

HEARING PART-HELD IN PRIVATE

Registration Appeals Committee

Registration appeal hearing

8 August 2025

Name: MUNEEB, Sameea

Case number: CAS-211367

General Dental Council: Matthew Turner, counsel
Instructed by Noranne Griffith, ILAS

Appellant: Present
Not represented

Outcome: Appeal dismissed

Committee members: Matthew King (Dentist) (Chair)
Karen Suarez (Dental Care Professional)
Miranda Carruthers-Watt (Lay)

Legal Adviser: Justin Gau

Professional Adviser: John Darby

Committee Secretary: Gareth Llewellyn

Mrs Muneeb

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 Noranne Griffith 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 and as a dental hygienist.

Proceeding partly in private

3. At the outset of the hearing the Committee considered whether part of the hearing should be held in private pursuant to Rule 14 (1) of the Appeal Rules in relation to your private and family life. The Committee, having accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser, determined to accede to the application in order to protect your private and family life. The hearing then proceeded partly in private.

Background to the appeal

4. Your applications for registration as a dental therapist and as a dental hygienist were received by the GDC on 25 February 2023. You sought to rely on your bachelor of dental surgery (BDS) degree obtained in Pakistan in 2015.
5. A Registration Assessment Panel ('the Panel') considered your applications on 11 March 2025 and determined that you had not demonstrated that you have the requisite knowledge and skill to be registered as a dental therapist or as a dental hygienist. These requirements derive from Section 36C (4) and (5) of the Act as in force at the time of your applications. The Panel identified a number of deficiencies in your knowledge and skill in respect of both applications, and set out learning outcomes which it was not satisfied had been covered. Accordingly, the Panel recommended that your applications for registration as a dental therapist and as a dental hygienist be refused.
6. You asked for your applications to be reassessed, and you provided further information in support of your renewed applications, including in relation to matters relating to your personal life and the wider effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which you stated affected your ability to gain professional experience. You asked for further time in which to gain professional experience. However, as that information did not include a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency in the relevant areas, the matter was not reassessed by the Panel.
7. In May 2025 you appealed against the Registrar's decision to refuse your applications for registration. You reiterated the points referred to in your previous correspondence. Your appeal has led to today's hearing.

Evidence

8. In considering this appeal the Committee has considered all the evidence provided to it, both written and oral.

9. The Committee heard oral evidence from you. In your oral evidence you described the difficult personal matters that you have experienced over the past few years as referred to in your applications and appeal. You described your professional experience. You stated that, having qualified as a dentist in Pakistan in 2015, you moved to the UK in 2017, and that you worked as a trainee dental nurse in the UK from 2021 to 2023. You stated that, beginning in 2017, personal circumstances beyond your control meant that you could not work and gain experience which account for the gaps in your clinical practice.
10. In response to questions asked of you by the Professional Adviser and the Committee, you described the content of your undergraduate studies in Pakistan, which was followed by a one-year clinical experience year. You described the nature and content of your postgraduate experience in clinical settings. You stated that you last treated a patient in 2017, although you stated that you had some exposure to clinical care and treatment whilst working as a trainee dental nurse. You set out your understanding of the scopes of practice of a dental therapist and a dental hygienist. You stated that, if the Committee were to accept your appeal, you would return to Pakistan to gain further professional experience within the next fortnight.

Summary of submissions

11. Mr Turner on behalf of the GDC stated that the GDC's 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 Panel as referred to above, namely that you do not possess the requisite knowledge and skill for entry to the register as a dental therapist or as a dental hygienist. In its written submissions, which Mr Turner adopted for the purposes of his submissions, the GDC recognised that you have asked for further time in which to gain professional experience in support of your applications, but that your applications '*cannot be held open for an indefinite period in order for [you] to work abroad to gain further experience*'. Mr Turner submitted that, in light of your lack of recent clinical experience, the shortcomings in your knowledge and skill mean that you are not suitable for registration as a dental therapist or as a dental hygienist.
12. In your submissions you stated that, due to circumstances beyond your control, you accept that you do not have sufficient and recent professional experience to demonstrate that you possess the requisite knowledge and skill for entry to the register as a dental hygienist or as a dental therapist. You stated that your inability to meet the requisite levels of knowledge and skill was for reasons beyond your control, and you invited the Committee to have regard to those circumstances as well as to your commitment to the professions which you have applied to join. You asked for further time to meet the criteria for registration to make good on the deficiencies that the GDC has identified.

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, advised the Committee that your undergraduate studies were similar to those of the equivalent programme of study in the UK. The Professional Adviser referred to your postgraduate experience in Pakistan, as well as your duties and experience whilst working as a trainee dental nurse in the UK. The Professional Adviser reminded the Committee of the evidence that you gave in relation to you keeping up your professional knowledge, and of your understanding of the scope of practice. The Professional Adviser drew the Committee's attention to your lack of relevant

professional clinical experience since 2017. The Professional Adviser invited the Committee to have regard to these matters when determining your appeal.

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 and a dental hygienist.
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 or as a dental hygienist, or both, 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 dismiss your appeal against the Registrar's decision to refuse your applications for registration as a dental therapist and as a dental hygienist. The Committee was not satisfied that you have demonstrated that you possess the requisite knowledge and skill to practise as a dental therapist or as a dental hygienist. 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 Panel in the form of outstanding learning outcomes have not been met. The Committee has serious concerns arising from your lack of recent clinical experience such that it is not satisfied that you possess the requisite knowledge and skill. Whilst the Committee heard from you that you would like additional time in which to make good the identified shortcomings in your knowledge and skill, it has no power within the Act and the Rules to grant such an application.
19. The Committee has every sympathy with the difficult personal circumstances to which you have referred, and considers that it is apparent that you are conscientious and committed. However, the Committee considers that it remains the case the deficiencies in your knowledge and skill are such that you are not suitable for entry to the register as either a dental therapist or a dental hygienist. It is because of this assessment of your knowledge and skill, and this assessment alone, that the Committee concludes that it must dismiss your appeal.

Right of appeal

20. You may appeal against this decision to the relevant court in accordance with paragraph (6) of Schedule 4A to the Act.
21. That concludes this determination.