

Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations Eligibility Criteria

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V1.0	17 th July 2025	Approved for publication
V1.1	22 nd April 2025	Branding update – logos and reference to Secretariat amended to Executive.
V1.2	15 th September 2026	Minor formatting changes

Introduction

This document defines the criteria required for candidates' eligibility to sit the Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations.

Eligibility criteria are defined to ensure that those completing the examinations have sufficient training and experience to complete the examination. Candidates should ensure that training would meet the minimum requirements laid out in the GDC curricula [published here](#).

Successful completion of the examinations does not imply eligibility for entry on the GDC specialist list or eligibility for a specialist role within the UK. Successful completion of the examination is one factor that the GDC and/or UK and International employers may consider within job application criteria.

Eligibility will take into consideration a variety of pathways to acquiring the necessary skills to meet the examination requirements.

UK Trainees with a National Training Number (NTN): Candidates who follow a UK training programme with a National Training Number typically undergo a structured educational and clinical focused pathway (3-5 years full time depending on specialty). This will include, amongst other elements, practical clinical training and assessments with oversight from a Training Programme Director.

Trainees outside the UK National training programme - Candidates who rely on their accumulated experience and self-directed learning will have acquired knowledge through training and work experience, or by doing a clinical masters or clinical doctoral degree. This pathway recognises that practical experience and self-study can be as valuable as formal education. Alternatively, a candidate may have followed a formal, structured training pathway outside the UK.

The examinations will provide a fair and inclusive way for candidates to demonstrate their competencies, regardless of whether they followed a training programme or another route based on experience and knowledge. This approach recognises that the same outcomes can be achieved by different routes.

1. Key Features of the Eligibility Criteria

1.1 Flexibility

The examinations are designed to be flexible, accommodating candidates from various backgrounds. This means that the examinations focus on assessing the core competencies and knowledge required for the profession, rather than the specific path taken to acquire them.

1.2 Competency-Based Assessment

These examinations are a set of competency-based assessments, ensuring that all candidates, regardless of their background, are evaluated on their ability to perform the necessary skills and demonstrate the required knowledge.

1.3 Inclusivity

By allowing access to candidates from non-NTN routes, these examinations promote inclusivity and diversity within the profession. This approach acknowledges that valuable skills and knowledge can be gained through various means, not just through formal education.

2. Eligibility Submissions

2.1 Applications will be supported by the relevant documentation noted for the criteria listed. Applicants are required to submit documentation using the system specified in the application.

2.2 **Please note:** This is a self-declaration process, and it is your responsibility to ensure that all documents you submit meet the stated requirements (for example, they must be signed, dated, and issued by a recognised institution). If your documents do not meet the criteria, your application may not be accepted, and any certification already awarded could be withdrawn. Candidates are advised to check their eligibility using these criteria and if it is agreed they are eligible, can apply for the next diet of the examination.

2.3 If the submitted evidence is found to be incomplete prior to the examination, candidates will be withdrawn from the list. If found to be incomplete after the examination, certification may be withdrawn.

2.4 No evidence will be accepted beyond the submission period for those wishing to apply.

3. General Requirements

3.1 Primary Dental Qualification

Candidates must provide certified evidence of possession of a primary dental qualification acceptable to the Colleges.

3.2 Membership of Faculty of Dental Surgery (MFDS)

Candidates must hold the MFDS postgraduate qualification.

3.3 Clinical Registration

Candidates must be registered with a recognised dental regulatory body in their country of practice that is recognised by the Colleges.

3.4 Clinical Practise

Candidates should be in training or practising in the specialty in which they are applying to take the examinations.

3.5 English Language Level

Candidates should have a good command of the English language, akin to IELTS 7, to participate in the examinations which will be taken entirely in English.

3.6 Applications may be considered on an individual basis at the discretion of the Dental Examinations Executive. Candidates who are unsure of their eligibility or

whose circumstances do not fully align with the criteria are strongly advised to contact the Executive in advance of submitting an application for guidance.

4. Other Requirements

To be eligible for the examination, prospective candidates must fulfil one or more of the following criteria that ensures that the curriculum outcomes have been achieved:

4.1 Have satisfactorily completed sufficient training certified by the NTN Training Programme Director by the time of the examination.

4.2 Be in the final year of a UK or Ireland university post graduate programme, such as a clinical masters or clinical doctoral degree programme, which parallels the NTN training programme.

4.3 For any UK, Ireland or International candidates who cannot fulfil 4.1 or 4.2, candidates must have sufficient experience working within the relevant dental specialty such that they can demonstrate competency to meet the outcomes noted in the GDC specialty curriculum.