

# Period of Adaptation

## Guide for Mentors

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## Mentor requirements

As a mentor you must be approved by the Dental Council in advance of taking on a mentee under a period of adaptation.

You must be a competent and experienced dentist and be knowledgeable of the health system in Ireland. The Dental Council has agreed that you should:

1. Agree to provide a contract of engagement that will compensate the candidate appropriately and treat them fairly and equitably during the period of adaptation.
2. Be a practice principal or a senior dentist in a large practice.
3. Be in good standing with the Dental Council.
4. Have at least four years full-time post-graduation clinical experience in Ireland.
5. Provide a supportive working environment.
6. Agree to mentor the candidate for full registration.
7. When applicable, agree to review and sign the candidate for full registration's logbook of clinical experience.
8. Agree to provide further information to the Dental Council if requested.
9. Agree to complete a character reference form on behalf of the candidate for full registration at the end of their period of adaptation. (*Appendix A*)
10. Agree to inform your practice colleagues of your mentorship agreement.
11. Provide your practice colleagues with 'Information on mentoring a period of adaptation for practice colleagues'. (*Appendix B*)
12. Maintain your registration through the mentoring period.
13. Satisfy the Dental Council that the practice is suitable to the required period of adaptation.

## How to seek approval

You can seek approval by emailing the Dental Council at [info@dentalcouncil.ie](mailto:info@dentalcouncil.ie)

You must include:

1. Your full name
2. Registration number
3. A copy of the Candidate's 'Offer of a Period of Adaptation'
4. Practice address
5. A brief work history and
6. Details on how you meet the above [mentor requirements](#).

Your email must be sent from your practice email address. Alternatively, you are welcome to post your request to the Dental Council office.

A response to your request will be sent by reply to your email address or, if submitted by post, will be sent to your practice address.

## When to seek approval

You should seek approval from the dental council when you have linked up with a dental professional that has been provided with an 'offer of a period of adaptation'.

A period of adaptation offer will set out the competences that the candidate must meet over the duration of the period of adaptation. This offer will also set out the duration that will be approved when a suitable mentor has been found. You can request a copy of this offer from the candidate seeking your mentorship.

You may have the capacity to mentor more than one dental professional in your dental practice. If this is the case, you will be required to seek approval for each candidate.

You must ensure that a contract of engagement has been discussed and agreed upon with the dentist before you apply for mentor approval.

## Types of mentorships

Candidates provided with a period of adaptation are given this time to make up a shortfall in one or more of the following areas

1. Professional practise
2. Registration requirements
3. Clinical experience

It is important that you are confident and comfortable to mentor a dental professional that has been provided with a period of adaptation.

You must ensure that you are satisfied that any dental professional that you are mentoring is sufficiently competent in English to safely work in your practice.

### Professional practise

If the Dental Council feel that there is a deficit in a dentist's professional practise, they will provide the applicant with a period of adaptation.

This means that the Dental Council have recognised the dentist's education and training for the purpose of registration, but there is a concern over the duration of their professional practise experience.

During this time, the dentist will be expected to familiarise themselves with the scope of practise for general dentists and complete a self-assessment form. They are entitled to perform all aspects of their scope of practise during this time.

To mentor one of these candidates, you must be a general practice dentist rather than a dentist specialising in a specific area.

You will be expected to complete a character reference (Appendix A of this guide) and countersign the dentist's self-reflection form. Your signature is only required to state that you have read the contents of the dentist's submission and to the best of your knowledge it is true and accurate. The

self-reflection form can be found in Appendix B of the Guide to Completing your Period of Adaptation.

### Registration requirements

If the Dental Council feel that a dentist meets the minimum standards to have their qualification and professional practise recognised for the purpose of full registration but the dentist in question does not meet the current language proficiency requirements, the Dental Council will provide them with a period of adaptation prior to completing one of our approved language exams.

The candidate is required to meet the minimum scores in their exam and can submit evidence of this at any stage of their period of adaption, to gain full registration.

They should make every effort to attend any necessary training they may need to obtain the required scores.

### Clinical experience

If the Dental Council feel that there is a deficit in a dentist's clinical experience, they will provide the applicant with a logbook summary document. This document will detail the clinical case work that should be covered over the duration of the dentist's period of adaptation.

This will be provided to the dentist alongside their offer to undertake a period of adaptation and you should also request a copy of this before seeking approval as a mentor.

This deficit will **not** be so much that it would require additional training, rather it will be a suggested number and type of cases that should be covered to show proficient clinical experience.

As a mentor you will be required to sign off on this logbook as verification that these cases were performed. You will also be required to complete a character reference for your mentee.

### Mentor and mentee's relationship

A dentist registered under a period of adaption is considered a 'candidate for full registration'. They are only entitled to practise their profession under the mentorship of an approved mentor and only within an approved practice.

The Dental Council views that the key characteristic underpinning the mentoring relationship is one of trust between the mentor and mentee.

You are expected to provide a supportive environment where matters can be discussed in an open and reflective way, and to allow experiences and advice to be shared confidentially.

This is a practitioner-focused mentoring relationship, and the Dental Council understands that the relationship between the mentor and the candidate for full registration will evolve over time and that the best approach is one that is agreed between both parties.

It is vital that throughout this period, patient safety remains at the forefront of the mentee's practice.

The Dental Council views that this relationship should include formal meetings and ad-hoc, 'on the job' interactions. The Dental Council acknowledges that this process could be integrated with the practice's human resources processes for on-boarding new staff and its training and development plans.

You should note that you are not being asked to pass or fail a candidate for full registration, only to bear witness to their professional activity and to support their development. As a mentor, you are expected to only sign-off the logbook for the areas where you are satisfied the candidate for full registration has demonstrated the required competencies.

If the candidate is having a difficulty demonstrating a required competency, you should discuss this in the first instance with the candidate and identify the relevant areas for development and agree a development plan with the candidate. The candidate is responsible for bringing any enduring difficulties demonstrating a required competence to the attention of the Dental Council.

If the candidate for full registration has been granted a period of adaptation for language reasons only, you should be satisfied that the candidate is sufficiently competent in English to work in your practice while the candidate achieves the standard required for a full registration in one of the Dental Council approved English language tests.

## Mentor reports

You may be asked by the Dental Council to provide an interim report on the candidate's period of adaptation from time to time. The Dental Council's assessment sub-committee may require this to ensure that the candidate is demonstrating required competencies.

If you are mentoring a candidate's clinical experience or professional practise, you will be required to state that you are, or are not, satisfied that the candidate has demonstrated the competence required of them. This is the competences stipulated on their Dental Council certificate.

In any case you will be required to complete a character reference form (*see Appendix A*). This character reference will give you to an opportunity to notify the Dental Council of any concerns that you may have regarding the candidate's professional behaviour or general competence. This will be considered when reviewing the candidate's request for full registration.

If you are mentoring a candidate while they meet their language competence, you may not be required to provide a report.

If, at any time, you feel that the candidate is not suitable to continue their period of adaptation safely under your mentorship, you have a professional responsibility to notify the Dental Council.

If throughout the period of adaptation, you have any concerns regarding the health and welfare of patients, colleagues, the candidate and/or you, you must contact the Dental Council without delay. Likewise, if you develop a potential concern about a candidate's clinical competence you must contact the Dental Council.

## Entitlements - candidate for full registration

A candidate for full registration is entitled to take part in the full scope of practise for their profession throughout their period of adaptation.

If they meet their language requirements before their period of adaptation ends, they can submit their evidence early for Dental Council approval.

In any case the dental professional will be required to submit their evidence four weeks before their period of adaptation ends to allow time for review.

When their evidence is reviewed, the following decisions can be made

1. Their evidence will be approved, and they will receive full registration.
2. Their evidence will be deemed unsatisfactory, and they will be refused registration.
3. They will be provided with an extension to their period of adaptation to resubmit sufficient evidence.

If they are provided with an extension, they will be required to have their mentor approved again for this duration.

## Costs

### Contract of engagement

A mentor is required to provide a contract of engagement that will compensate the candidate appropriately and treat them fairly and equitably during the period of adaptation.

### Insurance

The candidate for full registration is responsible for ensuring that they have the proper authorisation to work in Ireland and are appropriately indemnified or insured.

**Appendix A**

**Period of Adaptation Character Reference Form**

This reference is to be completed by a candidate's approved mentor

Mentor's name	
Mentor's professional title	
Mentor's registration number	
Practice address	
Mentored dates	
Candidate's name	
Candidate's registration number	

I wish to confirm that I mentored the above candidate through the stated mentored dates. I further confirm that:

- The above-named candidate is of good character and, in my opinion, is fit to apply for full registration with the Dental Council
- The Dental Council should be aware of the following details related to the candidate's professional character:

Date:

Mentors signature:

## **Appendix B**

### Information on mentoring a period of adaptation for practice colleagues

If you have been provided with this document then a practice colleague of yours has been approved, or is seeking approval, to mentor a dentist under a period of adaptation.

#### **Mentor**

During this period of adaptation, a mentor is required to:

1. Provide a contract of engagement that will compensate the candidate appropriately and treat them fairly and equitably during the period of adaptation
2. Be a practice principal or a senior dentist in a larger practice
3. Be in good standing with the Dental Council
4. Provide a supportive working environment
5. When applicable, review and sign the candidate for full registration's logbook of clinical experience.
6. Provide further information to the Dental Council if requested
7. Complete a character reference form on behalf of the candidate for full registration at the end of their period of adaptation. (*Appendix A*)
8. Inform their practice colleagues of their mentorship agreement
9. Provide their practice colleagues with this document (*Appendix B*)
10. Maintain their registration through the mentoring period

#### **Mentee**

A candidate for registration (a mentee), has been provided with a specific amount of time to meet specific competencies. These details will have been provided to both the candidate and their mentor. During this time the candidate is entitled to take part in the full scope of practise for a dentist.

However, they are only entitled to do this in their approved practice, under the mentorship of their approved mentor. This information is set out on their certificate of registration.

#### **Contacting the Dental Council**

Dental Council, 57 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Telephone: (01) 6762069

Email: [info@dentalcouncil.ie](mailto:info@dentalcouncil.ie)

As a member of the dental profession the Dental Council would like to remind you of your ethical obligations. If you become aware, bear witness to, or have serious concerns about the health and welfare of patients you should contact the Dental Council.

Likewise, if you become aware, bear witness to, or have serious concerns about the treatment of a dental professional working in your practice you should contact the Dental Council.

The Dental Council are available to provide advice on any concerns that you may have. Please feel free to contact the Dental Council on a confidential basis should you have any concerns about patient welfare or the dentist during their period of adaptation.



## Version history

Version history	Publication/revision date	Title	Summary of changes
1.0	11 September 2022	Period of Adaptation Guide for Mentors	
2.0	19 April 2023	Period of Adaptation Guide for Mentors	Change in mentor requirements. Update of Professional Practice section. Rearrangement of sections.