

PUBLIC HEARING**Registration Appeals Committee****Registration appeal hearing****7 August 2025****Name:** ARANHIKKAL, Muhammed Shanib**Case number:** CAS-211335

General Dental Council: Matthew Turner, counsel
Instructed by Lauren Francis, ILAS**Appellant:** Present
Not represented

Outcome: Appeal accepted

Committee members: Susan Stevens (Dentist) (Chair)
Karen Suarez (Dental Care Professional)
Miranda Carruthers-Watt (Lay)**Legal Adviser:** Justin Gau**Professional Adviser:** Marina Harris**Committee Secretary:** Gareth Llewellyn

Mr Aranhikkal

1. You are in attendance at this appeal hearing before the Registration Appeals Committee (RAC). You are not represented. Matthew Turner of counsel, instructed by Lauren Francis of the General Dental Council's (GDC's) In-House Legal Advisory Service, appears for the GDC.

Purpose of hearing

2. This appeal hearing has been convened in accordance with the General Dental Council (Registration Appeals) Rules 2006 ('the Appeal Rules'), pursuant to Section 36J and 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 Registrar not to grant your application for entry to the register as a dental therapist.

Background to the appeal

3. Your application for registration as a dental therapist was received by the GDC on 2 March 2023. You sought to rely on your bachelor of dental surgery (BDS) degree obtained from the Royal Dental College in India in 2022.
4. A Registration Assessment Panel ('the Panel') considered your application on 14 November 2024 and determined that you had not demonstrated that you have the requisite knowledge and skill to be registered as a dental therapist. These requirements derive from Section 36C (4) and (5) of the Act as in force at the time of your application. The Panel identified a number of deficiencies in your knowledge and skill. Accordingly, the Panel recommended that your application for registration as a dental therapist be refused.
5. You asked for your application to be reassessed, and you provided further information in support of your renewed application.
6. A second Panel considered your application on 9 April 2025. That Panel also determined that you had not demonstrated that you had the requisite skill and knowledge to be registered as a dental therapist.
7. In May 2025 you appealed against the Registrar's decision to refuse your application for registration. Your appeal has led to today's hearing.

Evidence

8. In considering this appeal the Committee has considered all the evidence provided to it, including the further documentary information that you provided in support of your appeal.
9. The Committee also heard oral evidence from you. In your oral evidence you stated that you acknowledge the concerns raised by the GDC about your application, but that the actions that you have taken, and the information that you have provided, since the Registrar's refusal to admit you to the register demonstrate that you do in fact possess the requisite knowledge and skill for entry to the register.
10. You were asked a number of questions by the Professional Adviser and the Committee in relation to your knowledge and skill. These included your understanding of the scope of practice of a dental therapist in the UK. For example, aspects of practice such as periodontal care and treatment, motivating patients in relation to their diet and brushing, direct access, managing patient anxiety, including treating child patients, and current UK guidelines

regarding periodontal treatment, decontamination and cross-infection procedures. You also described to the Committee how you would typically treat a patient referred to you, and described your understanding of a number of aspects of patient care and treatment as a dental therapist. You were asked about when you last had hands-on experience, and you stated that in January to March 2025 you were practising as a dentist in India. You stated that you would ultimately like to practise as a dentist in the UK. You stated in conclusion that you do in fact possess the requisite knowledge and skill to practise as a dental therapist in the UK, and you specifically referred to your overseas primary dental qualification in support of that evidence.

Summary of submissions

11. Mr Turner on behalf of the GDC stated that its position is that you are not eligible for registration as a dental therapist and that, accordingly, your appeal should be dismissed. The GDC predicates its position on the conclusions of the Panels as referred to above, namely that you do not possess the requisite knowledge and skill for entry to the register as a dental therapist. Mr Turner reiterated those representations in his closing submissions, and stated that the GDC makes no specific comment on the additional documentary evidence received following the Registrar's decision to refuse registration, or on the oral evidence that you gave.
12. In your closing remarks to the Committee you submitted that you are '*confident in your experience and exposure*', and you referred to the amount of time that you have been waiting to gain entry to the register.

Committee's consideration

13. The Committee has taken into account the evidence provided to it, as well as the submissions made by Mr Turner on behalf of the GDC and those made by you. The Committee has accepted the advice of the Professional Adviser and the Legal Adviser.
14. The Professional Adviser, amongst other advice, referred to your recent professional experience as a dentist in India, which on your evidence has covered key aspects of the practice of a dental therapist, including periodontal care and treatment. The Professional Adviser drew the Committee's attention to what it may consider to be shortcomings in your knowledge, with specific regard to your understanding of the guidelines relevant to the practice of a dental therapist practising in the UK.
15. The Legal Adviser, amongst other advice, advised the Committee that you bear the burden of proof of demonstrating that your name should be entered on to the register as a dental therapist.
16. The Committee's powers when considering such appeals are set out at paragraph 4 (8) of Schedule 4A of the Act. The Committee may, in short, decide to dismiss the appeal, allow the appeal and thereby quash the decision appealed against, substitute for the decision appealed against any other decision that the Registrar could have made, or remit the case to the Registrar for disposal in accordance with any directions that it may wish to give.
17. In determining your appeal the Committee has considered whether you have demonstrated that you have the necessary knowledge and skill to register as a dental therapist in the UK, having taken into account all of your dental qualifications, knowledge and experience, however and wherever acquired.

Committee's decision

18. The Committee has determined to allow your appeal against the Registrar's decision to refuse your application for registration as a dental therapist. The Committee was satisfied that you have demonstrated that you possess the requisite knowledge and skill to practise as a dental therapist. Having regard to all of the evidence presented to it, the Committee considers that the shortcomings in your knowledge and skill as identified by the previous Panels in the form of outstanding learning outcomes have been satisfactorily met. In reaching this conclusion the Committee had particular regard to the oral evidence that you gave in relation to how you would go about providing care and treatment as a dental therapist with regard to a number of key aspects of practice. The Committee considered that your oral evidence was comprehensive. The Committee also had regard, amongst other evidence, to the relevant and supportive professional references put forward in support of your application.
19. In allowing your appeal and deciding that you do possess the requisite knowledge and skill for registration, the Committee refers the matter back to the Registrar for consideration as to your identity, knowledge of English, your good character and your health. Once the Registrar has made a decision as to those other matters, this case need not be referred back to this Committee.
20. That concludes this determination.