

**Registrations Appeal Committee
Registrations Appeal Hearing****30 June 2025****Name:** BLOOHN, Patricia Marconi Custodio**Case number:** CAS-210725-V9G2C1

General Dental Council: Christopher Hamlet, Counsel
Instructed by IHLPS**Appellant:** Present
Unrepresented

Decision: Appeal allowed in relation to Matter C
Remitted back to Registrar for consideration of Matter D

Committee members: Jane Everitt (Chair, lay member)
James Ashworth-Holland (Dentist member)
Jennifer Cawley (Dental Care Professional member)**Professional adviser:** Marina Harris**Legal adviser:** Megan Ashworth**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 therapist and a dental hygienist.
2. The members of the Committee, as well as the Legal 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.
4. Mr Christopher Hamlet, Counsel, appeared as case presenter on behalf of the GDC.

Background

5. On 20 January 2023, the GDC received applications from you for registration as a Dental Therapist and a Dental Hygienist.
6. Your applications were made under section 36C of the Act, and in reliance on Matter C and D.
7. Matter C requires an applicant who holds qualification/s granted outside the United Kingdom relevant to the Dental Therapist and Dental Hygienist titles to also satisfy the GDC that they have the requisite knowledge and skill to practise as a Dental Therapist and Dental Hygienist. In this regard, you have relied on a dental surgeon degree obtained in Brazil on 6 January 2003.
8. Matter D requires the applicant to satisfy the Registrar of their identity, their knowledge of English, that they are of good character and are of good health, both physically and mentally.
9. Between 21 February 2024 and 21 March 2024, the GDC communicated with you to ensure your application contained the required documents before it could be submitted for consideration.

Assessment and decisions

10. Both applications were assessed by the Panel on 12 June 2024. The assessors noted a number of learning outcomes that were not sufficiently covered in the applications, along with suggestions for evidence that would demonstrate the learning outcomes.
11. Having considered the available evidence, the Panel did not recommend entry onto the register for either application.
12. On 19 June 2024, the GDC wrote to you with a copy of its decision letters. In the decision letters, the GDC relied on the Panel's recommendations and confirmed the decisions that you were not eligible for registration because you had not satisfied the Registrar that you had the requisite knowledge and skill to practise using either title.
13. For each of the identified learning outcomes identified in the decision letters, the Panel recommended that you provide evidence from a recent professional reference to confirm clinical competency.

14. In each of the decision letters, the GDC also advised you that you could apply for new assessments if you had new or additional information to address the above deficiencies. The GDC gave further information about reassessments and indicated that any new information would need to be received within 28 days of the decision letter. Further, the GDC advised that due to the amendments to the Act, if your application was unsuccessful after reassessment, you would not be able to apply via the same route. The letters also gave information about your right to appeal the decisions.

Post Panel Assessment: Correspondence

15. On 16 July 2024, you wrote to the GDC stating you were under the impression that the GDC had received a professional reference letter from your employer in the UK, as well as the letter from the president of the clinic you worked at in Brazil. You stated you were having trouble acquiring the document you requested on 20 June 2024 from the University in Brazil as everyone was on holiday. You requested an extension for the deadline for submitting the document until the beginning of August. You also attached a PDF with a description of your clinical experience in Brazil in 2022.
16. On 22 July 2024, the GDC received an email from the Universidade Cidade de Sao Paulo ('the University'), that informed the GDC that you had requested a copy of the syllabus of your course. You reaffirmed the request was received on 20 June 2024, however, the Faculty of Dentistry responsible for issuing this document were on vacation until the beginning of August. You informed the GDC they were treating the matter with urgency.
17. On the same day, a professional reference, dated 15 July 2024, was provided on your behalf by Ms Anne Grew, a registered dentist at the practice where you currently work as a dental nurse.
18. On 26 July 2024, the GDC wrote to you and advised that it would agree to an extension to 5 August 2024 but would not be able to accept a reassessment if information was provided after this date. It further confirmed a reference was received on 16 July 2024.
19. On 31 July 2024, the Declaration from the University was received.
20. On 14 August 2024, the GDC received an email attaching the Course Syllabus in Brazilian. On 19 August 2024, you attached a translated copy of the letter sent by the University. On the same date, the GDC wrote to you and apologised for the delay in response and confirmed receipt of all emails highlighted within your reply. The GDC further stated your application had been passed to the Re-assessment Team to be reviewed.
21. On 29 November 2024, the GDC wrote to you to advise that there had been a change in caseworker and confirmed receipt of the re-assessment documents which had been listed for consideration by an independent Registration Assessment Panel and stated an update would be provided in due course.
22. On 1 December 2024, you wrote to the GDC and sought confirmation of whether an email dated 7 March 2024 was included in your application. You stated you were reviewing correspondence with your previous caseworker, prior to receiving your first decision letter and realised that the caseworker did not clearly confirm the receipt of this email (which you explained contained vital information of your working patterns). You further stated the manager of the clinic confirmed sending this email, but that you wanted to confirm whether this information was included.

23. On 2 December 2024, you also emailed your former caseworker and requested a copy of the email relating to the above reference. On 5 December 2024, your applications were forwarded to the Panel for reassessment.

Reassessment

24. Your application was reviewed by a different panel on 5 December 2024. The Panel had before it the June 2024 decision letters, and the new information provided, which included:
- a) Professional Work Reference from Ms Grew (15 July 2024)
 - b) Declaration – employment – ABO
 - c) Letter from appellant to GDC (Undated)
 - d) Declaration from the University (Undated)
 - e) Translated copy of declaration (5 August 2024)
25. Having considered the available evidence, including the new information provided, the assessors again did not recommend entry onto the DCP register as a Dental Therapist or a Dental Hygienist. The GDC relied on the recommendations of the assessors and wrote to you via email on 28 January 2025 to advise that the assessors had requested further information before they could provide a final decision. The email highlighted that:

'The assessors have noted the professional reference provided as a Dental Nurse however as you are relying on primary dental qualification of a Dentist to register as a Dental Therapist and a Dental Hygienist the professional references are required to show clinical competency and should be provided as you working in this primary role. Whilst you have provided a confirmation list of duties from yourself (attached document), please note that this must be provided by your professional referee(s) who have supervised your work.'

26. The email then set out a list of learning outcomes, along with comments about the evidence provided and the evidence required. At the foot of the email, the GDC also noted, *'Additionally updated profession reference/s should be detailed and evidence more substantial clinical experience. This should include information such as the nature of procedures that have been carried out, hours worked, whether the work was full-time, part time or holiday work, the number of patients seen and whether the work was supervised or unsupervised.'*
27. Between 28 January and 24 February 2025, you corresponded with the GDC and provided additional information where requested.
28. Having considered the available evidence, including the new information provided by you between January and February 2025, the Panel again did not recommend entry onto the DCP register as a Dental Therapist or a Dental Hygienist.
29. The GDC's 27 February 2025 letter confirmed the decision that you were not eligible for registration as a Dental Therapist because you had not satisfied the Registrar that you had the requisite knowledge and skill to practise. The GDC also confirmed you were not eligible for registration as a Dental Hygienist because you had not satisfied the Registrar that you had the requisite knowledge and skill to practise. You were advised again that you could not use your overseas qualification to join the register as a DCP in the United Kingdom. You were informed that you could apply to join the register as a dentist via the Overseas Registration Exam or the Licence in Dental Surgery.

Subsequent correspondence

30. On 4 March 2025, you acknowledged receipt of the GDC's correspondence and sought further clarification on two aspects of the decision. You requested that the GDC elaborate on the meaning of the phrase *'insufficient to satisfy the Registrar,'* in order to understand clearly what was required for your appeal. Additionally, you inquired whether the information submitted by the university was deemed inadequate, noting that it appeared to be reflected within the stated learning objectives.

Appeal

31. On 24 March 2025, you filed a Notice of Appeal.

Evidence

32. The Committee was provided with a number of documents to assist with its consideration of your appeal, including the recent professional reference from Dr 1, recent Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and reflective statements addressing the outstanding learning outcomes. You provided oral evidence under affirmation and answered questions from the Committee and the Professional Adviser.
33. Oral evidence was also provided by your current employer on your behalf, Dr 2, a registered dentist, who attested to your diligence and professionalism since you have been working as Practice Manager and dental nurse at your current place of work. Your employer confirmed your working pattern and the frequency you work alongside each other in the practice. He stated that he regarded you as one of *"the best members of the team"* and that, should your appeal be successful, there is a role as a dental hygienist and/or dental therapist *"waiting for you"*. He stated that there are not many people for whom he would be willing to sit on appeal and speak for, but that you were one of them.

Submissions

34. Mr Hamlet, on behalf of the GDC, provided the GDC's submissions to assist the Committee in coming to its decision. The GDC submitted that your applications for entry onto the DCP register were thoroughly assessed by two different Panels and accepted those recommendations. He submitted that the GDC is currently neutral on whether you have addressed all the outstanding concerns raised by the previous assessment panels that reached their decisions based on the material with which they were provided at the time of assessment.
35. The GDC submitted that the issue for the Committee to determine is whether you possess the requisite knowledge and skill for registration in either the Dental Therapist or Dental Hygienist titles. The GDC stated that the Committee may take into account all of the documentation contained in the Registration Appeal Bundle, in addition to any evidence heard at the hearing.
36. For the purposes of today's assessment, Mr Hamlet invited the Committee to consider whether the material you have provided since the previous decisions were made has moved the dial in favour of allowing this appeal, specifically whether the additional material addresses the lack of recent professional references to demonstrate the learning outcomes. In this regard, Mr Hamlet referred to the fresh professional reference from Dr 1, your employer in Brazil from April to June 2022, and asked whether the information referred to within it, dated June 2022, is sufficiently recent for the requirement of registration. He also invited the Committee to consider the evidence provided by Dr 2 and what weight to attach to his evidence in assisting in deciding whether you are currently eligible for registration as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist.

37. As this is your appeal, the burden is on you to satisfy the Committee that you have the requisite knowledge and skill for registration as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist under Section 36C of the Act. The GDC stated that to grant registration, the Registrar must also be satisfied of your identity, that you have the necessary knowledge of English, are of good character and that you are in good health. It stated that although your qualification has been assessed, the GDC's Registration team may have yet to fully consider the other registration requirements.
38. You told the Committee that you believed that you have provided sufficient evidence of your competency and qualifications to demonstrate that you have addressed the learning outcomes required by the GDC. In particular, you referred to Dr 1's recent reference and the CPD you had targeted at the outstanding learning outcomes.

Committee's decision on appeal

39. 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 both the Professional Adviser, who questioned you on a number of matters whilst under affirmation, and the Legal Adviser.
40. In relation to providing professional references, the Committee noted the advice provided by the GDC in its Case Summary, which stated that when providing a professional reference, it must confirm clinical competency from within the last five years. The Committee acknowledged that the professional reference from Dr 1 relating to your clinical practice as a dentist, from 8 April to 30 June 2022, and falls within the last five years. The Committee was satisfied that the learning outcomes that were considered to be outstanding by the previous assessment panel had been comprehensively addressed in Dr 1's reference. The Committee noted that you practised as a dentist from 2003 until 2010 and this was referred to by Dr 1, who stated that you were '*an extremely skilled, ethical and compassionate professional.*' It noted that you have not practised any hands-on skills since your practical work in Brazil in June 2022 but made your knowledge in those areas clear when questioned in relation to clinical matters, responding to Committee and Professional Adviser questions in some detail. The Committee also had regard to your current practice as a dental nurse which includes supporting dental hygienists as well as interacting with patients on a regular basis.
41. Having heard the oral evidence of Dr 2, the Committee acknowledged how highly he spoke of your practice and his desire to employ you as a dental therapist/dental hygienist should this appeal be successful. He emphasised your strength in writing contemporaneous and accurate clinical records.
42. The Committee also had regard to the considerable targeted CPD courses that you had specifically undertaken to address the outstanding learning outcomes. It took into account that you are the current infection control lead at your place of work, having been appointed to the position in August 2022. In respect of your oral evidence, the Committee considered that your responses to questions were credible and reflected your knowledge of up-to-date guidelines, showing a clear understanding and knowledge of the learning outcomes that were considered by the previous Panels to not have been adequately addressed. Throughout your oral evidence, you demonstrated a clear appreciation of the scope of practice of both the dental hygienist and the dental therapist.
43. The Committee bore in mind the assessments of the previous panels and acknowledged the information that was available to them at the time those decisions were made. However, the Committee was satisfied that the additional evidence is persuasive and the outstanding learning outcomes detailed in the two previous assessments has now been adequately demonstrated.

44. In light of all the information before it, including the submissions of both the GDC and you, the Committee determined that there is sufficient evidence in the new information provided by you for the purposes of this appeal, to adequately address the individual deficiencies outlined by the GDC in its decision letters dated 27 February 2025. It was therefore satisfied that there is nothing further that you are required to complete to demonstrate that you have the requisite skills and knowledge, in respect of Matter C.
45. In all the circumstances, the Committee determined to allow your appeal in respect of Matter C (requisite knowledge and skills) and quash the decisions of the Registrar. The rest of your application, namely Matter D, will be considered by the GDC in due course.
46. This will be confirmed to you in writing in accordance with the Act.
47. That concludes this determination.