

General Dental Council Glossary of Terms – Fitness to Practise

The General Dental Council's (GDC) Glossary of Terms is intended to assist with consistency across our different formal decision making stages, namely:

- Agreeing undertakings with a dentist or dental care professional (DCP)
- Imposing conditions on a dentist or dental care professional's registration
- Imposing interim order conditions on a dentist or dental care professional's registration

In order to assist the relevant decision maker, the Glossary of Terms should be used in conjunction with:

- Undertakings Bank
- Practice Committee Conditions Bank
- Interim Orders Conditions Bank

These documents set out the wording that decision makers should use when formulating restrictions on a dentist or dental professional's registration. The Glossary of Terms should be used by:

- Dentist and dental care professional's representatives
- The General Dental Council
- Practice Committees and Interim Orders Committees
- Case Examiners and the Investigating Committee
- Patients and the public

The glossary should be referred to by decision makers but, from time to time, it may be necessary to deviate from the standard conditions/undertakings in order to formulate workable restrictions for some registrants. In these instances, the glossary may not appropriately cover all the terms used.

This is a living document and therefore any comments or suggestions can be welcomingly forwarded to casereviewteam@gdc-uk.org.

Audits

An audit is a process where records are randomly selected by the registrant or their workplace supervisor/reporter in order to ascertain objectively whether the records meet the expected standards. The records may be looked at as a whole or a specific aspect of practice may be looked at for example, radiographs. The audit may also look to see whether the specific area of practice was clinically necessary or whether (in the example of radiographs) they were of sufficient diagnostic value. The audit will usually be signed by the workplace supervisor/reporter to verify the information.

Case-based discussion

Case-based discussion enables assessment of the performance of a dentist or DCP in the management of a patient and helps to give an indication of their competence in certain clinical areas. Some examples of these areas might be informed consent, record keeping, radiography, charting or reviewing and updating medical histories. They enable the reviewer to identify that proper standards and clinically necessary activity is taking place in relation to the care of the patient.

It also serves as a mechanism for documenting discussions about, and presentations of, cases by dentists and DCPs who are required to be supervised as part of a conditions order or undertakings agreement.

Contracting body

A contracting body is an organisation or individual with whom the dentist or DCP has a contract to provide dental services. For example, a dentist may have a contract with NHS England to provide dental services to a group of adults or child patients, and a private dentist may have a contract with an individual patient to provide dental services directly to them. A private dentist may also hold contracts with companies such as Denplan to deliver services on their behalf.

Educational supervision

An educational supervisor is a person appointed by the Postgraduate Dental Deanery. They can, depending on the wording of the condition/undertaking, be nominated by the registrant. They will be appropriately trained to be responsible for the overall supervision of the registrant's learning and educational progress during a specified period. The educational supervisor will assist the registrant in drawing up their Personal Development Plan (PDP) to address the issues identified by the decision maker. They will monitor the registrant's progress against agreed deadlines in the PDP and will be responsible for reviewing the completed written evidence as specified in the PDP. The educational supervisor will provide the GDC, or other relevant bodies, with reports on this process at times specified under the conditions/undertakings or upon request. They are not responsible for supervising the dentist or DCP's clinical practice.

Locum

A locum is a dentist or DCP who is standing in for an absent professional or who is temporarily covering a vacancy, in an established post or position. Locum work is usually short-term positions to cover sickness, holiday or any other form of short-term absence. A locum is usually employed by an agency and undertakes a locum 'placement' at a dental practice or a hospital. For a dentist with restricted registration, the GDC consider a zero-hours contract to be the same as a locum contract. A registrant with conditional registration/an undertakings agreement carrying out a locum position could be at risk of

not being adequately supported, in an environment where others are not aware of their registration status.

Logs

Logs are a record of an individual consultation or examination that is made at the same time as the consultation or examination. The log should usually be signed by the workplace supervisor/reporter. The log must always include the:

- Dentist's/DCP's name
- Date of the consultation or examination
- Patient's anonymous identifier or patient number
- Patient's clinical issues or presenting problem
- The procedure undertaken or diagnosis
- Outcome of the procedure undertaken
- Any relevant medical history
- Any other information needed to meet the restriction on the dentist or DCP's registration (e.g. signature of a chaperone to verify the information).

Medical supervision

This must be directed for all cases where a registrant's fitness to practice is impaired by reason of physical or mental health. The medical supervisor will meet with the registrant regularly to discuss their progress and they will liaise with the treating doctors. The medical supervisor may, with the consent of the registrant, consult with others involved in the registrant's conditions/undertakings.

The medical supervisor will report to the GDC on a regular basis, setting out their opinion in relation to the registrant's progress under treatment, compliance with their conditions/undertakings and their fitness to practise in general.

Mentorship

This is usually carried out by a more senior and experienced colleague, who is able to offer guidance to a dentist or DCP. A mentor is a wide-ranging role and can cover clinical work, professional relationships and career plans. Mentorship can be a useful means of supporting a registrant who has become professionally isolated. The relationship between the dentist/DCP and the mentor is confidential. The GDC does not expect the mentor to provide reports. The GDC will, however, satisfy itself that the chosen mentor is an appropriate person.

On-call duties

For registrants working in a hospital setting, "on-call" duties would be when the registrant has the responsibility for responding to acute patients. This could be in a hospital setting or when the registrant is at home and off-duty. For General Dental Practitioners (GDPs), being part of a general practice can necessitate the need to take part in an on-call rota system, providing an on-call service outside of practice hours. GDPs may also belong to a dedicated on-call service, separate to the practice. Dentists can also be on-call if they are contracted to provide dental services under the NHS Dental Access Helpline or a private emergency dental service.

Out-of-hours work

Out-of-hours work is work undertaken outside of the regular business hours of that establishment. This work is usually carried out during anti-social hours, for example, between the hours of 18:00 and 08:00 on weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays.

Personal Development Plan (PDP)

This is a document setting out a registrant's plan for continued professional and/or personal development over a set period. All registrants should have an active PDP. In the context of conditions or undertakings, it is the starting point for the process of clinical remediation and/or retraining. The PDP can cover any area of the GDC's *Standards for the Dental Team*, but must specifically set out an action plan for the areas of clinical concern identified by the decision maker. The PDP should identify the planned action, measures to be taken and aimed completion date. The Postgraduate Dental Dean/Director/nominated deputy can give the registrant advice about preparing a PDP, but it is the registrant's responsibility to prepare and complete it.

Personal Healthcare Plan (PHP)

This is a document setting out a registrant's plan for continued treatment or management of an impairing health condition. A PHP may not be suitable for all registrants with a health condition. It may help with some conditions, for example, an addiction, for the registrant to be able to formulate and coordinate the various different appointments and support meetings they will need to attend and for which they will need to seek a report or provide evidence in support of conditions or undertakings. The medical supervisor will be able to help the registrant formulate a plan for recovery or management but it will be the registrant's responsibility to prepare and complete it.

Reporter

Every registrant who has conditions or undertakings on their registration must have a reporter in place. This person must be approved by the GDC but will usually be nominated by the registrant. The reporter must agree to provide regular reports to the GDC, Postgraduate Dental Dean/Director/nominated deputy, educational supervisor, workplace supervisor and medical supervisor, as referred to in their conditions/undertakings. In general, the feedback should include:

- Confirmation that the registrant is complying with their conditions/undertakings
- Confirmation of any complaints received and the outcome
- Confirmation of any concerns raised in the workplace about the dentist or DCP
- Confirmation of progress made in relation to any remedial activities
- Any other relevant information.

The person undertaking the role of reporter might also be, but does not need to be, any educational or workplace supervisor who is appointed. If the reporter does not work at the same premises as the registrant, they must be able to attend and have access at any time, to any documentation relevant to the conditions/undertakings.

Workplace supervision

A workplace supervisor is responsible for overseeing the registrant's clinical work on a day-to-day basis. They will give helpful and constructive feedback to the dentist or DCP and will provide a review of their clinical practice throughout the period of supervision. The workplace supervisor must agree to give the GDC regular reports about the registrant's progress. The role of the workplace supervisor and the reporter can be merged. Postgraduate Dental Deans/Directors/nominated deputies do not appoint, identify or manage workplace supervisors. The workplace supervisor must be approved by the GDC.

Levels of workplace supervision

- **Supervised**

The registrant's day to day work must be supervised by a person who is registered with the GDC in their category of the register or above. The supervisor need not work at the same practice as the registrant, but must make themselves available to provide advice or assistance should they be required. The registrant's work must be reviewed at least once fortnightly by the supervisor via one to one meetings and case-based discussion. These fortnightly meetings must be focused on all areas of concern identified by the conditions/undertakings. These meetings should take place face to face however, as a minimum, at least one of the two meetings must be face to face per month.

- **Closely supervised**

The registrant's day to day work must be supervised by a person who is registered with the GDC in their category of the register or above and who must be on site and available at all times. As a minimum, the registrant's work must be reviewed at least twice a week by the supervisor via one to one meetings and case-based discussion. These bi-weekly meetings must be focused on all areas of concern identified by the conditions/undertakings. These meetings must take place face to face.

- **Directly supervised**

The registrant's work must be directly supervised at all times by a person who is registered with the GDC in their category of the register or above and who must be on site and available at all times. The level of supervision required is equivalent to that of a Foundation Trainee.

Single-handed dental practice

A dentist operating as a sole practitioner without the support of other dentists is working single-handedly. If this is the case, the registrant may not be safe to practise without daily contact from a supervisor or without having the option of seeking assistance from a supervisor on site. In those circumstances it may be appropriate to deny a registrant the right to work single-handedly, for the protection of the public.