

**Registrations Appeal Committee
Registrations Appeal Hearing**

23 October 2025

Name: BAL, Vipanjot Kaur

Contact number: CAS-211284-T7P1J2

General Dental Council: Eleanor Curzon, Counsel
Instructed by IHLPS

Appellant: Present
Unrepresented, assisted by family member

Decision: Appeal dismissed

Committee members: Zareen Elleby (Chair, Dental Care Professional member)
Melissa Oura (Dentist member)
Tara Willmott (Lay member)

Legal adviser: William Hoskins

Professional adviser: Marina Harris

Committee Secretary: Sara Page

1. This Registrations Appeal Committee (RAC) has convened in accordance with the '*General Dental Council (Registration Appeals) Rules 2006*' ('the Appeal Rules'), pursuant to Schedule 4A of the '*Dentists Act 1984*' (as amended) ('the Act'). The purpose of the hearing is to consider your appeal against the decision taken by the GDC's Registrar to your application for entry to the register as a dental hygienist.
2. The members of the Committee, as well as the Legal Adviser, Professional Adviser, and the Committee Secretary, conducted the hearing remotely via Microsoft Teams in line with current General Dental Council (GDC) practice.
3. You were present at the hearing and unrepresented. You were supported at the hearing by a family member.
4. Ms Eleanor Curzon, Counsel, appeared as case presenter on behalf of the GDC.

Background

5. You applied for registration as a dental hygienist through section 36C(4) of the Dentists Act. Your application was received by the GDC on 6 March 2023. You are also registered with the Council as a dental nurse. You first registered as a dental nurse on 3 April 2013. Your registration as a dental nurse is based on you obtaining the Diploma in Dental Nursing in 2013 in the United Kingdom.
6. On 31 July 2024, the Council contacted you informing you that your application was incomplete and outlining the information that was outstanding. On the following day, you confirmed receipt of the Council's email stating that you would aim to provide the information by the deadline provided.
7. On 8 August 2024, you informed the Council you provided the information to the Council by hand delivering the information to the Birmingham office.
8. On 13 August 2024, you spoke with the Council and were asked whether you wished to proceed with your application based on your Bachelor of Dental Surgery qualification obtained in India, as you had not worked as a dentist since 2010. You advised you had done some holiday work in recent years, including a recent visit to India to gain work experience, and confirmed you wanted your application to be sent for assessment.
9. On 23 September 2024, the Council wrote to you as there was outstanding information to be provided. As such, the Council informed you that your application had been placed on hold and provided a deadline for this information to be provided.
10. On the same date, you wrote to the Council confirming that your documentation pack was hand-delivered to the Council's office and confirmed as received. You stated that a subsequent telephone discussion took place regarding your application, in which the Council explained that panels sometimes prefer applicants to demonstrate a certain level of recent practice as a Dentist within the last five years. You stated that your practice as a Dentist within that period was of shorter duration, as you have been resident in the UK for over 12 years and you have been working in the capacity of a Dental Nurse. Furthermore, you stated that the primary purpose of the call was to clarify whether you wished to withdraw your application and request

a refund. You confirmed that you did not wish to withdraw and wished to proceed with the application.

11. On the next day, the Council wrote to you advising that your application would be put before the next available panel and encouraged you that where possible, you should provide professional work references evidencing more recent clinical competency, as a Dentist, prior to the panel considering your application.
12. On 1 October 2024, you wrote to the Council confirming you would be submitting a further reference for your work as a Dentist in India, which you would be providing via email directly from your employer. You requested that this be placed before the panel.
13. On 4 October 2024, the Council received a professional reference on your behalf.
14. On 21 October 2024, you were informed that your application was ready to be sent for an assessment by the panel, and that you would be provided with a decision on your application following this.

First assessment

15. Your application was first considered by the Registration Assessment Panel (“the Panel”) on 5 December 2024. Taking into account all your qualifications and knowledge and experience, the Panel considered that you did not demonstrate the requisite knowledge and skill to be eligible for registration as a dental hygienist with the Council. Therefore, the Panel recommended that you be refused registration. The Panel considered your knowledge and skill was deficient in a wide range of areas.
16. The Registrar relied on the Panel’s recommendation and made the decision to refuse your application for registration as a dental hygienist in the Dental Care Professionals (DCP) register and notified you on 11 December 2024 that your application for registration had been refused and outlined the areas of deficiency against learning outcomes.
17. Alongside each of the learning outcomes considered deficient, the Council suggested that you provide ‘*a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency*’. These suggestions were based on the Panel’s comments.
18. On 17 December 2024, the Council received an email from you requesting to put your application on hold so you could travel to India for four to six months to build up your clinical experience. You further stated that, as an alternative option, you could request evidence of relevant clinical experiences from your employer in respect of your work undertaken during your recent travels to India between 2020 and 2024, which occurred in shorter intervals.
19. On 19 December 2024, the Council informed you that your application could not be placed on hold once it had been assessed by the Panel. The Council reiterated that you may provide additional evidence to address the outstanding learning outcomes listed in the decision letter, but any such evidence must be submitted by the specified deadline. Furthermore, regarding work undertaken during visits to India between 2020 and 2024, the Council informed you that you may submit evidence in the form of a professional reference and any reference should include detailed information on dates and hours worked, as well as the treatments provided.

20. On 9 January 2025, the Council received a professional clinical reference in support of your application. The referee provided examples of how you had covered some of the learning outcomes in your clinical work.
21. On 10 February 2025, the Council confirmed receipt of the professional reference and informed you that your re-assessment documents would be placed before the next available panel. The Council further requested you provide an up-to-date copy of your curriculum vitae.

Re-assessment

22. Your application was considered by a different Panel on 9 April 2025. Taking into account all your qualifications and knowledge and experience, the Panel considered that you did not demonstrate the requisite knowledge and skill to be eligible for registration as a dental hygienist with the Council. Therefore, the Panel recommended that you be refused registration.
23. On 24 April 2025, you were notified that your application had been refused by the Registrar. In refusing your application, they had relied upon the Panel's recommendation. In the decision letter, you were informed that you were not eligible for registration as a dental hygienist as you had not satisfied the Registrar that you had the requisite knowledge and skill. The letter detailed that a number of learning outcomes appeared not to have been covered as part of your training or professional experience. The Council noted alongside each learning outcome that *'to meet this outcome, you were requested to provide a recent clinical professional reference to evidence this learning outcome. The evidence of clinical experience you have provided is insufficient to satisfy the Registrar that you have the requisite knowledge and skill to practise using the title that you have applied for'*. These suggestions were based on the Panel's comments.
24. The letter also set out that that you had a right to appeal the decision and that such an appeal should be submitted within 28 days of the date of the letter. The Council also identified that you would not be able to use your Indian Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree to support any further applications for registration as a DCP in the UK. Instead, you were advised you could apply to join the register as a dentist via the Overseas Registration Exam or the Licence in Dental Surgery.

Notice of Appeal

25. On 8 May 2025, the Council received a Notice of Appeal ("NOA") from you in which you confirmed your wish to appeal the decision of 24 April 2025 to refuse you registration in the DCP register as a dental hygienist.

Submissions

26. Ms Curzon, on behalf of the GDC, reminded the Committee that as this is your appeal the burden is on you to satisfy the Committee that you have the requisite knowledge and skill required to practise as a dental hygienist for registration under section 36C(4) of the Act ("Matter C").
27. Ms Curzon stated that the Council's position is clearly outlined in the GDC's Case Summary (Exhibit 1). Overall, she submitted that the Council's position is based on the recommendation of the Panel. That is, that you are not eligible for registration as a dental hygienist as you have

not demonstrated to the Council that you possess the requisite knowledge and skill and that a number of the learning outcomes detailed have not been met, under section 36C(4) of the Act. Ms Curzon referred the Committee to further professional references that have been provided but confirmed that they are generic references that do not specifically address the matters identified. Further, she submitted that there has been no recent Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provided.

28. In your NOA, you stated that you are already registered with the GDC as a dental nurse and asked that this experience be considered. You explained that you worked as an overseas dentist and have worked for over 15 years, initially practising as a dentist in your home country and more recently working in the UK as a dental nurse across multiple NHS and private practices. You also offered in your NOA that, if necessary, you would return to your country of qualification to undertake a three-to-six-month period of clinical work to address any concerns raised in the Council's decision.
29. You told the Committee that you have studied and earned your degree to demonstrate your competency. You stated that you have the requisite knowledge but need the opportunity to "*brush up*" on your skills as a dental hygienist. You stated that you are working as a locum at dental practices that treat both private and NHS patients and that you know how to deal with patients, maintain confidentiality and demonstrate good communication. You stated that you work alongside dental hygienists in your role as a dental nurse and are willing to undertake any courses that are relevant. You confirmed that you have not completed any hands-on courses in the UK.

Committee's decision and reasons on appeal

30. In coming to its decision, the Committee considered all the evidence before it today. It took account of the submissions made by both parties and accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser as to its powers and principles to be followed. The Committee was also assisted by the Professional Adviser, who questioned you in relation to your clinical knowledge and experience.
31. The Committee bore in mind that the burden was on you to satisfy it that you have the requisite knowledge and skill required by section 36C(4) of the Dentists Act ("Matter C") for registration as a dental hygienist.
32. The Committee also remained mindful of the over-arching statutory objective of the GDC and its task in assessing whether you would be a safe and competent practitioner under the title of dental hygienist.
33. The re-assessment Panel identified approximately 25 learning outcomes as being insufficiently demonstrated in relation to your dental hygienist application.
34. Having considered the documentary evidence provided and the oral evidence given today, the Committee was satisfied that you have extensive experience of working as a dental nurse which has enabled you to be familiar with the requirements of dental practice within the UK. The Committee was also satisfied that you interact well with patients and colleagues. In its assessment of your oral evidence, the Committee noted that you were able to answer matters relating to basic periodontal examinations (BPE). However, when questioned about the guidelines that govern the role of a dental hygienist, you were unable to assure the Committee that you had knowledge about the relevant guidelines that you would be required to rely upon.

35. The Committee noted that you qualified in 2009 but you have only undertaken 18 months working as a dentist in India since qualifying. Since 2010, you have worked for limited periods; five months in 2020 and a further two periods in 2023 – 2024, one of ten days and one of 13 days. The Committee considered that this was not adequate to demonstrate sufficient practical experience. Moreover, the Committee found that your explanation regarding the work you had undertaken in India outlined that it was fairly restricted; mainly short emergency appointments limited to scaling, extractions and the provision of antibiotics. In addition, the Committee has concerns about your present lack of knowledge of the overall scope of practice of the dental hygienist.
36. In its consideration of any demonstrative learning undertaken by you, the Committee noted that you have not undertaken any CPD since 2023 and confirmed to the Committee today that you have not undertaken any hands-on training courses in the UK. In addition, you have not undertaken any supplementary training to support your application to the Register.
37. The Committee took into account the positive references received but did not consider them to provide sufficient detail of the patients you treated and associated clinical outcomes to specifically demonstrate that you have the requisite skills and knowledge. The Committee also noted that one reference detailed that you were proficient in advanced areas of dentistry but when questioned about this today, you described less complex periodontal procedures in your answers. In this regard, the Committee has concerns about the specificity and accuracy of the references provided and your role in any treatment.
38. The Committee was satisfied that your role as a dental nurse had enabled you to be present during dental hygiene appointments, it was unable to identify from your evidence that you were any more involved with the treatment than through your presence as a dental nurse.
39. The Committee noted that whilst you stated that you would be content to undertake any courses to prove your suitability as a dental hygienist, you had not undertaken any courses of your own volition. The Committee was concerned that in appealing the decision of the Registrar, you have not made any further effort to support your appeal beyond providing your qualification and historic evidence of training and CPD undertaken. The Committee noted that it is the responsibility of the appellant to demonstrate they are a safe and competent practitioner before admission to the Register, not for a practitioner to undertake training post-admission to refresh their skills and knowledge.
40. The Committee bore in mind the GDC's overarching objective, which includes the protection of the public and the maintenance of public confidence in the dental professions. Having considered all the evidence provided, both documentary and oral, the Committee was not satisfied that you have the requisite knowledge and skill to practise safely as a dental hygienist.
41. In all the circumstances, the Committee determined to dismiss your appeal for registration as a dental hygienist.
42. This will be confirmed to you in writing in accordance with the Act.
45. That concludes this determination.