

HEARING HELD IN PUBLIC

Registration Appeals Committee (Registration Appeal Hearing)

23 March 2026

Name: VADDADI, Sai Venkata Geetha Chandrahasa

Case number: CAS-212505-R6V4B2

General Dental Council: Rebecca Vanstone, Counsel
Instructed by Lauren Francis, ILAS

Appellant: Present
Represented by Revd. Dcn. Joice James Pallickamyallil
(Lay Representative)

Outcome: Appeal allowed in respect of Matter C
Remitted back to the Registrar in respect of Matter D

Committee members: Gaon Hart (Chair, Lay Member)
Christopher Parker (Dental Care Professional Member)
Sarah Benton (Dentist Member)

Professional Adviser: John Darby

Legal Adviser: Alastair McFarlane

Committee Secretary: Lola Bird

Ms Vaddadi,

1. This is a Registration Appeals Committee hearing. The hearing is being conducted remotely by Microsoft Teams video-link.
2. The hearing is being held in accordance with the terms of the *General Dental Council (Registration Appeals) Rules Order of Council 2006*, pursuant to Schedule 4A of the *Dentists Act 1984 (as amended)* ('the Dentists Act').
3. The purpose of this hearing has been for the Committee to consider your appeal against the decisions of the GDC's Registrar that you are not eligible for registration in the Dental Care Professionals Register ('the DCP Register') as a Dental Therapist and/or a Dental Hygienist.
4. You are represented at these proceedings by Reverend Deacon Joice James Pallickamyilil, a lay representative. Ms Rebecca Vanstone, Counsel, appears on behalf of the Registrar of the GDC.

Legal framework and background

5. The Committee had regard to the legal framework and factual background to this appeal, as set out in the written case summary provided by the GDC dated 3 March 2026, and as outlined by Ms Vanstone in her opening submissions.
6. On 7 March 2023, the GDC received from you two applications for registration, one for registration as a Dental Therapist, and the other for registration as a Dental Hygienist. In making your applications, you relied on your Bachelor of Dental Surgery obtained in India in 2022.
7. It is noted in the GDC's case summary that there has been a change in the law since 8 March 2023, in relation to how applicants with overseas diplomas in dentistry can join the DCP Register. Prior to 8 March 2023, an applicant who held an overseas diploma in dentistry was able to apply to join the DCP Register. However, applicants can no longer rely on diplomas in dentistry and must now hold a relevant DCP qualification in order to join the DCP Register.
8. As your applications were received by the GDC on 7 March 2023, which was a day before the change in legislation, they were processed in accordance with the legislative framework in place at that time. Therefore, in setting out the law in this case, the GDC has referred to the relevant parts of the Dentists Act that were in force at the time your applications were received.
9. Accordingly, it is noted that your applications for registration were made under Section 36C of the Dentists Act. Sections 36C(1) to (2) and (4) to (6) of the Dentists Act, as they were at the material time, stated as follows:

(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)
- (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 [they have] the necessary knowledge of English;*
- (b) that [they are] of good character; and*
- (c) that [they are] in good health, both physically and mentally.*

10. You made your applications under Matters C and D above. However, the only matter under consideration at this appeal is whether you possess the requisite knowledge and skill to be registered as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist in accordance with Matter C.

11. Ms Vanstone informed the Committee that, as your applications for registration failed in respect of Matter C, the Matter D criteria were not considered. She therefore submitted that in the event the Committee is satisfied today that you have the requisite knowledge and skill under Matter C, the Matter D criteria would still need to be assessed by the GDC.

Requisite knowledge and skill

12. Under the applicable legal framework, when determining whether an applicant has the requisite knowledge and skill, the GDC was required under section 36C(5)(a) of the Dentists Act to take into account all the applicant's relevant qualifications, and all relevant knowledge or experience, wherever acquired.

The first assessment panel outcome

13. On 8 April 2025, three assessors formed a Registration Assessment Panel ('the first assessment panel') and considered individually your applications for registration.

14. On the basis of the information you provided, the first assessment panel was not satisfied that the content of the training course which led to the award of your primary qualification met the standard in preparing to practice for a Dental Therapist or a Dental Hygienist. Further, having taken into account the information you provided regarding your professional experience and any additional training undertaken, the first assessment panel was not satisfied that this experience covered the shortfalls identified in relation to your primary qualification.

15. Having assessed both your applications, the first assessment panel did not recommend your entry onto the DCP Register as a Dental Therapist or as a Dental Hygienist. That panel did not consider that you had demonstrated the requisite knowledge and skill to be eligible for registration under either title.

16. The Registrar relied on the first assessment panel's decisions in respect of your applications and the GDC wrote to you by way of separate letters, both dated 17 April 2025, which explained the outcomes of the assessments. The GDC informed you that the reason for the refusal of your applications was that the first assessment panel had identified that a number of learning outcomes, relevant to the practice of a Dental Therapist and a Dental Hygienist, had not been covered as part of your training or professional experience. The relevant learning outcomes were set out in detail in the respective letters of 17 April 2025.

17. In summary, the main reason for the first assessment panel's refusal decisions were that, in relation to the majority of the learning outcomes, you had not provided a recent professional reference confirming your clinical competency. It was also noted in respect of some of the listed learning outcomes that evidence of self-reflection on certain topics was required.

18. You were advised in the letters that, should you have any new or additional information which would address the deficiencies identified by the first assessment panel, you could submit the additional information to the GDC by 19 May 2025 for reconsideration by the Registrar. You were further advised of your right to appeal the refusal of your applications.

The second assessment panel outcome

19. You did provide additional information to the GDC, including further professional work references, and on 9 July 2025, your applications were re-assessed by a Registration Assessment Panel ('the second assessment panel').

20. Having re-assessed your individual applications, the second assessment panel did not recommend your entry onto the DCP Register as a Dental Therapist or as a Dental Hygienist. That second panel, having taken account of your qualification, professional experience and additional training, considered that you did not demonstrate the requisite knowledge and skill to be eligible for registration under either title.

21. The Registrar relied on the second assessment panel's decisions and on 22 July 2025, the GDC notified you by way of separate letters that it had been identified that a number of learning outcomes, relevant to the practice of a Dental Therapist and a Dental Hygienist, had not been covered as part of your training or professional experience. The relevant learning outcomes were set out in detail in each of the letters. The main reason given for the refusal of your applications was the lack of a recent clinical professional reference to demonstrate the learning outcomes. It was stated that the evidence of clinical experience you had provided was insufficient to satisfy the Registrar that you have the requisite knowledge and skill to practise under either title. You were again advised of your right to appeal the Registrar's decisions.

Your appeal

22. On 20 August 2025, the GDC received your Notice of Appeal (NOA) appealing the decisions of the Registrar not to register you as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist. In support of your appeal, you provided two further professional work references dated August 2025. You maintained the following grounds in your written NOA:

- a. Your professional work references were overlooked.
- b. There is a lack of published criteria for applications.
- c. If you had been aware of the requirements, you would have made attempts to meet them.
- d. The application process is discriminatory and inconsistent.
- e. Your college degree is evidence of your competency.
- f. Imposing arbitrary clinical evidence requirements is unscientific and unethical.
- g. The additional professional references should be taken into account.

Today's appeal hearing

23. The Committee heard submissions from Ms Vanstone made on behalf of the Registrar, as well as submissions from Revd. Dcn. Pallickamyilil made on your behalf. The Committee also heard oral evidence from you.

24. Further, the Committee had before it additional evidence in support of your appeal, comprising the two professional work references of August 2025, a further professional work reference dated 10 March 2026 and evidence of your Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Initial submissions made on behalf of the Registrar

25. Ms Vanstone referred the Committee to the areas of deficiency identified by the second assessment panel which, she highlighted, included 33 separate learning outcomes relevant to the practice of a Dental Hygienist and 38 separate learning outcomes relevant to the practice of a Dental Therapist.

26. Ms Vanstone submitted that the Registrar was entitled to refuse your applications for registration, given that the material submitted and considered by the assessment panels did not demonstrate that you have the requisite knowledge and skill for registration as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist.

27. Ms Vanstone acknowledged that you have submitted further information in support of your appeal. She stated that it would be a matter for the Committee whether there is now sufficient evidence to demonstrate that you have met the learning outcomes that were identified as deficient. Ms Vanstone submitted that generally, when assessors are considering applications for registration, they look for evidence of clinical experience within the last two years. She submitted that the Registrar must be satisfied that an applicant would not pose a risk to the public if admitted to the GDC Register. Ms Vanstone submitted that, in light of the concern raised by the assessment panels in respect of your primary qualification, the Committee must be satisfied that any additional evidence provided in relation to your knowledge, skills and training since obtaining that qualification must satisfy the outstanding learning outcomes.

28. In relation to the various grounds of appeal, as set out in your NOA, Ms Vanstone submitted that there was no need for the Committee to make a finding in relation to each. She stated that the only matter for the Committee to determine was whether you possess the requisite knowledge of skill for registration as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist.

29. In respect of the particular matter you raised in your NOA regarding the lack of published criteria for applications for registration, Ms Vanstone acknowledged that there is no such guidance. However, she submitted that whilst there is no published policy in relation to the request for recent clinical experience, this requirement allows for flexibility and gives the assessors the opportunity to take a holistic view of applications before making reasoned decisions.

30. In his initial submissions, Revd. Dcn. Pallickamyilil stated that you are a Dentist qualified in India. He told the Committee that you have taken every opportunity to return to India, when possible, to work as a Dentist there. In this regard, he referred the Committee to the professional work references you provided, in particular the most recent references, which he said were detailed and self-explanatory in terms of your clinical competence. He also told the Committee that you have completed a Master's Degree in Oral Sciences and he drew the Committee's attention to the evidence of your CPD which, he said, demonstrated your efforts to keep your knowledge and skills up to date and in accordance with UK practice.

Your oral evidence

31. The Committee next heard your oral evidence, in which you addressed in detail your undergraduate experience, which you said included a one-year compulsory internship from 2021 to 2022. You spoke about your theoretical and practical learning as an undergraduate and provided considerable information in relation to the procedures you undertook during your internship. You also spoke about your completion of your Master's Degree in Advanced/Graduate Dentistry and Oral Sciences in September 2023 and the exposure the course provided in terms of you being able to observe dental students in hospital and at school camps.

32. You also gave evidence in relation to your work in the UK, including as a Clinical Support Work in the NHS working in Theatres and Anaesthetics, a role you have been undertaking since February 2024. You told the Committee about your experience observing clinicians whilst you have been working in the UK, including Dentists and Dental Therapists.

33. You also outlined the work you had undertaken as a Dentist in India, including most recently from October to December 2025. You gave detailed examples of how you have and would assess patients in various circumstances, highlighting your experience in areas relevant to the practice of a Dental Therapist and a Dental Hygienist. In answer to questions put to you in cross-examination, you stated that you had treated around 10 patients a day during your most recent period of practice in India, as well as examined a number of other patients. It was noted that you had also worked as a Dentist in India in 2024, which was part-time for a period of one month (September to October 2024).

34. You went on to answer a number of questions from the independent Professional Adviser present at these proceedings. These included further questions in relation to your undergraduate experience. Having already explained in detail the work you undertook on phantom heads, you confirmed to the Professional Adviser that, as an undergraduate, you had to pass tests before being assessed as competent to treat patients. You also explained that, during your undergraduate studies, whilst seeing patients in clinics, you were supervised at each stage of a patient's treatment by your professors. You further outlined your undergraduate experience in relation to treating children, including undertaking pulpotomies and pulpectomies, the format of your final examinations and the insights you gained from discussing cases with fellow students.

35. Additionally, you spoke about your most recent clinical experience when you returned to work as a Dentist in India. You set out the work that you had undertaken within the scope of practice of a Dental Therapist and Dental Hygienist, including in the treatment of both children and adults. You stated that your work practice in India during this time was initially supervised by the chief Dentist at the practice but mostly undertaken unsupervised.

36. In relation to your experience observing clinicians whilst you have been working in the UK, including Dentists and Dental Therapists. You stated that you had had the opportunity to speak to the clinicians about your observations, and that you considered yourself confident and competent to undertake the required scopes of practice of a Dental Therapist and a Dental Hygienist.

37. You also gave evidence about the CPD that you have undertaken, specifically the hands-on courses you have completed. You highlighted the hands-on course you undertook in February 2026 on 'Fundamentals of periodontal disease in general dental practice' and another hands-on course on 'Pulpotomy, Hall Technique and MIH (Molar Incisor Hypomineralisation)', which you completed in March 2026. You stated that in addition, you have had the opportunity to work on phantom heads assisting a friend who is currently undertaking the Overseas Registration Exam.

Closing submissions made by the parties

38. Following your oral evidence, the Committee heard closing submissions from both parties.

39. Ms Vanstone reminded the Committee that the burden was on you to demonstrate that you possess the requisite knowledge and skill to practise as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist. She also asked the Committee to bear in mind that you have only undertaken three months of clinical practice in the last three and a half years. She submitted that de-skilling was an issue that needed

to be considered by the Committee, including any public protection concerns that may arise from you being admitted to the DCP Register.

40. Lastly, Ms Vanstone reminded the Committee that if it determined that it was satisfied that you do have the requisite knowledge and skill for registration under one or both titles (Matter C), it should give consideration to remitting this case back to the Registrar in relation to the outstanding criteria under Matter D.

41. Revd. Dcn. Pallickamyilil submitted that it has been evident at today's hearing that you do possess the requisite knowledge and skill for registration as a Dental Therapist and Dental Hygienist. He submitted that the referees who have provided you with references have observed your work and confirmed your clinical competence. Revd. Dcn. Pallickamyilil submitted that the during of your clinical practice is not the only factor that should be considered, but that the Committee should have regard to the evidence of the quality of your work and that patients were treated safely. He also invited the Committee to consider your oral evidence, the evidence of your CPD, including the hands-on courses, and your completion of a Master's Degree, all of which he said demonstrate how you have kept your knowledge and skills up to date.

The Committee's decision on your appeal

42. The Committee noted that the only question before it, which was agreed by the parties, was whether you possess the requisite knowledge and skill to be registered as a Dental Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist. It considered all the evidence before it, including your oral evidence. It took account of the submissions made by Ms Vanstone on behalf of the Registrar and those made by Revd. Dcn. Pallickamyilil on your behalf.

43. The Committee accepted the advice of the independent Professional Adviser, including that your evidence in relation to your undergraduate study and assessment in India was very similar to what might be experienced by an undergraduate dental student in the UK. The Committee also accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser, who confirmed that the correct legal framework in respect of this appeal is as set out in the GDC's case summary of 3 March 2026.

44. 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 Therapist and/or Dental Hygienist. The Committee also remained mindful of the overarching statutory objective of the GDC and its task in assessing whether you would be a safe and competent practitioner under either of the relevant titles.

45. The Committee took into account that your applications for registration were considered and refused by two qualified assessment panels comprising of members in the relevant fields of practice. However, the Committee had before it today, evidence that was not before the assessment panels, which included your oral evidence. The Committee found you to be a credible witness and it was reassured by your detailed answers to the questions that were put to you. It found that you demonstrated considerable knowledge in relation to the scope of practice of a Dental Therapist and Dental Hygienist and it was clear that you have a passion for the profession.

46. The Committee took into account that the primary reason for the refusal of your applications was the limited nature of your recent clinical experience. The Committee noted that you have undertaken two months' clinical practice in the last six months, with just over three months' clinical practice in the last three and a half years. However, the Committee had regard to the extensive CPD evidence that you provided, covering areas of practice relevant to a Dental Therapist and a Dental Hygienist. In considering this evidence, the Committee considered the hands-on learning to be of particular relevance to the deficiencies identified by the second assessment panel. It noted your completion of two hands-on courses in February and March 2026 respectively and that both were based on practice in the UK. The Committee also took into account your evidence of the informal training that you have been undertaking on phantom heads, in addition to your shadowing of Dentists and DCP colleagues whilst working in the NHS.

47. It was the conclusion of the Committee, taking into account all the evidence presented, both oral and documentary, that in addition to the brief periods that you have practised in India, you have made considerable efforts to ensure that you have kept your skills up to date, including in accordance with UK practice. The Committee considered the individual learning outcomes that were identified as deficient by the second assessment panel in July 2025. It was satisfied, on the basis of the evidence received at this appeal, that you have met all the learning outcomes relevant to the practice of a Dental Therapist and that you have effectively addressed those relevant to the practice of a Dental Hygienist at the same time. The Committee was satisfied that you would be a safe and competent addition to the DCP register.

48. The Committee therefore determined to allow your appeal in respect of both titles.

Remittal back to the Registrar in relation to Matter D only

49. The only matters for consideration at this appeal were in relation to your knowledge and skill for registration as a Dental Therapist and Dental Hygienist. The Committee has determined that you do have the requisite knowledge and skills to be registered under both titles and has determined to allow your appeal on this basis.

50. However, as explained during the course of these proceedings, there remain the outstanding requirements for registration under Matter D which, the Committee understands, have not been assessed by the GDC's Registrations Department. These are the requirements relating to your identity, whether you have the necessary knowledge of English, are of good character and are of good health.

51. In the circumstances, the Committee remits your case to the Registrar to dispose of in accordance with its direction that:

You are entitled to be entered onto the DCP Register as a Dental Therapist and Dental Hygienist subject to the GDC having assessed you as suitable for registration under Matter D.

52. That concludes this determination.