours of CPD for DCPs**

We plan to introduce a CPD scheme for DCPs based on the same principles as the current scheme for dentists. The purpose of CPD is to assure the public that all dental professionals on our registers are keeping up-to-date. We are proposing to introduce a CPD scheme in which DCPs will complete 150 hours of CPD in a 5-year cycle with 50 of those hours being verifiable CPD. This equates to 30 hours per year of which 10 are verifiable CPD.

1. Do you agree that DCPs should do 150 hours of CPD of which 50 hours are verifiable in a five-year cycle?

Yes No

2. If you answered no to question 1 do you think DCPs should do a lower or higher amount of CPD?

Higher Lower

Please explain why

The Society operates a CPD scheme in which the contribution of CPD activity to achievement of learning objectives and professional development is the key outcome. The Society does not believe that CPD should be assessed in terms of the time committed to participation.

Core CPD activities for dental care professionals (DCPs)

We plan to include the same core subject areas as dentists in the verifiable CPD requirement for:

- Clinical dental technicians
- Dental hygienists
- Dental nurses
- Dental therapists
- Orthodontic therapists

We have agreed on three core subject areas that these groups should undertake verifiable CPD on, whatever their area of practice or working environment. This would include those dental professionals not actively involved in clinical work. These are:

- Medical emergencies (at least 10 hours per CPD cycle)
- Disinfection and decontamination (at least 5 hours per CPD cycle)
- Radiography and radiation protection (at least 5 hours per CPD cycle)

We have agreed on these three core topics in line with the dentist scheme because we think all dental professionals should be up to date on these topics whether or not they work in a clinical environment.

In the case of radiography, this would include where appropriate prepare equipment, materials and patients. To be able to process, mount and monitor quality assurance measures in processing dental radiographs.

3. Do you agree that the following groups should be able to show that they have carried out verifiable CPD in medical emergencies, disinfection and decontamination and radiography and radiation protection?

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Clinical dental technician | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If you answered no please explain why
For all of these groups of staff, their competence in these core subjects is the most important outcome, not the time spent studying them. |
| Dental hygienist | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If you answered no please explain why |
| Dental Nurse | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If you answered no please explain why |
| Dental therapist | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If you answered no please explain why |
| Orthodontic therapist | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If you answered no please explain why |

For dental technicians we intend to substitute dental materials and equipment for radiography and radiation protection (at least 5 hours per CPD cycle). This is because the dental technician curriculum does not include radiography and radiation protection as it does for other DCP groups. For dental technicians we think that updating knowledge in materials and equipment would be of greater relevance in terms of public protection.

4. Do you agree that dental technicians should substitute CPD in dental materials and equipment for radiography and radiation protection?

Yes No

If you answered no please explain why

Our agreement to this exception is based on the assumption that dental technicians do not in practice work with ionizing radiation. Logically, what they have studied in the curriculum may not always equate with practice. If work with radiation arises in the course of their career, then public safety and radiation protection become paramount. It may be appropriate to consider inserting this requirement as a rider.

We are going to recommend that all DCPs working in a clinical or laboratory environment carry out CPD (verifiable or general) to make sure that they are up to date in:

- Legal and ethical issues
- Handling complaints

This recommendation would mirror the dentist scheme. Being up to date in legal and ethical issues and handling complaints ensures that all registrants are able to act as professional members of the dental team.

5. Do you agree with the recommendation that all DCPs in a clinical or laboratory environment should also carry out CPD (verifiable or general) in legal and ethical issues?

Yes No

If you answered no please explain why

6. Do you agree with the recommendation that DCPs in a clinical or laboratory environment should also carry out CPD (verifiable or general) in handling complaints?

Yes No

If you answered no please explain why

Education provision of CPD for DCPs

7. What kinds of provision would be most helpful to you in terms of meeting the CPD requirements?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Lectures | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hands-on courses | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Professional/ Association meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commercial sponsored lectures | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commercial sponsored hands-on courses | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Peer review | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Clinical audit | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Websites offering dental education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Questionnaires in journals | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reading journals | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reading text books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dental team training | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dental and other websites | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Computer assisted learning | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In house team training | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other types of CPD (Please specify) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (Please specify) The Society recognises all of these as resources that can help a health care professional to maintain their professional competence through CPD. |

The General Dental Council would like to hear the views of its registrants (and future registrants), patients and others who will be affected by our CPD proposals for DCPs.

For further information on revalidation and the current compulsory CPD scheme for dentists www.gdc-uk.org

Please reply to:

Moragh Loose

CPD for DCPs consultation

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London

W1G 8DQ

You can also reply by email to mloose@gdc-uk.org.

The deadline for responses is 5.00pm on **16 March 2007**. Please note that we cannot guarantee that any responses received after the deadline will be considered.

We will write to you following our analysis of consultation responses to advise you of what action we have taken as a result of the consultation.

The Revalidation Working Group

The Working Group is made up of Council members, co-opted members from outside the Council and members of staff. The membership provides the Group with a range of expertise. The members are:

- Carol Varlaam - (Chair) Lay Council member
- Rosemarie Khan – DCP Council member
- Denis Toppin – General Dental Practitioner (GDP) Council member
- Alison Lockyer – Chair of Registration Committee
- Jim Lafferty – GDP Council member
- Ray Reed – co-opted Postgraduate Dental Dean (non-Council member)
- Hew Mathewson – President of GDC
- Duncan Rudkin – Chief Executive and Registrar
- Frances Garratt – Head of Post-qualification Policy
- Moragh Loose – Policy Adviser – Post-qualification Policy