

Proposed plan for the appointment of GDC Education Associates

Purpose of paper	This paper sets out the proposed process to be used for the recruitment, selection and appointment of a new panel of Education Associates.
Action	For discussion and approval
Corporate Strategy 2016-19	<p>Professionals Objective 2: To help ensure that dental professionals are properly trained in the skills necessary to practise dentistry safely from the outset.</p> <p>Performance: Objective 1: To improve our performance across all our functions so that we are highly effective as a regulator.</p>
Business Plan 2018	Developing our model of upstream regulation
Decision Trail	<p>In January 2017, the decision was made by the QA team to take up the existing option to extend the inspectors' five-year contracts by one further year, in order to complete the full and planned cycle of Quality Assurance activity for Dentistry and Dental Care Professional (DCP) programmes.</p> <p>Of necessity, this recruitment exercise started in February 2018 and an earlier version of this paper was discussed by the Executive Management Team Board on 3 May 2018. We have refined the paper further to the helpful feedback from EMT.</p>
Next stage	Further to approval of the process, the new education associates should be in post to deliver the scheduled work to commence in the 2018/9 academic year.
Recommendations	Council is asked to agree the arrangements for approving recommendations for appointment of the incoming cohort of education associates.
Authorship of paper and further information	<p>Manjula Das, Head of Education Quality Assurance Phone: +44 (0) 20 7167 6113 Email: mdas@gdc-uk.org</p> <p>Peter Butler, QA Operations Manager Phone: + 44 (0) 20 7167 6016 Email: pbutler@gdc-uk.org</p>
Appendices	Appendix 1: Extract from education Associates Pack

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The Dentists Act 1984 confers powers on the Council to appoint persons to visit and inspect education establishments. These powers have been delegated to the Registrar in respect of dental schools, but not Dental Care Professional (DCP) course providers.
- 1.2. A new panel of education associates (made up of non-registrants and representatives of all registrant groups) is currently being recruited to be in post by October 2018 in order to deliver the agreed quality assurance (QA) work starting in the 2018/9 academic year. They will replace the outgoing QA inspectors who were appointed in 2012.
- 1.3. This paper sets out the arrangements the Executive is putting in place for appointment of education associates. The arrangements will involve the Council formally signing off the list of those recommended for appointment following a robust recruitment and selection exercise that is currently underway.
- 1.4. The previous recruitment exercise in 2012 was based solely on paper applications. With our experience over the last 6 years and changes to the resources available to support the process, we think it necessary and appropriate to deliver the process in a more robust way, including face to face interviews.

2. Introduction and background

- 2.1. The GDC utilises several groups of associates to undertake various aspects of its work as independent contractors rather than direct employees. These include Registration Assessors, ORE advisory group and the group currently known as "QA inspectors" (although note that we are expecting the next intake to have a slightly expanded remit and are proposing to refer to them as "education associates").
- 2.2. The legal power to appoint education associates differs for dental schools and DCP course providers. For dental school visitors (as they are referred to in the Act), the Council has delegated its appointment power to the Registrar (GDC (Delegation of Functions) Rules 2011). For DCP course providers, the Council has exercised its powers to make provision for appointment of visitors in the GDC (Professions Complementary to Dentistry) (Visitors) Rules 2006. The Rules do not delegate the appointment power in this case. Given the intention that those appointed at the end of this recruitment exercise will cover both dental schools and DCP course providers, and the delegation to the Registrar only covers the former, the Council will need to make the decisions on appointment.
- 2.3. The remit of the incoming group of education associates will remain focused mainly on the inspection of programmes and examinations leading to registration with the GDC as a dentist or DCP. We are also expecting to draw on their contributions in some additional areas, including:
 - analysis of evidence submitted for annual monitoring
 - quality assurance of specialty training
 - revision of learning outcomes and specialty curricula
 - development of QA and broader education policy
- 2.4. Our recruitment process reflects the broader range of skills we are seeking.
- 2.5. Education associates are not covered by the Statutory Panelists Assurance Committee (SCP). They are managed by the Executive directly, through the education QA team.
- 2.6. In January 2017, the decision was made to take up the existing option to extend the inspectors' five-year contracts by one further year, in order to complete the full and planned cycle of QA activity for Dentistry and Dental Care Professional (DCP) programmes (and partly as a contribution to cost saving in 2017). The current inspection work will be complete by September 2018.

- 2.7. The Executive is therefore in process of selecting and recruiting a new group of education associates (subject to approval by the Council), to replace the current panel of QA inspectors who were appointed in 2012 and will reach the end of their tenure on 3 October 2018. We are expecting to recruit up to 70 associates, around 15 of whom will be non-registrants. This is broadly similar in shape and size to the current cohort.
- 2.8. In previous exercises, selection was made on the basis of papers only. This made the option of direct involvement of Council members in the process more practical.
- 2.9. For the current round of recruitment we are proposing a considerably more robust process than in previous years, involving face-to-face interviews and other standard, although not previously used in this context by the GDC, selection techniques. We have received significant numbers of applications and investing correspondingly significant Executive resource in the assessment process, as well as partnering with external expertise.
- 2.10. One consequence of the investment in the recruitment process by the Executive is that we are recommending the Council that it can focus its involvement on the final stage of the process, the final and formal sign-off of the recommended candidates.

3. Mechanism for selection

- 3.1. Appendix 1 shows the extracted purpose, responsibilities and essential and desirable criteria for registrant and non-registrants from the job description and role profile, which were developed with input from HR.
- 3.2. Applications were invited via Cornerstone (HR Applicant Tracking System) on 22 March 2018 and was open for a month. The roles were advertised via The Guardian Jobs website, Glassdoor.com and LinkedIn.com. We also promoted the positions via our website and through our social media pages. Additionally, we sent targeted emails to stakeholder groups such as professional bodies and education and training providers in the four nations and across all professional groups. The application period closed on 22 April 2018.
- 3.3. All current education associates were informed in advance of the application process and were required to apply in exactly the same manner as new candidates to ensure consistency and fairness in the process.
- 3.4. We have received 75 applications for non-registrant and 102 applications for registrant associates. We have noted a shortfall in applications for orthodontic therapists and clinical dental technicians. These groups are difficult to recruit from given the relatively small numbers of registrants in each category. We are carrying out some additional targeted recruitment exercises to encourage potential applicants in these categories.
- 3.5. Longlisting of applications is currently being undertaken by the Executive. Each application is being scored against the evidence provided for each of the essential criteria set out in the person specification for the role, using standard GDC scoring mechanisms. To ensure consistency within the system, there will be double scrutiny of each application and a final calibration meeting to agree final scores. These scores will provide an initial filter of applications with the lowest scoring candidates being removed from the process.
- 3.6. Working with internal HR experts and our external provider, we will be using online assessment tests of suitability based on the required characteristics, aptitude and behaviours. This will act as a further filter to help us identify applicants who are most appropriate for the role.
- 3.7. We will invite those who successfully complete the online tests, for interview. Interviews will be conducted in line with our existing protocols.
- 3.8. The process will generate a list of recommended candidates for Council's approval. To assist the Council's approval we will provide appropriate supporting data such as the mix of the cohort in terms of professional grouping etc. We expect the recommendations to be submitted to Council at its July meeting.

4. Timescales

- 4.1. The table below sets out the timescales going forward for the recruitment and appointment of education associates.

End of May	Longlisting completed and applicants informed
End of 1st week of June	Online assessments completed
Mid July	Interviews complete
Council meeting on 26 July	Share list of proposed new education associates with Council for approval
August	Appointments made
September	Contracts issued
October	Training delivered
November onwards	New pool associates ready

- 4.2. We will need to provide initial training in October 2018 with a view to commencing the first risk-based inspections in November and December 2018. Training will then continue on an annual basis.

5. Risks and considerations

Communications

- Adverts were circulated via the registrant newsletter in March, supported by targeted emails and supported by social media.
- For registrant groups where we have had low numbers, we continue with a targeted recruitment campaign.
- Details (including brief biographies) of education associates will be published on the GDC website.

Equality and Diversity

- Candidates provided equality and diversity data as part of the application process. This was collected by HR.
- Successfully shortlisted applicants will be asked if they have any special requirements to allow them to attend the assessment days and interviews. Adjustments will be made as required.
- Interview training will cover EDI issues

Legal

- Corporate legal have provided advice regarding final decision-making and appointment (see section 5 above)

Policy

- By developing the job description and person specification, we will have a pool of associates who will be able to advise us on a wider range of developments to take forward QA, education and potentially inform other areas in the organisation. This is a good opportunity to use a new pool of associates for wider areas of work than previously done.

Resources

- The QA team have a budget of £80,000 for the selection, recruitment and training of the education associates this year.
- We anticipate about £30,000 will be spent on the services of Gatenby Sanderson. This figure depends on the level of support we decide to use and the numbers going through from the longlisting process.
- From past experience, the training event costs about £35,000.
- The selection and recruitment processes will be developed and delivered by the QA team, with support from Gatenby Sanderson. We are also seeking support from interested individuals from other areas in the organisation (so far individuals from Standards, Policy, Communications and FtP have been approached and volunteered) who can get involved in a range of ways, which will offer development opportunities. This also encourages cross directorate working and support.

National

- In the selection and recruitment process we aim to ensure we have good coverage of the four nations.
- Applicants have been made aware that travel across the UK will be required as part of the role.
- All assessment days and interviews will be in London to keep staff costs to a minimum.

Risks on registers

- If we do not have the education associates in post by the end of October 2018 we will be limited in the ability to deliver a large number of significant pieces of work detailed in our Business Plan including:
 - the planned inspections to all BDS programmes in the 2018/9 academic year
 - quality assurance of specialty training in 2019
 - revision of specialty curricula in 2019
- Reputation – we have communicated to a range of stakeholders that we will start risk-based QA (consultation currently out) from the 2018/9 academic year and have organised a BDS workshop this July to support the activity. If the associates are not in place, we will not be able to deliver this.

6. Recommendation

- To note the selection mechanism set out in the paper
- To agree to the proposals for exercising Council approval of the recommended candidates.

7. Internal consultation

Department	Date and consultee name
Communications	March-April 2018 Helen Alexander, Matt Newell
Corporate Legal	July 2016, April/May 2018, Melissa Sharp and Tey Hassan
Fitness to Practise	March-April 2018 Val Shepherd and Anne Sinclair
Governance	March 2018 Clare Mitchell

HR	February-May 2018, Carolyn Philip, Dan Rosenblatt, Matt Ambrose and Andrew Obst, Kim Chudley, Bobby Davis
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8. Appendices

Appendix 1: extract from Education Associates Information Pack

APPENDIX ONE

Education Associate

Purpose

GDC-appointed education associates are responsible for inspecting programmes and examinations leading to registration with the GDC as a dentist or dental care professional (DCP). When working as inspectors, they make recommendations to the GDC on the quality of the programme and examination and assist in the drafting of inspection reports. Registrant associates also assess new programme submissions and make recommendations to the GDC as to whether new programmes are likely to be able to meet the Standards for Education. Education associates will also undertake the analysis of evidence for example annual monitoring, quality assurance of specialty training, revision of learning outcomes, revision of specialty curricula and assessments and advise on areas of development.

Responsibilities

These include:

- Assessing new programme submissions and making judgements against GDC learning outcomes and Standards for Education (Registrant education associates only)
- Reading and analysing the documentation sent in advance of the inspection and provided during the inspection;
- Participating in the inspection to gather, test and verify evidence (including questioning staff and students and visiting clinical facilities);
- Making judgements (against GDC learning outcomes, Standards of Education and Standards for Specialty Education) on the adequacy of the quality management of a programme, assessment systems, the assurance of patient safety and equality and diversity issues;
- Contributing to the drafting of the report on the inspection and/or paper-based assessment, including requirements and recommendations made to those responsible for the delivery of the programme;
- Assessing annual monitoring returns;
- Providing advice on education issues;
- Giving input on curricula changes and updates to the learning outcomes;
- Participating in quality assuring specialty education programmes;
- Being part of the revision and approval of specialty curricula;
- Providing feedback and participating in peer review/appraisal.

Person Specification for Registrant Education Associates

Essential attributes

- Knowledge and recent experience (within the last two years) of the delivery of pre-qualification dental or dental care professional (DCP) education and/or foundation or vocational training
- Understanding of professional practice and healthcare regulation in the UK
- Knowledge of, and commitment to, the GDC's publication: *Preparing for Practice: Dental Team Learning Outcomes for Registration, Standards for Education and/or the Standards for Specialty Education*
- Understanding of audit and quality assurance principles
- Ability to exercise discretion, tact and diplomacy as well as to work confidentially
- Excellent communication skills (written and oral)
- Ability to review and assess large amounts of complex documentation
- Experience of working as a member of committees, teams or panels
- Commitment to making difficult decisions where they are in the best interests of patients
- Registration with the GDC and recent experience (within the last two years) of working in relevant dental or DCP discipline in the UK
- Awareness of, and sensitivity to, equality and diversity issues
- Ability to demonstrate a flexible approach to working – this will include the need to travel and be available for all inspection dates
- Commitment to promoting the role of the GDC and acting professionally as an ambassador for the organisation and the dental sector.

Desirable attributes

- Experience of curriculum and assessment design and/or development
- Knowledge of quality assurance in higher/further education
- Experience of inspecting or interviewing
- Knowledge of contemporary approaches to assessment

Person Specification for Lay Inspectors

Essential attributes

- Understanding of professional practice and regulation in the UK
- Awareness of audit and quality assurance principles
- Ability to exercise discretion, tact and diplomacy as well as to work confidentially
- Excellent communication skills (written and oral)
- Experience of working as a member of committees, teams or panel
- Strong leadership and management skills
- Commitment to making difficult decisions where they are in the best interests of patients
- Ability to review and assess large amounts of complex documentation

- Ability to demonstrate a flexible approach to working – this will include the need to travel and be available for all inspection dates
- Knowledge of quality assurance in higher/further education
- Familiarity with the academic environment
- Commitment to promoting the role of the GDC and acting professionally as an ambassador for the organisation and the dental sector.
- Awareness of, and sensitivity to, equality and diversity issues

Desirable attributes

- Experience of Chairing committees or panels
- Experience of curriculum and assessment development
- Experience of inspecting or interviewing
- Knowledge of contemporary approaches to assessment

