

PUBLIC HEARING**Registration Appeals Committee
(Registration Appeal Hearing)****6 August 2024****Name:** OKHLOPKOVA, Elena**Registration number:** 273503

General Dental Council: Jayesh Jotangia, Counsel/Case Presenter.
Instructed by ILAS**Registrant:** Not Present and not represented.

Outcome: Appeal dismissed

Committee members: Adair Richards (Chair and Lay member)
Angela Wragg (DCP Member)
Suleman Anwar (Dentist Member)**Legal adviser:** Jenny Appleton**Professional adviser:** Malcolm Smith**Committee Secretary:** Gurjeet Dhuper

1. This is an appeal before the Registration Appeals Committee (the “Committee”). Mrs Okhlopkova appeals against the Registrar’s decision refusing her application for registration in the DCP register under the title of a Dental Hygienist. The issue on appeal is whether Mrs Okhlopkova demonstrates the requisite knowledge and skill to practise as a member of the profession under that title in accordance with the requirements of section 36C of the Dentists Act 1984 (the “Act”).

Proceeding in Mrs Okhlopkova’s absence

2. The Committee was satisfied that it was appropriate to proceed in the absence of Mrs Okhlopkova. The Committee considered that service of notice of these proceedings was properly served on her in accordance with the General Dental Council (Registration Appeals) Rules 2006 (the rules). It also noted that on 5 August 2024 Mrs Okhlopkova emailed the Dental Professional Hearings Service to state that she was content for the appeal hearing to proceed in her absence. The Committee was also satisfied that it was appropriate for it to consider the appeal at this hearing, as it was of the view that the requirements of paragraph 5 and 13 of the Appeal Rules have been met.

Background and submissions

3. Mrs Okhlopkova is currently registered with the Council as a Dental Nurse. Mrs Okhlopkova has been registered with the Council as a Dental Nurse since 25 September 2017. She first applied for registration as a Dental Hygienist on 29 July 2020, however this application was returned to Mrs Okhlopkova as it was deemed to be incomplete. Between 22 January 2021 and 01 September 2023 there was various correspondence between Mrs Okhlopkova, her husband and the GDC regarding the status of Mrs Okhlopkova’s application. It transpired that Mrs Okhlopkova had not received the GDC’s letter dated 08 September 2020 explaining her application was being returned. In the light of this, it was agreed, by email on 16 April 2023, that the GDC would accept a further application from Mrs Okhlopkova under the closed route and that she would not be required to pay a further application fee.
4. On 04 October 2023, the GDC received an email from Mrs Okhlopkova’s husband seeking advice as to whether Mrs Okhlopkova’s dentistry degree from Novosibirsk University needs to have an apostille stamp or if it can be accepted without this. On the same day, the GDC sent an email to Mrs Okhlopkova’s husband confirming that the Council require the syllabus to be verified by the University, or a letter confirming the same. On 19 October 2023, Mrs Okhlopkova resubmitted an application form for registration as a Dental Hygienist.
5. On 27 November 2023, the GDC sent an email to Mrs Okhlopkova requesting outstanding documents, namely a verified syllabus, translated syllabus and a Certificate of Good Standing (“CGS”). On 28 November 2023, the GDC sent an email to Mrs Okhlopkova and her husband confirming that the current CGS could be accepted but that an updated CGS would be required should her application be successful.
6. On 06 December 2023, the GDC sent an email to Mrs Okhlopkova confirming that her application was ready for assessment and would be presented to the January 2024 assessment panel, and an update would be provided in due course.

7. Mrs Okhlopkova's application is made under section 36C of the Act. Mrs Okhlopkova is seeking to rely on a National Diploma in Dental Nursing obtained in the UK in June 2017. She is also relying on a Dentistry Diploma in Russia obtained in 1994. It is these qualifications which have been assessed for the purposes of Mrs Okhlopkova's application. Therefore, Mrs Okhlopkova seeks to demonstrate that she is suitable for registration as a Dental Hygienist by satisfying the Registrar of Matter C and D.
8. In respect of Matter C, that is Mrs Okhlopkova holds a qualification or qualifications granted by an institution outside the United Kingdom relevant to the Dental Hygienist title and they have satisfied the Council that they have the requisite knowledge and skill to practice as a Dental Hygienist.
9. With regards to Matter D, that Mrs Okhlopkova has satisfied the Registrar of her identity, her knowledge of English, is of good character and is of good health, both physically and mentally.

Assessment of application and decision

10. Three assessors formed the Registration Assessment Panel on 25 January 2024 and reviewed Mrs Okhlopkova's application pack in respect of the Dental Hygienist title. Having considered the Dental Hygienist application, the Panel did not recommend entry onto the register, as the evidence provided by Mrs Okhlopkova did not demonstrate that she possessed the requisite knowledge and skill to be eligible for registration as a Dental Hygienist.
11. The GDC relied on the recommendation of the Panel and wrote to Mrs Okhlopkova on 09 February 2024 with the outcome of the assessment. The reasons for the decision were set out in the letter and the GDC confirmed that the Panel had identified the following learning outcomes as having not been covered as part of her training or professional experience:
 - a. ***DH 1.2.1 Recognise the importance of and carry out an appropriate systematic intra- and extraoral clinical examination - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
 - b. ***DH 1.2.2 Recognise the importance of and record a comprehensive and contemporaneous patient history - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
 - c. ***DH 1.2.3 Recognise the significance of changes in the patient's reported oral health status and take appropriate action - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a***



minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.

- d. ***DH 1.2.4 Recognise abnormalities of the oral cavity and the rest of the patient and raise concerns where appropriate - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
- e. ***DH 1.2.5 Undertake relevant special investigations and diagnostic procedures, including radiography - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
- f. ***DH 1.2.6 Assess patients' levels of anxiety, experience and expectations in respect of dental care - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
- g. ***DH 1.2.7 Discuss the importance of each component of the patient assessment process – To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
- h. ***DH 1.5.2 Obtain valid consent from the patient before starting treatment, explaining all the relevant options and possible costs - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
- i. ***DH 1.5.3 Plan the delivery of, and carry out, care in the best interests of the patient - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.***
- j. ***DH 1.5.4 Identify where patients' needs may differ from the treatment plan and refer patients for advice when and where appropriate - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable***



to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.

- k. *DH 1.5.5 Discuss the role of the dental hygienist and other members of the dental team in the treatment plan - To meet this outcome please provide self-reflections on GDC Scope of Practice for the whole team, Direct Access and patient group directives.*
- l. *DH 1.7.1 Treat all patients with equality, respect and dignity - To meet this outcome please provide an up-to-date CPD with reflection Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.*
- m. *DH 1.7.2 Explain the impact of medical and psychological conditions in the patient - To meet this outcome please provide a Up to date CPD to address learning outcome.*
- n. *DH 1.7.3 Recognise the need to monitor and review treatment outcomes - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*
- o. *DH 1.7.4 Manage patient anxiety and pain through effective communication, reassurance and relevant behavioural techniques - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*
- p. *DH 1.7.5 Manage patient pain through the appropriate use of analgesia - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*
- q. *DH 1.8.1 Recognise the risks around the clinical environment and manage these in a safe and efficient manner - To meet this outcome please provide a self-reflection on Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) RIDDOR and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).*
- r. *DH 1.8.3 Recognise and take responsibility for the quality of care provided to the patient – To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*
- s. *DH 1.8.4 Take responsibility for ensuring compliance with current best practice guidelines – To meet this outcome please provide self-reflections and self-declarations, signed and dated on the below:*
 - i. *National institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines:*
 - 1. *(NG30) Oral health promotion: general dental practice*
 - 2. *(NG48) Oral health for adults in care homes*



3. (CG19) *Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews guidelines*
- ii. *College of General Dentistry; Clinical Examination and Record-Keeping: Good Practice Guidelines (previously known as Faculty of General Dental Practice),*
 - iii. *Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP),*
 - iv. *British Society of Periodontology Flowchart implementing the 2017 Classification*
 - v. *British Society of Periodontology clinical guidelines - Basic Periodontal Examination (BPE) 2019.*
- t. *DH 1.8.6 Explain the importance of and maintain contemporaneous, complete and accurate patient records in accordance with legal requirements and best practice - To meet this outcome please provide a self-reflection on the College of General Dentistry (CGDent) (previously known as Faculty of General Dental Practice UK (FGDP)) Clinical Examination and Record-Keeping: Good Practice Guidelines.*
- u. *DH 1.10.1 Recognise the responsibilities of the dental team as an access point to and from wider healthcare - To meet this outcome please provide a self-reflection on UK NHS commissioning pathways.*
- v. *DH 1.10.2 Provide patients with comprehensive and accurate preventive education and instruction in a manner which encourages self-care and motivation - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*
- w. *DH 1.10.3 Underpin all patient care with a preventive approach that contributes to the patient's long-term oral health and general health - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*
- x. *DH 1.10.4 Advise on and apply a range of preventive materials and treatment - T To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*
- y. *DH 1.10.5 Assess the results of treatment and provide appropriate aftercare and ongoing preventive advice - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*



- z. **DH 1.10.6** Describe the health risks of diet, drugs and substance misuse, and substances such as tobacco and alcohol on oral and general health and provide appropriate advice, referral and support - **To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.**
- aa. **DH 1.11.1** Assess and manage the health of periodontal and soft tissues taking into account risk and lifestyle factors - **To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.**
- bb. **DH 1.11.2** Explain and take account of the impact of the patient's periodontal and general health on the overall treatment plan and outcomes - **To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.**
- cc. **DH 1.11.3** Undertake non-surgical treatments, under prescription where appropriate, to remove hard and soft deposits and stains using a range of methods - **To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.**
- dd. **DH 1.11.4** Monitor and record changes in periodontal health as necessary using appropriate indices - **To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period. and self-reflection British Society of Periodontology (BSP) clinical guidelines: Basic Periodontal Examination (BPE).**
- ee. **DH 1.11.5** Recognise and appropriately manage the complications associated with periodontal therapy - **To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.**
- ff. **DH 1.11.6** Place temporary dressings and re-cement crowns with a temporary cement – **To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent '**



we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.

gg. DH 1.11.7 *Recognise the role of surgical management of periodontal diseases and provide appropriate patient care - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*

hh. DH 1.11.8 *Describe the risks related to dental implant therapy and manage the health of periimplant tissues - To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.*

ii. DH 3.0 Patients, their representatives and the public

Communicate appropriately, effectively and sensitively at all times with and about patients, their representatives and the general public and in relation to:

- i. patients with anxious or challenging behaviour*
- ii. referring patients to colleagues, particularly where patients are from diverse backgrounds or there are barriers to patient communication*
- iii. difficult circumstances, such as when breaking bad news, and when discussing issues, such as alcohol consumption, smoking or diet.*
- iv. Obtain informed consent.*

To meet this outcome please provide a recent professional reference confirming clinical competency. If you are unable to provide a recent reference, (by 'recent ' we mean within the last 2 years) it should be within the last 5 years. For a reference to be considered by the assessors at panel, a minimum of 2 months clinical experience is desired over a duration of 12 months for each year over the 5-year period.

12. The letter advised Mrs Okhlopko that should she have any new or additional information which would address the above deficiencies identified by the Panel, she could submit the additional information by 08 March 2024, and the Registrar would consider the additional evidence submitted and provide a new decision on her application.

13. In addition, the letter also advised Mrs Okhlopko that, as of 08 March 2023, she cannot use her overseas diploma in dentistry to support an application for registration as a DCP in the UK. If Mrs Okhlopko's application was unsuccessful at the next assessment panel, she was informed that her application would not be processed any further, and that if she still wanted to apply to join the register as a dentist she would need to complete the Overseas Registration Exam or the Licence in Dental Surgery. The letter also advised Mrs Okhlopko of her right to appeal the decision, and that any appeal would need to be received by the GDC by 10 March 2024.

14. On 19 February 2024, the GDC received an email from Mrs Okhlopkova's husband seeking help with his wife's application and indicated that they will be appealing the decision and require guidance on how to appeal.
15. On 04 March 2024, the GDC sent an email to Mrs Okhlopkova's husband setting out the timeline of Mrs Okhlopkova's application and process, and the decision. In relation to the requirement to have two professional clinical references that are no more than two years old is set out in the GDC's guidance notes to the application. Further, given the difficulties over the last four years with the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions on carrying out clinical duties, the assessors have taken the view of reviewing clinical experience over the last five years from the time the application was submitted, which was August 2023.
16. In addition, in relation to learning outcome DH 1.11.6, the GDC explained that it relates to dental tasks that can be undertaken by a dental hygienist as set out in the GDC's Scope of Practice. Lastly, it was confirmed that Mrs Okhlopkova could have an extension of time until 22 March 2024 to submit any additional information, if required, or that she could submit an appeal by 10 March 2024.
17. On 26 April 2024, the GDC sent a letter to Mrs Okhlopkova's husband in which the timeline of the application process was set out, as well as the information regarding the clinical reference requirements and the reason behind extending the two-year period for clinical experience to five years to assist applicants in light of the restrictions created by the Covid-19 pandemic.
18. On 08 March 2024, the GDC received a Notice of Appeal ("NOA") from Mrs Okhlopkova, in which she confirmed her wish to appeal the decision to refuse her applications for registration as a Dental Hygienist. Within her NOA, Mrs Okhlopkova explained that when she first moved to the UK in 2011, she struggled to find the relevant information and guidance from the GDC's website about how she could apply for registration as an overseas applicant. As the overseas registration exam had a low success rate and was expensive, Mrs Okhlopkova says that she applied twice for a three-year Dental Hygienist course at Bristol Dental School but was rejected and was informed that she was "*overly qualified*" after providing them with her NARIC report. Mrs Okhlopkova goes on to explain that she later qualified as a Dental Nurse in 2017 and is currently registered as a Dental Nurse with the GDC.
19. In addition, Mrs Okhlopkova explains that she came across a "*bogus website*" offering overseas dentists working as Dental Nurses in the UK the opportunity to work as a Dental Hygienist without the need to take an exam or extra training. However, it transpired that the training course being offered was not legitimate and she reported it to the GDC, and it was at this time that Mrs Okhlopkova says she was informed by the GDC that there was a route to registration for overseas dentists to work as dental care professionals. But Mrs Okhlopkova says she was not informed of any deadline to apply under this route.
20. During the registration application process, Mrs Okhlopkova explains that she has had multiple caseworkers handling her application, sent over 70 emails and made hundreds of phone calls with little response from the GDC and has spent considerable time trying to find the required information, including travelling back to Russia to obtain documentation.

21. In relation to the clinical experience requirement, Mrs Okhlopkova says that the documentation only mentioned needing clinical experience as a DCP for the last two years and not as a dentist. Mrs Okhlopkova queries how she can provide evidence of clinical experience as a Dental Hygienist when she is not allowed to perform specific skills in her current Dental Nurse role. Mrs Okhlopkova says that the guidance to the application form states that the applicant must provide two clinical references as a DCP which are not more than two years old, and she explains that she provided this on headed BUPA paper covering her work experience with BUPA during the application process.
22. Lastly, Mrs Okhlopkova goes on to explain that she has shown the GDC's decision letter and guidance to multiple people and each have formed a different view about the process and the reason for her rejection was "*very poorly written*". Mrs Okhlopkova also says that the application requirements must be "*more clearly defined*" to help people avoid stress, time and vast expense.
23. The Committee heard the submissions made on behalf of the Registrar by Mr Jotangia. Mr Jotangia submitted that the GDC has accepted the recommendation of the assessment Panel and it is the GDC's position that Mrs Okhlopkova is not currently eligible for registration as a Dental Hygienist in the UK, and that her appeal should be dismissed on this basis.
24. The matter for the Committee today is to determine whether Mrs Okhlopkova possesses the requisite knowledge and skill for registration as a Dental Hygienist. The Committee may take into account all of the documentation contained in the Registration Appeal Bundle, in addition to any evidence heard on the day of the hearing.

Committee Decision

25. The Professional Adviser took the Committee through a set of questions that he would have asked Mrs Okhlopkova had she attended the hearing today. The purpose of this was to explore a number of areas with Mrs Okhlopkova and to give the Committee clarification and assistance in making its decision on Mrs Okhlopkova's appeal. The areas in which the Professional Adviser's questions focused on included:
 - a. Mrs Okhlopkova's diploma training in Russia
 - b. How her clinical training was delivered
 - c. The treatments carried out during her diploma training
 - d. Range of clinical work carried out when she worked as a dentist between 2007 and 2011
 - e. Techniques used for certain dental procedures
 - f. Knowledge of oral health
 - g. Understanding of Scope of Practice as a Dental Hygienist
 - h. Any hands-on clinical training undertaken in dental hygiene since arriving in the UK
 - i. Self-reflections on courses and CPD undertaken
 - j. Quality of Mrs Okhlopkova's references to address a number of specific elements
 - k. Knowledge of informed consent
 - l. Outstanding CPD on her personal development plan

26. The Committee accepted the advice of the Professional Adviser.
27. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser.
28. In considering whether Mrs Okhlopkova is suitable for GDC registration, the Committee had regard to all of the evidence provided. Its primary concern is to safeguard the public. When making its decision, the Committee noted that the burden was on Mrs Okhlopkova to satisfy it that she had the requisite knowledge and skill for registration. It also bore in mind the overarching objectives of the GDC, which included protecting the public and maintaining public confidence in the profession.
29. The Committee considered that the burden is on Mrs Okhlopkova to prove that she is safe and adequately skilled to be on the GDC Register as a Dental Hygienist. It noted her clinical work and journey she has been on as an undergraduate and her professional career as a dentist in Russia. However, there are unfortunately many gaps in her dental journey which Mrs Okhlopkova has not been able to elaborate on or explain fully. The Committee took into account that there is no evidence of the clinical training and supervision elements of Mrs Okhlopkova's undergraduate training and how that was delivered. It notes that Mrs Okhlopkova has worked as a dentist in Russia from 1995 to 2011, but she has not been clinically treating patients since then as she has been working as a Dental Nurse. In addition, it also had regard to the range, relevance and the quality of the CPD evidence provided and that some of the certificates had been duplicated.
30. The Committee had regard to the points made by Mrs Okhlopkova in her appeal that her experience of the registration process thus far, in her view, has been inadequately applied. However, there was no information before the Committee to indicate that the initial decision made by the assessment panel was in gross error.
31. Since Mrs Okhlopkova submitted her appeal in March 2024, no further evidence has been provided by her and neither is there any evidence that she has addressed the various points set out by the registration assessment panel. The Committee therefore determined that based on all the evidence submitted, Mrs Okhlopkova has not provided the necessary information to satisfy this Committee that she has addressed the deficiencies identified by the Assessment Panel regarding her skills and knowledge. The Committee has therefore concluded that Mrs Okhlopkova has not met the necessary requirements.
32. Therefore, the Committee has determined to dismiss the appeal.
33. That concludes this determination.