

GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL

GDC

protecting patients,  
regulating the dental team



[www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)

# GDC Consultation

## Validation via provisional registration - General consultation

The deadline for responses is **5.00pm on 20 March 2008**

Please reply to:

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You can also reply by email to [mloose@gdc-uk.org](mailto:mloose@gdc-uk.org) or via our website at <http://www.gdc-uk.org> .

## Provisional registration consultation

### Who are you?

To help us to understand the context of your response, please indicate the perspective from which you are replying.

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

Individual member of the public

Representative of an organisation:

(Please specify) Royal Pharmaceutical Society.....

Other

(Please specify).....

### What do you think?

#### Policy

We plan to develop a period of provisional registration for dental professionals who are applying for registration for the first time. During provisional registration dental professionals will need to demonstrate in a working environment that they meet the standards required for full registration.

1. Do you support the idea of dental professionals completing a period of provisional registration before they could become fully registered?

Yes  No  Don't Know

Please explain **why**... *It is not clear to the Society why the GDC wishes to introduce validation with provisional registration. In pharmacy, a year of vocational training (pre-registration year), including a registration examination, is part of the initial qualification. The Society recognises that newly registered pharmacists still have a lot to learn in the first few years of practice, although they are qualified to be in sole charge of a pharmacy and frequently work as single handed practitioners, especially in community pharmacy.*

We would like dental professionals to be able to complete the period of provisional registration in a variety of ways. We want to know how you think the required skills and behaviours under the four standards headings (below) should be demonstrated.

Examples of assessment methods might include: dental professionals being directly observed while working, creating a portfolio of evidence to show how they meet the requirements, testing by creating a mock clinical situation that the dental professional has to solve, online assessment. These are just a few examples and we are keen to know what types of assessment you think might be useful for demonstrating skills including any other forms of assessment we have not named.

1. How do you think dental professionals' skills in these areas could be best tested?

*We believe that the assessment of skills should be related to the standards/competences that you expect dental professionals to achieve and be able to demonstrate. In pharmacy, the Society is moving to the view that the standards for full registration should be the same as the standard for revalidation. In an ideal world, with access to adequate resources, professionals should be assessed at the top of Miller's triangle, i.e. 'does' and they should demonstrate this repeatedly. The logical conclusion of this approach is that individuals would be assessed on the basis of their practice and not by a secondary technique such as OSCE which evaluates 'shows how'.*

*Observation of practice by an appropriately skilled mentor with recording of achievement in a structured portfolio could be used in each of your key areas. Techniques such as the mini-cex, mini-pat and case-based discussions are being used successfully by trained tutors with new registrants in pharmacy.*

Clinical Skills:

Communication Skills:

Professionalism:

Management and Leadership skills:

We propose to limit how a dental professional can work until they complete provisional registration. For example dentists might not be allowed to own their own dental practice or work without the supervision of a fully registered dentist.

3. Do you agree that during a period of provisional registration a dental professional should only be able to work in a restricted way? (e.g. the right to own a practice, a restriction on the right to practise unsupervised, and a requirement to complete a minimum time period).

Yes  No  Don't Know

**Please explain why...** *There is very little point in provisional registration unless there are conditions attached that enable vocational training to achieve its purpose.*

2. If you said Yes above what do you think the restrictions should be? Please explain why?

*The model of vocational training is unlikely to achieve its purpose unless there are arrangements for formative and summative assessment of improving performance. Mentorship is unlikely to be successful if the trainee owns the practice and employs the mentor.*

### Structure of provisional registration

We believe that there should be a minimum time period that a dental professional must complete as a provisional registrant before they can apply for full registration. What factors do you believe should be taken into account in deciding the length of a minimum period of provisional registration?

5. Should the minimum of time required to complete provisional registration be dependant on:

Time taken to complete initial qualification Yes  No  Don't Know

Nature of initial training (i.e. academic V on the job training) Yes  No  Don't Know

Level of skill required for work Yes  No  Don't Know

Should be the same for all groups Yes  No  Don't Know

**Other please explain...** *We believe the determinate should be the acquisition of competence and not time. The experience of the GDC with the current NHS vocational training for dentists would be a guide to the additional skills and knowledge that trainees should acquire. The work of Eraut on the development of professional competence supports this view. (M Eraut, Developing professional knowledge and competence, Routledge 1994)*

The purpose of provisional registration will be to validate the skills of a dental professional to ensure they are fit for full registration. While most dental professionals will complete provisional registration and go on to be fully registered others may not. Some dental professionals may be unable to show that they are fit for full registration.

6. What should happen if a dental professional does not meet the requirements of provisional registration? **(Do you mean full registration?)**

*They would presumably be qualified to continue to work as a supervised professional as they would be qualified to do so by their initial qualification.*

7. How many opportunities should a dental professional get to pass provisional registration?

*This assumes that there would be a 'final assessment' of practice leading to full registration. In pharmacy, pre-registration trainees are currently allowed three attempts at the registration examination with a fourth attempt allowed in exceptional circumstances. We are reviewing this policy.*

Please explain **why**...

*Assessment opportunities that are limited only by number can lead to long gaps between attempts. The currency of the initial qualification decreases with time. We believe that it is better to set a time limit for the final hurdle, bearing in mind that some applicants will be slow learners. The number of attempts can then be unlimited or limited by the availability of assessments.*

8. We would welcome your additional thoughts and suggestions on any aspect of provisional registration:

*The Society welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation as it is coincident with our own work on the development of pre-registration training and revalidation in pharmacy.*

*We would welcome a statement of purpose, especially about the ongoing relationship between graduation and licence to practice.*

How will the proposals in the consultation fit with EU legislation on the education and registration of dental professionals?

*Our experience with vocational training and terminal assessments is that some tutors are reluctant to 'fail' graduate trainees who do not meet the standard. This may also be the case with implementation of the KSF and career development in the NHS.*