

PUBLIC HEARING

Registration Appeals Committee (Registration Appeal Hearing)

28 October 2025

Name: MITTER, Ashima

Case number: CAS-211560-J2G0S7

General Dental Council: Matthew Turner, Counsel.
Instructed by Zara Gull, IHLAS

Registrant: Present
Unrepresented

Outcome: Appeal Dismissed

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

Legal adviser: William Hoskins

Professional Adviser: Bev Littlemore

Committee Secretary: Andrew Keeling

Mrs Mitter,

1. This Registration Appeals Committee was convened to consider your appeal against the decision of the Registrar of the General Dental Council (GDC) that you are not currently eligible for registration as either a Dental Therapist or Dental Hygienist. You attended the hearing, but you were not represented. Mr Matthew Turner, Counsel, appeared on behalf of the GDC. The hearing was held remotely on Microsoft Teams.

Legal Framework

The Dentists Act 1984 (as amended) ("the Act")

2. Section 36C of the Act sets out the relevant requirements for qualification for registration in the dental care professionals (DCP) register:

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, a person shall be entitled to be registered under a particular title in the dental care professionals register if he satisfies the registrar—

- (a) of matter A or C, and*
- (b) of matter D.*

(2) Matter A is that the person holds a qualification or qualifications approved by the Council under section 36D(2) in relation to the profession, or class of members of a profession, to which the title applies.

...

(4) Matter C is that the person—

(a) holds a qualification or qualifications granted by an institution or institutions outside the United Kingdom relevant to the profession complementary to dentistry, or class of members of such a profession, to which the title applies (in this section referred to as “relevant qualifications”); and

(b) has satisfied the Council that he has the requisite knowledge and skill to practise as a member of the profession or class to which the title applies.

(4A) Subsection (4)(b) does not apply to a person whose application for registration is made in reliance on a relevant qualification that—

- (a) was granted in a relevant European State; and*
- (b) demonstrates, in the opinion of the Council, a comparable level of knowledge and skill to that demonstrated by a qualification approved (or qualifications together approved) in respect of the same profession or class under section 36D(2).*

(5) For the purpose of establishing whether a person has the requisite knowledge and skill for the purposes of subsection (4)(b), the Council—

- (a) shall take into account all that person's relevant qualifications, and all relevant knowledge or experience, wherever acquired; and*
- (b) may determine that a person must perform to the satisfaction of the Council in any test or assessment specified in the determination.*

(6) Matter D is—

- (a) the person's identity;*

- (aa) that he has the necessary knowledge of English;*
- (b) that he is of good character; and*
- (c) that he is in good health, both physically and mentally.*

3. As set out above, when determining whether an applicant has the requisite knowledge and skill, the GDC is required under Section 36C(5)(a) of the Act to take into account all the applicant's relevant qualifications, and all relevant knowledge or experience, wherever acquired. The GDC has the power to require an applicant to perform a test or assessment, although it does not currently ask applicants to do so.
4. On 8 March 2023, Section 36C(4)(a) of the Act was amended to remove the diploma in dentistry from the definition of relevant qualifications for this section. As a result, new applicants cannot rely on a degree or diploma in dentistry qualification to join the DCP register. Your application was received prior to this amendment and you are relying on your Bachelor of Dental Surgery degree from India. Accordingly, your application was processed in line with the legislation in force at the time (as set out above).

Background

Registration applications

5. On 22 February 2023, the Council 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 Matters C and D as set out above.
7. Between 16 October 2024 and 17 January 2025, the Council communicated with you to ensure your applications contained the required documents before they could be submitted for consideration. This included guidance that the documents should be clearly legible, and correspondence relating to your request for an extended deadline due to being abroad in India.
8. On 17 January 2025, the Council wrote to you confirming your applications were ready for the Registration Assessment Panel ("the Panel") and would be listed for consideration at the February 2025 Panel meeting.

Assessment and Decisions

Assessment

9. Both applications were assessed by the Panel on 11 February 2025.
10. The assessors noted 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 17 February 2025, the Council wrote to you with a copy of the decision letters. In the decision letters, the Council 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.

Dental Therapist Decision – Reasons

13. The reasons for the Council's decision to decline your Dental Therapist application were set out in its letter to you. The Council confirmed that the Panel identified a list of 28 learning outcomes that were not covered as part of your training or professional experience, along with suggestions for evidence that might demonstrate the learning outcomes.
14. The letter also highlighted the Panel's feedback about professional references:

'The assessment panel have requested for any additional references provided to state recent clinical experience and include the exact dates worked, number of hours worked, the numbers of patients seen and the types of treatments provided.'

Dental Hygienist Decision – Reasons

15. The reasons for the Council's decision to decline your Dental Hygienist application were set out in its letter to you. The Council confirmed that the Panel identified a list of 23 learning outcomes that had not been covered as part of your training or professional experience, along with suggestions for evidence that might demonstrate the learning outcomes.
16. The Panel recommended that any professional references to address the identified learning outcomes should include the information set out above at paragraph 14.
17. In each of the decision letters, the Council also advised you that you could apply for new assessments if you had new or additional information to address the deficiencies listed in the two decision letters. The Council 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 Council advised that due to the amendments to the Act (set out above), 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.

Subsequent Correspondence

18. On 24 February 2025, a further professional work reference for you was provided. This included a covering email reiterating that you had worked as a dentist in India from September 2018 to July 2019 and from 4 October to 27 October 2024.
19. On 25 February 2025, you provided further documents requested for the reassessment panel. This included an updated CV, Immediate Life Support (ILS) certificate, and CPD certificates. You also requested confirmation of receipt of the professional work reference mentioned above.
20. On 4 March 2025, you emailed the Council requesting clarification of receipt of the reassessment evidence and sought clarification as to whether further documentation was required.
21. On 5 March 2025, the Council wrote to you acknowledging receipt of the reassessment documents and further sought clarification as to whether you had any additional dental experience after 27 October 2024 to support your application. The Council also invited you to provide a covering letter explaining your circumstances for inclusion in the reassessment bundle.
22. On the same date, you wrote to the Council confirming that your professional experience as a dentist ended on 27 October 2024 and that you have since been working as a Trainee Dental Nurse. You stated that you have no further dental experience to add and asked if any further information or documentation is required regarding your professional background.

Reassessment

23. On 12 March 2025, the Council confirmed that your applications were listed for reassessment in May 2025.
24. Your applications were reassessed by a different Panel on 8 May 2025. The Panel had before it a copy of the February 2025 decision letters, and the new information provided which included:
 - a. Updated Curriculum Vitae: (12 March 2025);
 - b. Professional Work Reference in relation to Dental Therapist Title (24 February 2025);
 - c. Professional Work Reference in relation to Dental Hygienist Title (24 February 2025);
 - d. CPD certificates (various dates);
 - e. Your Cover Letter (5 March 2025).

25. Having considered the available evidence, including the new information provided, the Panel again did not recommend entry onto the DCP register as a Dental Therapist or as a Dental Hygienist. The Panel included comments relating to the clinical professional reference provided, and in each assessment noted:

'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.'

26. The Council relied on the Panel's recommendations and wrote to you on 21 May 2025 with the outcome of each assessment.

Dental Therapist

27. The Council's 21 May 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 Council identified 24 learning outcomes that you had not met.

28. Alongside each of the above learning outcomes, the Council noted:

'...you were requested to provide a recent clinical professional reference to demonstrate 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.'

Dental Hygienist

29. In addition, the Council's 21 May 2025 letter confirmed that 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. The Council identified 20 learning outcomes that you had not met.

30. As with the Dental Therapist letter, alongside each of the above learning outcomes the Council noted:

'...you were requested to provide a recent clinical professional reference to demonstrate 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.'

31. In addition to the learning outcomes set out above, each of the Council's letters set out your right to appeal. 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 that you could apply to join

the register as a dentist via the Overseas Registration Exam or the Licence in Dental Surgery.

Appeal

32. On 3 June 2025, you filed a Notice of Appeal (“NOA”) for both applications. In that NOA you provided clarification on your clinical references, particularly from October 2024, which you stated demonstrated achievement of the relevant learning outcomes. You also claimed that your original application was made in 2021 when your clinical experience was more recent, and that delays beyond your control have affected how your experience appeared on paper. You also highlighted your current role in the UK as a Trainee Dental Nurse, applying core principles of patient care, communication, and clinical hygiene. You expressed willingness to undertake further steps, such as supervised practice, a bridging course, or additional assessment, to meet the Council’s expectations.
33. You also filed a letter alongside your NOA, which summarised the grounds of your appeal:
- a. Application timeline and delay: you stated that the application was submitted in 2021 and yet a decision was made over two years later. You stated that at the time of submission, your clinical experience was valid and current, and requested that the delay be considered when assessing recency of your professional experience.
 - b. Evidence relevance and sufficiency: you asserted that clinical references provided, particularly from October 2023, were directly aligned with the GDC’s Learning Outcomes and should be considered sufficient.
 - c. Clinical competency: you noted that concerns raised in the decision related mainly to recency of references. You requested a more detailed review of your October 2023 documentation, which you stated addressed many of the outcomes.
 - d. Recent experience: you stated that at the time of submission, your experience was aligned with GDC expectations. You further stated that gaps since then should be attributed to relocation to the UK, not lack of competence.
 - e. UK-based clinical role: you explained you are currently employed as a Trainee Nurse in the UK, undertaking patient care, oral hygiene instruction, and preventive health promotion. You stated these activities reflect relevant competencies for a Dental Hygienist and Therapist.

- f. Immigration and legal constraints: you submitted that your indefinite leave to remain (ILR) application remained pending, preventing overseas travel and limiting opportunities to gain further international clinical experience.
 - g. Residency and integration: you stated you have resided in the UK since 2019 and are committed to continuing your healthcare career here.
 - h. Different routes: you request the GDC to reassess submitted clinical references against the Learning Outcomes, taking into account your ongoing UK-based clinical role as evidence of competency or consider offering a pathway such as supervised practice, a bridging programme, or additional assessment to meet outstanding requirement.
34. Alongside your NOA, you provided two professional work references (both dated 24 February 2025).
35. In a further submission dated 22 August 2025, you provided a further statement and further documents. In your appeal statement, you reiterated the grounds of appeal set out above. You highlighted that you had been working continuously as a Trainee Dental Nurse since August 2020 and that you had gained daily experience in a regulated setting that reinforced your knowledge of cross-infection control, patient safety, consent, teamwork, and professionalism. You also explained that you travelled to India in October 2024 to refresh your clinical skills by working as a dentist. In conclusion, you submitted that your updated CPD portfolio, structured reflections, case-based evidence, and professional references demonstrate that you have now achieved the required learning outcomes.
36. You included further supporting evidence, namely, the following:
- a. Personal Reflective Statement;
 - b. Bridging Statement;
 - c. First Support Letter;
 - d. Second Support Letter;
 - e. Case Based Reflections;
 - f. CPD portfolio;
 - g. Self-reflections list;
 - h. Personal Development Plan;
 - i. Your Dental Therapist Checklist.

Today's Hearing

Oral Evidence and Submissions

37. Mr Turner, on behalf of the GDC, took the Committee through the background to your case, the legal provisions in respect of your application and the powers of the Committee at this hearing.
38. Mr Turner submitted that the GDC's position is that your applications have been assessed by two separate Panels, who have both identified a number of learning outcomes that have not been met. He submitted, therefore, that the GDC's position is as set out in its written case summary for this hearing, which is that you are not currently eligible to be registered as either a Dental Hygienist or Dental Therapist. This is because you have not satisfied the GDC that you have the requisite knowledge and skill for either role. However, he submitted that the burden was on you to satisfy the Committee that you are eligible for registration and the Committee should look at everything afresh.
39. You gave oral evidence at this hearing and answered questions from the Professional Adviser and the Committee. You told the Committee that you had started the process for applying for registration in 2021, but clarified that this involved undertaking CPD courses and you did not submit a proper application to the GDC until 2023. However, you stated that when you started the process of applying in 2021, your clinical experience was more recent and this should be taken into consideration by the Committee. You stated that you are currently in India practising as a dentist in order to obtain the recent clinical experience requested by the GDC.
40. You explained that you worked in India as a dentist between 2018 and 2019 before you arrived in the UK in 2019. You explained that you were then unable to return to India until 2024 owing to personal reasons, Covid restrictions and constraints in taking annual leave from your practice in the UK. You are currently working as a Trainee Dental Nurse at a dental practice in the UK and have done so since August 2020.
41. You described to the Committee your daily routine when practising in India and as an example, explained the treatments you undertook and patients you saw when you practised yesterday.
42. You then answered questions about how you would undertake a periodontal assessment, how you would manage patients in pain and your understanding of the '*Delivering Better Oral Health*' NHS document. You explained that you have not undertaken any hands-on courses whilst in UK as you were under the impression that you had to be registered with the GDC in order to do so. You also explained that you have not been able to assist any Dental Hygienists or Dental Therapists at your dental practice as these clinicians do not work at the practice.
43. With regard to your written self-reflections document, you explained that you took a long time to write these and that they contained all your own words. In response to questions from the Committee, you stated that you did not use ChatGPT or any templates to assist you in writing the documents. You explained to the Committee your

understanding of the scope of practice of a Dental Therapist, but you stated that you did not understand the meaning of Direct Access.

44. In closing submissions, you stated that all of the deficiencies in your knowledge and skills highlighted by the GDC had now been addressed.

The Committee's Powers

45. A decision by the Registrar not to register a person's name in the dental care professional's register is an appealable registration decision under Section 36J and Schedule 4A of the Act. Paragraph 4(8) of Schedule 4A to the Act provides that the Committee may determine to:

- a. dismiss the Appeal;
- b. allow the appeal and quash the decision appealed against;
- c. substitute for the decision appealed against any other decision which could have been made by the Registrar; or
- d. remit the case to the Registrar to dispose of in accordance with the directions of the Registration Appeals Committee.

The Committee's Decision

46. The Committee has carefully considered your appeal. It has taken account of all the documentary evidence and of the submissions made by Mr Turner, on behalf of the Registrar, and your oral evidence. It accepted the advice of the Professional Adviser and the Legal Adviser.

47. The Committee first considered your recent clinical experience. It noted that this amounted to around four weeks since you arrived in UK from India in 2019. The Committee further noted that you had not undertaken any hands-on courses during this time as you were under the mistaken impression that you had to be registered with the GDC to do so. Furthermore, you confirmed that you have not had the opportunity to shadow or observe Dental Hygienists or Dental Therapists. The Committee considered that this was unfortunate as you therefore have not had the opportunity to see first-hand their skill set and working practices. Overall, the Committee considered that your recent clinical experience of 23 days in October 2024 and your current two-week period in India were not sufficient to demonstrate that you have kept your practical clinical skills sufficiently up-to-date.

48. The Committee then went on to consider your oral evidence. You were asked a number of questions by the Committee and the Professional Adviser. The Committee considered that you did not display up-to-date knowledge about dental treatments, guidelines or procedures. It noted that you used some terminology that has now been superseded when answering questions and your responses did not align with current teaching. The Committee also noted that you did not fully understand the scope of

practice for a Dental Therapist. For example, you were unaware that Dental Therapists could take and report on radiographs.

49. In respect of your written self-reflections, the Committee noted that these were very detailed and personal reflections. However, the Committee was concerned to note that this was not supported by your oral evidence and in some instances appeared to directly contradict that evidence. For example, you provided a personal written account of your use of alcohol. However, in oral evidence you told the Committee that you did not drink alcohol. Furthermore, in oral evidence, you stated that you did not understand what was meant by Direct Access despite providing a detailed self-reflection of this in October 2024. Nor were you able to provide the Committee with any assurance that you understood the purpose of the '*Delivering Better Oral Health*' toolkit, which was also the subject of a self-reflection piece.
50. In respect of your most recent work reference from India, on questioning from the Committee, it emerged that you had assisted in a number of procedures rather than carrying them out independently. This was inconsistent with the impression created by this reference.
51. In conclusion, the Committee determined that you had provided insufficient evidence to show that you could practise safely and competently as either a Dental Hygienist or Dental Therapist. Furthermore, your knowledge of both of those roles was limited. The Committee was also mindful that the burden was on you to satisfy the Committee that your appeal should be allowed.
52. Taking everything into consideration, the Committee was not satisfied that you had provided sufficient satisfactory evidence to demonstrate that you have the requisite knowledge and skill to be entered onto the register as either a Dental Hygienist or Dental Therapist as required under Sections 36(c) of the Act.
53. Accordingly, the Committee has determined to dismiss your appeal.
54. That concludes this hearing.