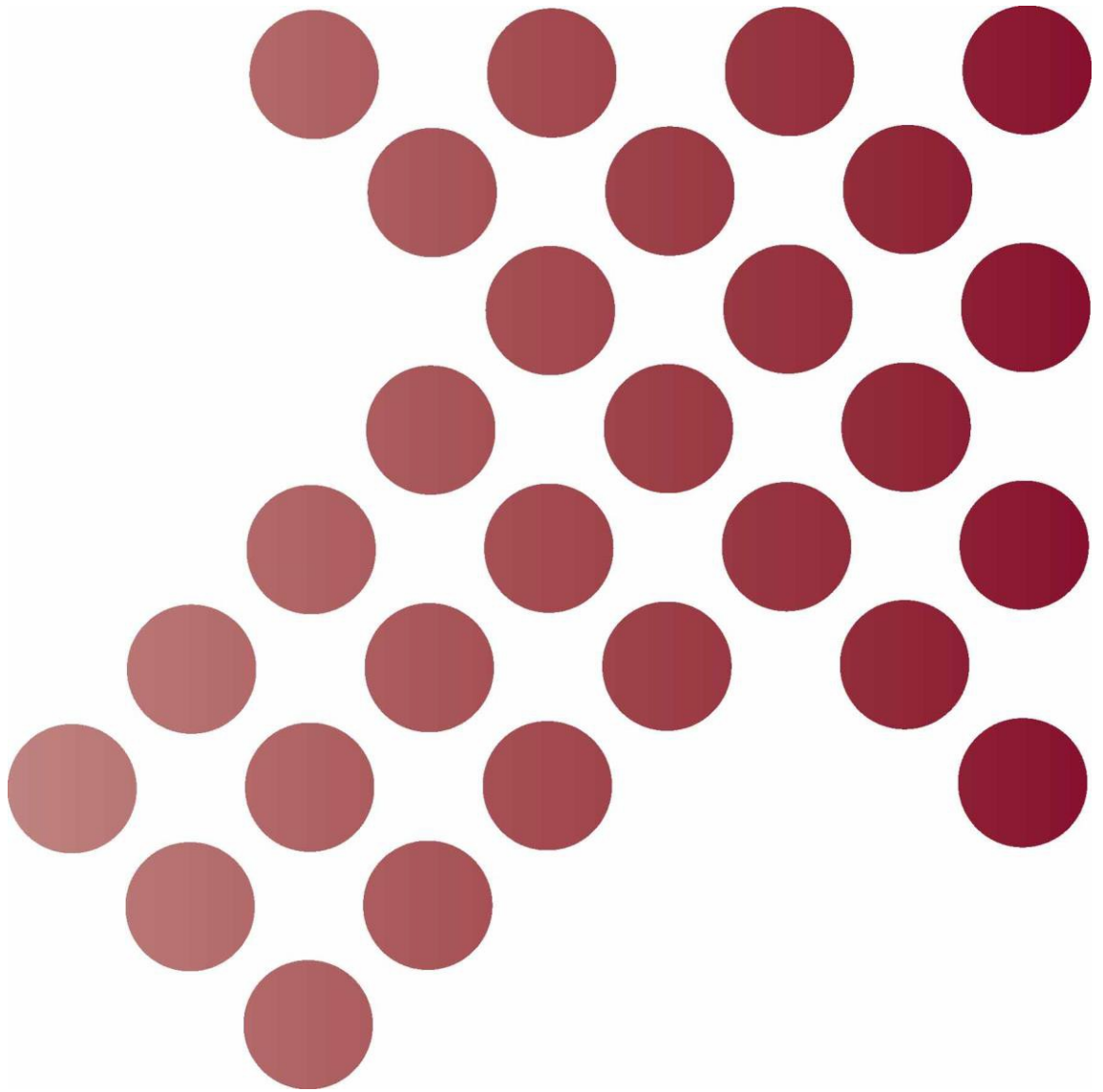


# Quality Assurance Monitoring Guidance for Education Providers



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# 1. Introduction

As the regulatory body for dental professionals, the General Dental Council (GDC) promotes high standards of education in all aspects of dentistry. The GDC sets the requirements that all programme providers must comply with for all UK dentistry programmes that lead to registration as a dental professional, which can be found in the **Standards for Education**. These standards are the regulatory tool that the GDC uses to ensure that an educational programme is fit for purpose and new graduates are safe beginners. The three standards are central to the GDC's Quality Assurance (QA) processes and contain a total of 21 requirements across the following areas:

1. Patient protection
2. Quality evaluation and review
3. Student assessment

One of the ways in which the GDC fulfils its primary role to protect patients and the public is by assessing whether a programme is fit for purpose through our QA process. The QA process consists of a range of different tools including monitoring and inspections of education providers.

Prior to 2018, education providers delivering established programmes which led to registration with the GDC, were inspected on a periodic basis, normally once every five to six years. In 2017, we published our discussion document *Shifting the balance: a better, fairer system of dental regulation* and at the end of the year, we detailed in ***Shifting the balance: your views, next steps and the direction of travel for the GDC going forward*** which can be found [here](#). This consisted of four main areas. The first was for dental regulation to move 'upstream', which will place a stronger emphasis on engaging with all registrants to improve patient protection, developments in Education and QA, learning within the system, engaging more effectively with current and future dental professionals, and developing alternative approaches to continuing professional development. The other areas included promoting the local resolution of complaints, working more closely with our partners and stakeholders and an end to end review of the fitness to practice process.

## What does moving upstream mean for QA activity?

Further to the consultation, the GDC looked to develop the education processes including the development of risk-based and thematic quality assurance, and the development of the process to revise the learning outcomes. A further consultation was held on this in 2018 and the results of this were published in November 2018 and can be found [here](#).

For more information about the GDC inspection process please visit our website [here](#).

This monitoring guidance details the monitoring process, including how it is used and our expectations of you as an education provider. We collate and analyse information about each individual education programme from a range of resources, and benchmark this against our *Standards for Education*. This process enables us to make decisions regarding the appropriate risk-based QA activity that will be undertaken. Only those who have not undergone enhanced monitoring or an inspection visit during the last academic year or who have been selected for an inspection visit during the forthcoming academic year, will be subjected to this monitoring process.

## 2. Monitoring process

All education providers who have been selected to participate in our monitoring process will be sent an email with a link to an online monitoring questionnaire during October. Through the monitoring process you will be asked to provide the following information in your online monitoring questionnaire:

- An update on your programme developments
- Details of your staff, including a copy of your organogram
- A self-assessment on how you are meeting each requirement set out in the *Standards for Education*, including providing us with copies and/ or hyperlinks of evidence to support your statements

We will also be seeking your feedback on how you found the process to aid future developments.

You will have eight weeks to respond to our information request and return your monitoring questionnaire. If you are unable to return your questionnaire by the deadline, you must notify the Education and Quality Assurance (EQA) team as soon as possible at [qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org](mailto:qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org). Failure to supply the team with the required information or to keep our team informed of any potential delays will result in you being subject to an inspection.

Once we have received your monitoring questionnaire it will be assessed by the EQA team and our Education Associates (EA). All EAs are appointed through an open and competitive recruitment exercise, are trained in the GDC QA process and receive on-going training throughout their appointment.

A range of decision tools/matrix have been specifically created to risk assess, monitoring questionnaires and supporting evidence provided. These tools will be used by assessors to ensure a transparent and consistent decision-making system is in place. This process will be used to identify potential risks to your programme and will ultimately determine what QA activity the GDC will undertake during the next academic year.

As part of the GDC's new risk-based approach to regulation, one of the following outcomes will be recommended:

- Regular Monitoring
- Enhanced Monitoring
- Inspection within the next planned academic year
- Immediate Inspection

Further information on these outcomes is given below.

### Regular Monitoring

This means that we have identified a lower level of risk to your programme and you will not be subject to a planned inspection during the next academic year.

You may however be required to answer any queries that arise from the information you have supplied.

## **Enhanced Monitoring**

This means that we have identified a moderate level of risk to parts of your programme. Therefore, you will be required to provide additional information and evidence to support areas where potential deficits have been identified.

You will be required to document all additional information/evidence using our Standards Mapping Table. Our request will include questions about your submission, a request for an explanation on your plans for meeting the requirements within the *Standards for Education* and what evidence is available to demonstrate achievement of the requirement being met.

You may not be subject to a planned inspection in the next academic year. This depends on the follow up evidence you supply to us.

## **Inspection within the next planned cycle**

This means that we have identified a high level of risk to your programme and the decision has been made to carry out an inspection within the next academic year.

Inspection duration, scope and remit are dependent on our analysis. Programme inspections can be up to two days in length. We may also request that you provide us with the dates of your final summative assessments as we may wish to inspect these as well. The inspection will be carried out by a panel that will consist of member(s) of the EQA team and EAs. Whilst there, a series of meetings will take place with both students of the programme and staff. The inspection will result in a published report which will include your observations and an action plan.

## **Immediate inspection**

This means we have identified a higher level of risk to your programme and the decision has been made to carry out an immediate inspection in the current academic year as well as an inspection in the next academic year. The immediate inspection will be held within eight weeks to discuss the current situation regarding the concerns or issues identified. Whilst there, we will also meet with students of the programme to gather their perspective. This immediate inspection will allow us to examine the issues identified in greater detail before the planned inspection during the next academic year.

## **3. Providing your response**

Before submitting your online monitoring questionnaire, please ensure you have the necessary resources available to you at the time of completing the questionnaire and that it has been completed by the appropriate member of your team who has a robust overview of the programme delivery.

Awarding Bodies must also ensure that they have plans and resources in place to collect and coordinate monitoring questionnaires from their education providers. The GDC must reiterate that Awarding Bodies have sole responsibility for consolidating data/evidence and returning this information using one monitoring questionnaire. Unfortunately, submissions received from individual education providers will be immediately returned to Awarding Bodies to collate and resubmit as a collective submission.

We would suggest that you consider completing the online questionnaire using “Google Chrome” as this application has been found to have greater compatibility.

You must ensure that the questionnaire is completed in full before submitting it and that you have supplied us with all the evidence requested within the monitoring questionnaire. This evidence will be essential in supporting you to validate your statements and preventing the risk of an inspection visit. Where any part cannot be completed, an explanation must be provided within the questionnaire. Once you have all the necessary information available you should contact the EQA team directly to request that we send you a secure link to file share. This will enable you to share your documents electronically.

Where you are providing general documents to evidence a requirement, such as a student handbook, you will need to provide the exact location of the information within the document which addresses the requirement in question. An exact location would be the page number, section title, and/or paragraph number of the relevant information. Links to specific points within documents can be included. Please ensure that all links are included within your response before submitting your questionnaire.

Once your submission is sent online and your supplementary documentation is uploaded to file share secure link it will be accessible to the EQA team for analysis. If you have any questions about completing the questionnaire, submitting your questionnaire or have an expired file share secure link, please contact the EQA team at [qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org](mailto:qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org) as soon as possible and before the deadline.

As per figure 1, below, you will be directed to the 'final page' once you have completed the online monitoring questionnaire. From this page you will be able to download and save the document for your own records.

Figure 1

100% complete

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### Final page

Your responses to this survey have been submitted.

If you need a formal record of your submission, please use the following details:

**Completion receipt**

Receipt number: 502141-502132-49534924  
Submission time: 2019-08-19 13:44:52 BST

[Print](#) [Download PDF](#) [Email](#)

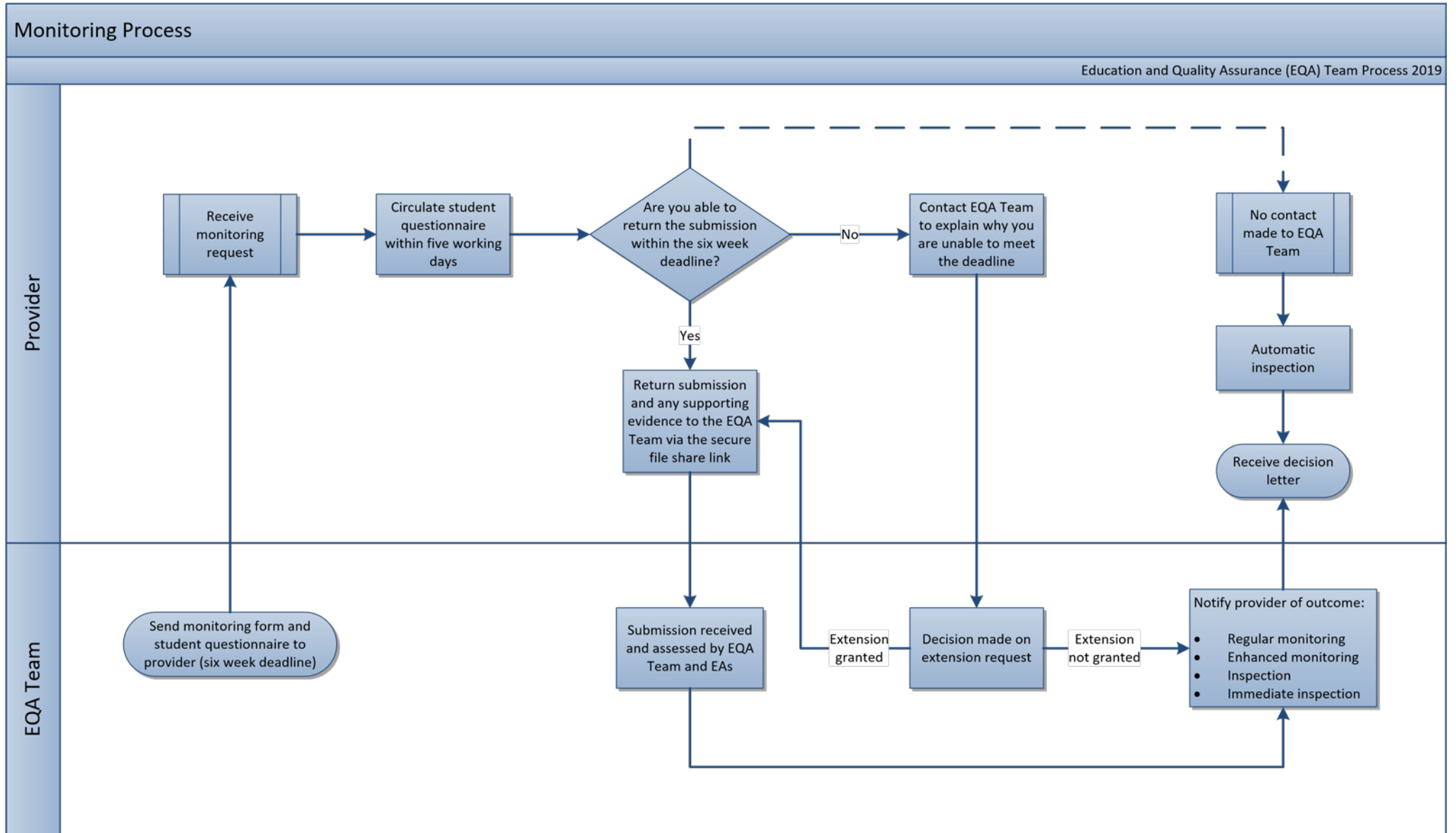
**Download my responses**

You have 15 minutes to view this data

[My responses](#)

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## 4. Monitoring process map



## 5. New submissions, major changes or threats to delivery

Under the *Standards for Education* there is an expectation that providers have a framework in place to manage the quality of their programme(s). This includes making appropriate changes to ensure the curriculum continues to map across to the latest GDC learning outcomes and adapts to changing legislation and external guidance.

In circumstances where a revision to a qualification will involve a new submission, major change or a significant restructure of the delivery of the award, the GDC must be contacted and advised of the changes in writing. A risk assessment will then be undertaken as to whether a further paper-based assessment is required by subject-specific EAs to assure the Registrar that the relevant standards are being maintained.

In addition, the *Standards for Education* includes a requirement for providers to contact the GDC should any serious threats to delivery of the programme be identified.

Major changes and/or threats to delivery of the programme may include the following:

- Significant curriculum alterations
- Significant increase or decrease in student numbers
- Significant decrease in staff
- Revised time frame for delivery (increasing or decreasing weeks of study by more than 10%)
- Remodelling a course from a part time design to a full time one
- The adoption of a new assessment strategy and
- The implementation or removal of work/placement-based modules or significant revising of outreach provision.

The monitoring process **should not** be used by providers to notify the GDC of any new programme submissions, major changes or threats to the delivery of your programme for the first time. You **must not** delay notifying the GDC of a major change and/or threat in order to include this information in a monitoring questionnaire.

For more information about the GDC submission process please visit our website under the QA process guidance (2015).

If you are unsure at any stage about what might constitute to a new submission, major change or threat, please contact the EQA team at [qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org](mailto:qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org) to seek clarification or further information.



## 6. Feedback

The EQA team are committed to improving the way we work with you and would greatly appreciate any ideas you may have of how our procedures, documentation and communication methods can be improved.

You can email the EQA team at [qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org](mailto:qualityassurance@gdc-uk.org) or telephone on 020 7167 6110. Feedback forms will be sent to you during the monitoring process.

# General Dental Council

protecting patients,  
regulating the dental team

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