

**General
Dental
Council**

Standards
for Education



The Standards for Education (referred to below as “Standards”) and their associated requirements apply to all UK programmes, leading to registration with the General Dental Council (GDC). They cover programmes in dentistry, dental hygiene, dental nursing, dental technology, dental therapy, clinical dental technology, and orthodontic therapy.¹

The Standards are split into four areas that the GDC expects providers to meet for training programmes to be approved, and to lead students and trainees into professional registration. These areas are:

- Patient protection and safety
- Student development and support
- Quality assurance of the programmes
- Examination and assessment

The following tables detail the four Standards and their respective requirements.

We have broken down the guidance for different professional groups, so that we are explicit with the expectations of how they can demonstrate that a requirement is met.

A provider must make available appropriate evidence for each requirement.

Examples of the evidence that the GDC expects to be provided are set out for transparency and clarity for all parties. The Standards for Education are designed to demonstrate a ‘right touch’ approach and ensure that clear expectations are communicated to providers.

Providers should decide which documents to use as evidence to demonstrate each requirement under the Standards. If a provider produces similar evidence for other purposes, the GDC will seek to use this to minimise the administrative burden on providers. It may be possible for a provider to use a particular document as evidence across a number of requirements.

Further guidance on the documents that providers need to complete and the evidence that should be presented to the GDC at different stages of the process is contained in the following documents:

- GDC Quality Assurance Process: Guidance for Providers (versions are available for DCP and BDS providers)
- New Programme Submissions
- Pre-inspection questionnaire
- GDC Standards mapping table
- GDC Learning outcomes mapping table.

Standards 1-3 are applicable to organisations that provide **both programmes and examinations**.

Standard 4 is applicable to the providers that only **deliver assessments**.

1. This is the third version of the GDC Standards for Education and it will be effective from the 2025/26 academic year. This 2025 version replaces the one published in 2015.

Standard 1

Providers must demonstrate their duty to protect the public. Providers must ensure that patient safety on the programme is paramount, and care of patients is of an appropriate standard. Providers must ensure that any risk to the safety of patients and their care by students is minimised. **(Applicable to organisations that provide both programmes and examinations).**

1. Providers must be assured that the students possess the skill and knowledge to undertake routine clinical and technical procedures.

- 1.1 Providers must ensure that students are assessed as competent in the relevant skills at the levels required in the pre-clinical environments prior to working with patients.
- 1.2 Providers must ensure that students take an evidence-based approach to clinical / technical practice.

2. Providers must have a patient consent process.

- 2.1. Providers must inform patients that their treatment may be carried out by and/or be observed by a student.
- 2.2. Providers must ensure that patients who are being cared for by a student give informed and valid consent and are aware that they may withdraw that consent at any time.
- 2.3. Providers must ensure that students understand and comply with valid consent and confidentiality when assisting or treating patients.

3. Providers must ensure that students only provide patient care in an environment which is safe and appropriate.

- 3.1. Providers must comply with relevant legislation and guidance regarding patient care.
- 3.2. Providers must comply with relevant legislation and guidance regarding equality and diversity and inclusivity.
- 3.3. Providers must ensure that any work placements are safe and appropriate for students and patients.

4. Providers must ensure there is a process in place for the supervision of students.

- 4.1. Providers must ensure that students are supervised according to the activity and the student's stage of development.
- 4.2. Providers must ensure that supervisors are registered with the GDC.
- 4.3. Providers must ensure that supervisors are appropriately trained.

5. Providers must ensure there are robust processes in place for raising and addressing concerns and patient safety issues.

- 5.1. Providers must demonstrate that all parties are aware of how to raise concerns.

- 5.2. Providers must support staff and students who identify and raise concerns.

- 5.3. Providers must identify and record issues that may affect patient safety.

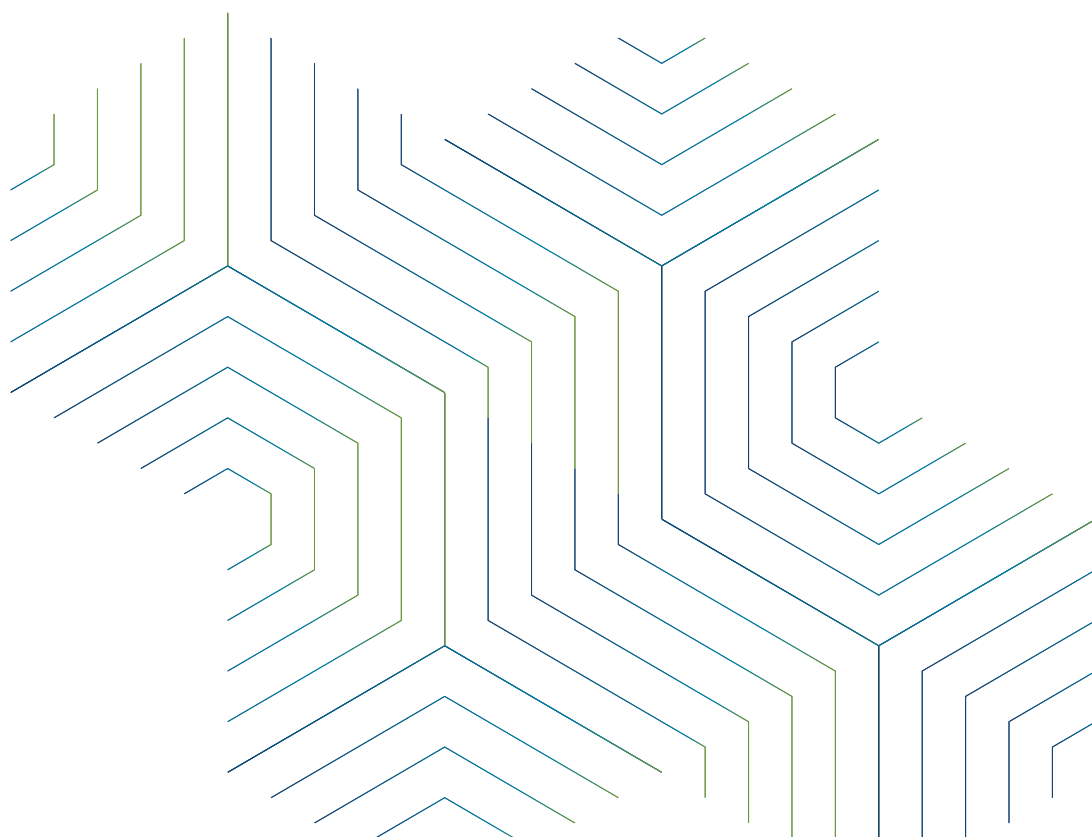
- 5.4. Providers must act on concerns and patient safety issues promptly and appropriately.

- 5.5. Providers must have a process to enable learning from concerns and patient safety issues for continuous process improvement.

6. Providers must implement rigorous processes to ensure students exhibit the professionalism required for a regulated profession.

- 6.1. Providers must ensure that the GDC's Standards and guidance framework is embedded within student training.

- 6.2. Providers must have a student fitness to practise policy and can demonstrate that all parties understand and appropriately use the policy.



Standard 2

Providers must have an effective, fair, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for the student's development into a safe practitioner. **(Applicable to organisations that provide both programmes and examinations).**

7. Providers must ensure that the programme delivers the GDC learning outcomes and demonstrate the expected behaviours of a safe practitioner.

- 7.1. Providers must have systems to deliver the learning outcomes and demonstrate the expected behaviours of a safe practitioner.

- 7.2. Providers must ensure that students have exposure to an appropriate breadth of patients and procedures to develop the knowledge, skills, competences, and behaviours to demonstrate the learning outcomes and behaviours.

- 7.3. Providers must adapt their curricula in line with the latest GDC learning outcomes and expected professional behaviours.

- 7.4. Providers must adapt their curricula in line with the relevant laws and regulations.

8. Providers must ensure that assessments are fair and appropriate to assess the GDC learning outcomes and monitor the behaviours expected of a safe practitioner.

- 8.1. Providers must plan, monitor, and centrally record the assessment of students for each learning outcome and behaviour.

- 8.2. Providers must ensure that behaviours that do not meet the required standard are recorded, and action taken to address this.

- 8.3. Providers must use feedback from multiple sources as part of student assessment.

9. Providers must offer students support throughout the student journey.

- 9.1. Providers must provide regular feedback on student development and progress.

- 9.2. Providers must ensure that students reflect on their behaviours, practice, and development.

- 9.3. Providers must have processes to support student wellbeing.

- 9.4. Providers must identify students who require remedial support and provide it as necessary.

10. Providers must ensure that students are clear of what is expected of them.

- 10.1. Providers must educate students about the professional expectations of them, including behaviours, and what it means to be part of a regulated profession.

- 10.2. Providers must ensure that students understand the programme's requirements and the expectations of them.

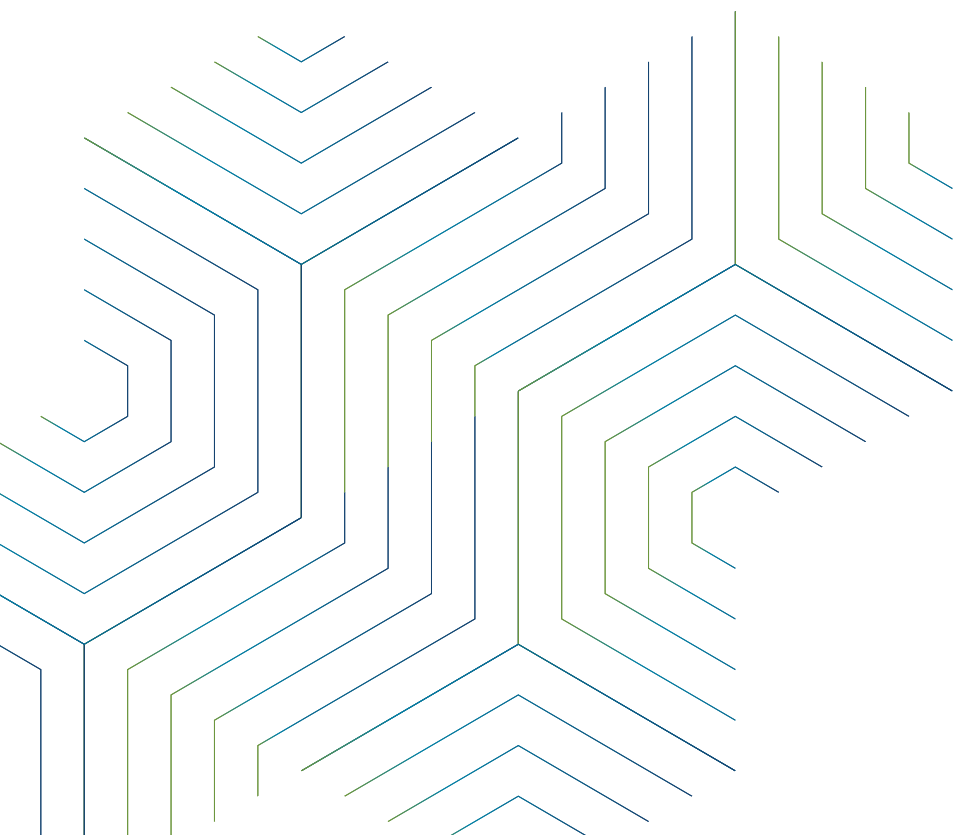
11. Providers must only award students a qualification if evidence indicates that they are demonstrating the expected behaviours and have met all the learning outcomes.

12. Providers must ensure that the programme is inclusive, transparent and treats applicants fairly.

- 12.1. Providers must demonstrate that their admissions process is fair, inclusive, and transparent.
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- 12.2. Providers must identify barriers prior to and throughout the programme that may disproportionately impact marginalised groups and take actions to address them.

13. Providers must ensure that the programme is appropriately assessed.

- 13.1. Providers must ensure that examiners and assessors have the appropriate skills, experience, and training to undertake the task of assessment, including appropriate registration with the appropriate regulator.
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- 13.2. Providers must inform students and staff involved in assessment of the assessment expectations.
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- 13.3. Providers must demonstrate that their assessments are fair, inclusive, and transparent.
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Standard 3

Providers must have in place effective policies and procedures for the monitoring and review of the programme. **(Applicable to organisations that provide both programmes and examinations).**

14. The provider must have a quality assurance framework in place to manage the quality of the programme.

- 14.1. Providers must address any concerns identified through the quality assurance framework.
- 14.2. Providers must ensure that students take an evidence-based approach to clinical / technical practice.
- 14.3. Providers must use feedback to inform and improve programme development.

15. The provider must subject programmes to independent external scrutiny by an appropriate individual.

- 15.1. Programmes must have external, impartial quality assurance to ensure that assessments are fair, rigorous, set at the correct standard, and ensure equity of treatment for all students.
- 15.2. Providers must clearly document the recruitment, training, and responsibilities of the external individuals

16. Providers must have a robust process for standard setting.

- 16.1. Providers must ensure that staff involved in assessment are aware of the standard expected of students and the necessary calibration is carried out.
- 16.2. Providers must ensure that trainers and assessors have appropriate and up to date working knowledge of developments within dentistry, technology and education.

17. Providers must have robust assessment strategies.

- 17.1. Providers must demonstrate that assessments are fit for purpose, valid and reliable.
- 17.2. Providers must use methods of assessment appropriate to the learning outcome(s).
- 17.3. Providers must collect and analyse assessment results against the diversity of the student demographics and take necessary action to address any discrepancies.
- 17.4. Providers must ensure that assessment is fair and undertaken against clear criteria.

Standard 4

Quality evaluation and review of the examination: the provider must have in place effective policy and procedures for the monitoring and review of the examination leading to the award of a qualification.

(Applicable to the providers that only deliver assessments).

18. Examination providers must have a quality framework in place.

- 18.1. Assessment is designed to demonstrate student competences against the GDC's Safe Practitioner Learning Outcomes and behaviours.

- 18.2. There must be a clear statement about where responsibility lies for this quality function.

- 18.3. Any concerns identified through the operation of this quality framework, including internal and external reports relating to quality, must be addressed as soon as possible.

- 18.4. Threats to the quality of the assessment must be reported to the GDC

- 18.5. Examination providers must be able to demonstrate that students can meet all the Learning Outcomes and behaviours before graduation

- 18.6. External quality assurance must include the use of external examiners, who must be familiar with the GDC learning outcomes.

- 18.7. Internal and external assessors must be utilised to facilitate the examination process and have demonstrable knowledge of GDC approved curriculum/latest learning outcomes.

- 18.8. Proposed changes to procedures approved by the GDC must be submitted and agreed via the GDC's Modification Process.

19. The provider must subject programmes to independent external scrutiny by an appropriate individual.

- 19.1. Programmes must have external, impartial quality assurance to ensure that assessments are fair, rigorous, set at the correct standard, and ensure equity of treatment for all students.

- 19.2. A clear standard setting process must be employed and regularly reviewed to ensure ongoing effectiveness.

- 19.3. Providers must use/have an appropriate standard setting process for summative assessments.

- 19.4. To award the qualification, providers must be assured that students have demonstrated attainment across the full range of learning outcomes, and that they are fit to practise at the level of a safe practitioner

- 19.5. Students may only gain entry to the examination once they have demonstrated they meet the agreed criteria.

- 19.6. Providers must collect and analyse examination results against the diversity of the student demographics and take necessary action to address any discrepancies.

20. Examination providers must demonstrate that assessments are fit for purpose and deliver results which are valid and reliable.

- 20.1. The methods of assessment used must be appropriate to the learning outcomes, in line with current and best practice
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- 20.2. Assessments must be routinely monitored, quality assured and developed to ensure they capture up to date and best practice.
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- 20.3. Assessments must undergo regular systemic review to support high standard clinical questioning.
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- 20.4. Students must be aware of the standard that is expected of them.
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- 20.5. Examination Providers must routinely develop, refine, monitor and quality manage against clearly outlined and approved criteria.
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- 20.6. Examiners must have appropriate skills, experience and training to undertake the task of assessment, including registration with the relevant regulatory body.
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- 20.7. Examination Providers must ensure that trainers and assessors have appropriate and up to date working knowledge of developments within dentistry and education.
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- 20.8. Providers must ensure that staff involved in the examination are aware of the standard expected of students and the necessary calibration is carried out.

21. Examination providers must document external examiners' reports on the extent to which examination processes are rigorous, set at the correct standard, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted.

- 21.1. Auditable records must be kept of all External Examiner reports and recommendations including subsequent action taken by the examination provider.
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- 21.2. External Examiners must have demonstrable knowledge, skills and, experience for this role.
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