

Fee Increase

The Dental Council prides itself on its efficient operations and has made a determined effort not to increase its fees unless it becomes necessary.

There are record numbers of dentists registering in Ireland and the Dental Council has significantly expanded the scope of its role in dental education. An important short-term objective is to replace the registration database. The existing database is almost 20 years old and it no longer meets the demands being placed on it. Overall, the council's workload has increased significantly since the last fee increase in 2014 and as a result the staff has doubled. Prior to 2014, the fee had not increased since 2008.

For 2020, the Dental Council has agreed to increase its retention fee from €220 to €250. In its Strategic Plan, the Dental Council anticipates that the retention fee may have to increase annually over the next 2-3 years in order to meet both the present challenges, and the changes anticipated in the proposed new Dental Bill. This increase is required to allow the council to invest for the future.

If you are a dentist or dental specialist, you will have received your annual retention notice. The annual retention fee is due to be paid by the 31 January and your fee can only be paid online. Your renewal notice will include instructions on how to make your payment. Please feel free to contact the office if you are having problems with your payment. We would like to remind dentists that that this is a busy time for our staff, and we appreciate your patience and understanding as we try to deal with your questions as quickly as possible.



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Unregistered Dental Hygienists

A number of instances have arisen in recent months where unregistered people have been discovered practicing as dental hygienists. While the circumstances in these cases vary, they generally fall into two categories:

- **Unregistered dentists from outside the European Union**
- **Previously registered dental hygienists suspended for non-payment of fees**

All practicing dental hygienists are obliged to be registered and it is a criminal offence for a person to practice dentistry while not registered. The Dental Council is preparing to prosecute in at least one of these recent cases. As dental hygienists are required to practice under the supervision of a dentist, it may become a fitness to practice matter for any dentist who allows an unregistered dental hygienist to practice in their surgery.

There are an increasing number of dentists from outside the European Union living in Ireland, who for a variety of reasons, have not taken or passed the Dental Council examination for Non-EEA dentists. Other than for Canadian graduates, this is the only pathway to practice for any dentist who is not established to practice in the European Union.

It is relatively easy for a dental hygienist who has been suspended from the register of dental hygienists for non-payment to restore their name. If the dental hygienist has been practicing, we will require the dental hygienist to inform their supervising dentist and their indemnity provider, and we will require the dentist to confirm that they have been informed.

Dentists should check their staff's registration status at least once a year. The renewal date for all auxiliary dental healthcare workers is the 1st of September, and those who pay their fee before the renewal date should receive their registration certificates by mid-September. Dentists can also check registrations by emailing the Dental Council.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Christmas Opening Hours:

The office will close for Christmas on December 23rd and open again on January 2nd 2020.

Tooth Whitening:

The Dental Council is rolling out a campaign on social media on tooth whitening towards the end of December.

The purpose of this campaign is to educate the public on the "do's and don'ts" of tooth whitening and the potential dangers of ordering products online. Unfortunately not all patients seek a dental professional's advice before they go ahead with the procedure.

The Dental Council wants to start making itself more open and engaged with patients and increase their knowledge of how to be safe and make best choices when it comes to their dental health. This includes advising patients to see a dentist before having treatment. We would be most grateful if you could follow us on our social media platforms and help to get the message out into the public domain by sharing the campaign as much as possible.



Retention Fee Payments:

Payment is exclusively online via the Dental Council website. We strongly advise keeping log in details and passwords somewhere safe. Our payment facility is provided by an expert third party and so dental council staff do not have access to your online account and cannot assist with forgotten passwords/e-mail addresses. We are unable to accept any other form of payment.

Dental Council visit to the Dental Council of New Zealand



Left to right: Ms Suzanne Bornman, Ms Marie Warner, Mr Frederic Duguay, Dr Andrew Gray, Mr Paul Lyons, Dr Gerry Cleary and Mr David O'Flynn.

The Dental Council established a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) in December 2012 with the Commission on Dental Accreditation in Canada (CDAC). This agreement is based on the compatibility of the education accreditation processes, standards and learning outcomes for dentists in each jurisdiction.

The MRA enables dental graduates from each jurisdiction to register for practice in the other jurisdiction without any additional registration requirements beyond those which would apply to local graduates. In addition, the operation of the MRA is a key means by which the Dental Council satisfies itself that its approach to accreditation is peer-reviewed and benchmarked to best practice.

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The Dental Council has been in discussions with the Dental Council of New Zealand (DCNZ) for a number of years to explore opportunities to establish a further MRA. To progress such an agreement, representatives from DCNZ observed a Dental Council accreditation visit in Cork University Dental School and Hospital in September 2017. The Dental Council was subsequently invited to observe a visit to the dental school in the University of Otago in September 2019.

The Dental Council observers comprised Council's Vice-President, Registrar and Education Manager. Access was provided to all supporting documentation in advance of the visit and also to the reports generated following the visit. Observers were provided with access to all meetings held with faculty members and students, and opportunities to review teaching facilities. There were ample opportunities to engage with DCNZ accreditation team members and senior executive staff before, during and after visits.

Arrangements towards finalising an MRA with DCNZ have progressed very well to date and it is hoped that the process will be concluded in Q2 2020. A number of innovations and instances of best practice were observed during the visit to Otago University which will contribute to the current review of the Dental Council's accreditation framework.

Auxiliary Dental Workers Committee

In this issue we are going to take a closer look at another committee within the Dental Council, the Auxiliary Dental Workers Committee. This is a busy committee and has worked through a considerable work plan in the time since the current council was elected.

The committee has 15 members in total with the following breakdown:

Elected Dentists: 7

RCSI Nominee: 1

UCC Nominee: 1

Minister for Education Appointee: 1

Elected CDT: 1

Elected Dental Hygienist: 1

Elected Dental Nurse: 1

Elected Orthodontic Therapist: 1

Nominated Dental Technician: 1

Since the commencement of the most recent Dental Council, this committee has completed 7 programme accreditation visits with two more planned in 2020. The composition of the committee brings a valuable and insightful dynamic as academic experts mix with professional who are working in general practice and hospital settings.

The members are also actively working on upgrading policies, guidelines and procedures and will also be working to assist in implementing the sections of the National Oral Health policy that affect the auxiliary workers. As with all sub committees of the Dental Council, any decisions made by the Auxiliary Dental Workers Committee goes before full council before a decision is made final.

The Dental Council and the Consumer Protection Act

The Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation recently prescribed the Dental Council as a body who can apply for a court order where a person engages in one or more of the acts or practices prohibited under the Consumer Protection Act, 2007. The Dental Council had sought this power to enhance our enforcement capability and it welcomes the Minister's decision.

This will give the Dental Council more power to deal with matters such as unfair or misleading advertising and in certain circumstances, instances of illegal practice. The terms 'unfair' and 'misleading' have a specific legal meaning under this Act, and as a statutory body, the Council is obliged to only exercise its powers where it is in the public interest to do so.

This is a novel development and the Dental Council is the first public sector body to be prescribed by the Minister to exercise this power. It remains to be seen how frequently this power will be used but it does give the Council useful enforcement options.

Orthodontic Appliances Direct to Patients

Most dentists will be aware that a small number of international companies have established in Ireland who are providing orthodontic appliances directly to patients with a minimal or reduced input from dentists or orthodontists. Dentistry has changed more rapidly over the last thirty years than most areas of medicine and new technology tends to question where the line between patient safety and patient autonomy lies. None more so than the 'direct-to-consumer' business model operated by these firms.

The Dental Council's role is to regulate professionals and not the new technology. The Dental Council has republished the guidance it issued in 2017 on this type of orthodontic service on its website. This guidance was aimed at both members of the public who might be considering this treatment and dentists who

are working with the manufacturers.

Patient autonomy and the patient's right to make an informed choice underpins ethics in dentistry. We recommend that patients considering this treatment should discuss it with their dentists. This is an invasive treatment and it is important that any treatment planned is appropriate.

Dentists working with the manufacturers are reminded that they are still obliged to comply with the Dental Council's Code of Practice regarding Professional Behaviour and Ethical Conduct. This includes the obligation to practice in the best interests of your patients, to ensure that the patient is aware of the benefits and risks associated with this treatment, and the requirement to keep appropriate records.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regulated Health Professionals Bill

This Bill has nearly completed its passage through the Oireachtas and we anticipate it will be signed into law and enacted over the coming weeks. We provided information on the main points in the Bill in our Summer 2019 newsletter. The Bill is part of the 'Brexit' suite of legislation being fast-tracked and it will allow the Dental Council to consider sanctions attached to registrants in other jurisdictions.

National Oral Health Policy

The Department of Health has held some exploratory meetings and workshops to commence work on implementing Smile agus Sláinte, the National Oral Health Policy. Many of the policy's objectives impact on the Dental Council and we are committed to working with the Department to ensure that dental regulation is fit for purpose.

CBCT X-ray machines

Cone Beam Computed Tomography (CBCT) x-ray machines are becoming cheaper and more prevalent in Irish dental surgeries. This technology has the potential to significantly improve patient outcomes. We would like to remind registrants that the Dental Council has published guidance on our website on using CBCT in practice and the recommended training for the licence holder, the referred and the practitioner.

2020 ANNUAL RETENTION FEE DEADLINE

JAN 31st

Dental Council Prizes

The Dental Council awards a number of prizes every year to encourage academic and clinical excellence in undergraduate programmes. We award prizes across the dental team and the prizes are intended to recognise and acknowledge the commitment made by all dental students. Most of our prize winners were final year students and we wish them well as they embark on their career in dentistry. The 2019 prize winners are:

Cork University Dental School and Hospital

Dental Students

Dr Chan Chee Hon - Prize for Highest Mark in Clinical Course (Final Year)

Dr Eoin Gough - Prize for Best Student for Professionalism (Final Year)

Mr Robert Giannotti - Prize in Medicine & Surgery (4th Year)

Mr Nicholas Lubbe - Prize in Prosthetic Dentistry (3rd Year)

Mr Ern Jie Yeo - Prize in Conservative Dentistry (3rd Year)

Auxiliary Dental Students

Ms Amanda Brady – Colm O’Sullivan Medal

Ms Maria Bunyan - Prize for Best Overall Result in Dental Nursing



Ms Amanda Brady, UCC, Winner of Colm O’Sullivan Medal

Dublin Dental University and Hospital

Dental Students

Dr Joshua Chen - Prize in Restorative Dentistry (Final Year)

Dr Annie Hughes - Prize in Restorative Dentistry (Final Year)

Dr Madeline Edmonds - Prize in Oral Surgery (Final Year)

Dr Ciaran Ryan - Prize in Child & Public Dental Health (Final Year)

Audit Prizes

Dr Mairead Kelly and **Dr Ciara Mulvihill** - Prize for Best Audit

Dr Gabrielle O’Donoghue and **Dr Delia Smith** - Prize for Best Pure Audit

Dr Ahmed Kahatab and **Dr Caoimhe McKenna** - Prize for Most Innovative Audit

Auxiliary Dental Students

Ms Gabriela Hirceaga – Prize Best All-Round Student (Dental Technology)

Ms Vilte Jankunaite – Prize Best Overall Result (Dental Hygiene)

Ms Karoline Armonaite – Prize Best Overall Result (Dental Nursing)

National Dental Nurses Training Programme

Ms Sarah Sinnott – Prize for Highest Result (from Dublin Dental University and Hospital)



Ms Maria Bunyan, UCC, Prize for Best Overall Result in Dental Nursing