

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY  
School of Dental Sciences  
Admissions Policy

Dental Surgery BDS Honours (A206)

BSc Oral and Dental Health Sciences (A207)

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## 1) Introduction

The admissions process is supervised by admissions tutors for the school, acting on behalf of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The Admissions Policy is intended to ensure that the process of student selection is free from discrimination of any kind. It is based on guidelines from the Dental Schools Council produced in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality. In considering all applicants, the Dental School will take into account the General Dental Council's (GDC) standards in Preparing for practice: Dental Teams Learning outcomes for Registration and the guidelines on GDC [Fitness to Practise](#).

The admissions policy is reviewed annually by the School of Dental Sciences Admissions panel. Since the policy is made freely available, via the internet and other sources, and in order to ensure that all applications are dealt with on the same basis, changes are not made part-way through the admissions cycle.

As a member of the UKCAT consortium Newcastle University require **valid<sup>1</sup> UKCAT scores** as part of the entry requirements for BDA (A206). (See [www.ukcat.ac.uk](http://www.ukcat.ac.uk) and section 10) for further information)

## 2) Equal Opportunities Statement

We aim to ensure equality of opportunity for applicants and for all students in teaching, learning and assessment, and in the provision of services. We aim to create conditions whereby students are treated solely on the basis of their academic achievement, ability and potential, regardless of age, religion or belief, ethnicity, gender, being trans gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, or disability. However, selection for a dental degree course implies selection for the dental profession and all applicants must have the potential to fulfil the duties of a dental professional as stated by the GDC in their document '[Preparing for practice](#)'.

Our values also align with those of the [NHS Constitution](#) which are:

Working together for patients

Respect and dignity

Commitment to quality of care

Compassion

Improving lives

Everyone counts

Admissions Selectors are drawn from a wide pool representative of gender and ethnicity and including individuals from both a dental, clinical and non-clinical background. All selectors and staff involved in the selection exercise are aware of their responsibility to implement the Universities' policies on equal opportunities and have participated in training sessions covering equal opportunities.

Any selector who is found to be in breach of the Admissions Policy will be required to stand down.

As part of our policy review, admission statistics on ethnic origin, and gender and socio-economic background are regularly monitored.

Additional factors that will **not** determine the assessment of the UCAS application for dentistry (Courses A206 and A207) are:

- a) being related to a dentist, or being related to a member of the Alumni or staff of either University or the Health Service
- b) inclusion of choices other than A206/A207 in the UCAS application
- c) type of school, college or university attended
- d) political belief

### **3) Disability**

We are committed to the principle of equal treatment of disabled persons and the proper application of the Equality Act 2010. Thus, an applicant who is judged academically suitable will, subject to the provisions of the Act, be neither treated less favourably nor placed at a substantial disadvantage on the grounds of disability unless this can be justified within the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. It is important for applicants to contact the Dental School and/or [Student Wellbeing Service](#), to discuss the course requirements, and any concerns they may have. Applicants should be aware that such requirements change from time to time in line with evolving good practice and prevailing legislation.

During an interview, selectors assess individuals on their personal and academic merits without reference to any declared disability.

Applicants are encouraged to disclose their disabilities, of whatever nature, on their application. Applicants with a disability may wish to contact the General Dental Council who can provide guidance. The General Dental Council [‘Disability Equality Scheme’](#) may also be useful.

Any applicant who (a) meets the academic requirements, (b) is called for interview, and (c) has declared a disability on the UCAS application, may be contacted by the Student Wellbeing Service where the applicant can discuss his/her support requirements, and be invited for an information visit to ascertain if there are any further issues. On receiving an offer to study applicants will be automatically contacted by the University Student Wellbeing Service to discuss support requirements.

All applicant must be considered able to meet the outcomes of ‘Preparing for Practice’; our programme outcomes and to be able to practice as a Dental professional.

### **4) Health Requirements for Admissions and Continuing Practice**

We have an overriding duty of care to the public with whom students come into close contact. All students are required to comply with the Department of Health’s guidance on health clearance for healthcare workers. Early clinical contact means that students will be asked to provide proof of their immunisation status by completing an Occupational Health Questionnaire on entry. Immunity against the following is required: Polio; Tetanus; Varicella (Chicken Pox); Diphtheria; Measles; Mumps; Rubella; TB.

Newcastle University follow the [Dental School Council protocol on blood borne viruses](#). Early in the course students will be required to be screened for Hepatitis B; Hepatitis C and HIV. All aspects of a student’s medical record will be bound

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of ‘valid’, UKCAT scores can only be used in the year you achieve them.

by the same duty of confidentiality as for any doctor-patient interaction and informed by the same ethical guidance. Students commencing the programme will be immunised against Hepatitis B by our Occupational Health provider, the cost will be covered by the school.

#### **5) Occupational Health**

All applicants who take up an offer are required to complete and return a confidential NHS Occupational Health questionnaire by the date stated in any offer received through UCAS. From the information provided, the Occupational Health Service will assess the immunisation status, and students will be required to fulfil any stipulated requirements identified from this assessment.

In certain circumstances, it may also be necessary for applicants to undergo an Occupational Health Assessment with a NHS Occupational Health Consultant, appointed by the University, before we are able to confirm their offer of a place. This assessment is designed to help us ensure that applicants are not only able to undertake the rigours of the BDS programme, especially with respect to working with patients in the clinical setting, and meet its outcomes in line with the statutory requirements of the GDC as defined in 'Preparing for Practice', but to also ensure that we provide any reasonable support necessary.

#### **6) Fitness to Practise**

For all applicants/students issues of [fitness to practise](#) are taken into account at admission and throughout the degree programmes.

We are under a duty in the public interest to ensure that students following degrees leading to professional health care qualifications meet relevant professional standards for fitness to practise. The University is responsible for protecting patients, fellow students, staff, vulnerable individuals and taking appropriate steps to minimise any risk of harm to anyone as a result of the training of their dental students. In discharging these duties, the welfare and safety of actual or potential patients is the University's chief concern. In addition, the University has a duty of care to its students, and must ensure that any decisions are made with the best interests of the student at heart, as part of its support and welfare strategy. This includes being sure, as far as possible, that a student is fit to undertake the rigours of a demanding programme of study and a demanding profession.

The Faculty of Medical Sciences has a procedure in place designed to ensure the Fitness to Practise of its students. This procedure has been drawn up with specific reference to the guidance provided by appropriate health care professional bodies. The Procedure can be found at: [Fitness to Practise Procedure - Student Progress](#)

#### **7) Criminal conviction, warnings, cautions and reprimands**

All students, as part of the process of ensuring students are 'fit to practise' undergo an enhanced disclosure check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This type of disclosure is designed to check the background of individuals who will have a high degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults. Under our duty of care to the community at large, patients, staff and students, any reprimand, warning, caution or conviction declared at application or disclosed in a DBS will be scrutinised by the University and appropriate decisions made on conditions set for any future studies in the University.

Applicants must disclose this information on application and if they receive a criminal conviction after they submit their application. Failure to disclose will be taken seriously and students are reminded it is their duty to disclose all and any information in relation to these matters at the earliest opportunity. Our policy on considering such applications is aligned to that applied by the regulating authority, the General Dental Council, and published in their guidance documents. Such guidance is provided to protect members of the public, maintain the public's trust in the professions and ensure standards of behaviour and conduct are appropriate to the professions.

You should note that while Newcastle University may consider an application to the A206/A207 courses, it is not in a position to predict or pre-empt any decision of the General Dental Council (GDC) in relation to any disclosures at the time of registration with them. The GDC will normally investigate such disclosures at the time of registration, under their rules and guidance. The University is also unable to influence any decisions in relation to disclosures by future employers. All dental professionals and students undergo an enhanced DBS disclosure. A standard disclosure will detail every conviction (including spent convictions), caution, warning and reprimand which is recorded in the central record, or it will state that there is no such information held on all criminal information. An Enhanced disclosure will include all the information in a Standard disclosure and in addition detail any information which, in the opinion of a Chief Police Officer, might be relevant for the purpose and ought to be included in the certificate. Additionally this level of disclosure will provide clarification as to whether the applicant is banned from working with children or vulnerable adults.

Newcastle Dental School requires that this check is carried out on entry to Stage 1 (for both BDS and ODHS students) and again prior to the start of the clinical teaching (third year; BDS students), and we reserve the right to withdraw or discontinue your studies on receipt of an unsatisfactory disclosure. For Stage 1 entry the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application process is normally conducted during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of term. **On receipt of the enhanced disclosure check the student must bring the disclosure to the Dental School Office.**

#### **8) Providing False or Misleading Information**

Applicants suspected of providing, or found to have provided, false information or application similarities shall be referred to UCAS if their application was originally submitted through that service. The University reserves the right to cancel an application and withdraw any offer if it is found that the application contains false or misleading information. Newcastle University policy towards applicants who provide false or misleading information in their application can be found at : [www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/requirements/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/requirements/).

#### **9) The Admissions Process**

Applications are received from UCAS in the period from early September to 15th October (for BDS only) and 15<sup>th</sup> January (for ODHS). We do not normally consider applications which have been submitted to UCAS after the 15 October deadline or 15 January deadline. The selection process involves three stages: a) shortlisting; b) interview of shortlisted candidates; and c) making offers.

##### *a) Shortlisting*

For both BDS and ODHS, applications are assessed initially to check the acceptability of qualifications. Predicted or achieved grades are required. Applications fulfilling the academic requirements will be passed to the next stage.

Academic entry information can be found at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/a206/entryrequirements/> or <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/a207/entryrequirements/>

**Resit qualifications - Note:** We would normally expect applicants to have achieved their A levels on their first attempt. Those who wish to think about applying with a resit grades should read Extenuating Circumstances Section 17)

**We do not consider applications from candidates who have previously commenced a dental degree at another institution and failed to progress for any reason.**

**Please Note:** *Once the academic screening criteria have been met academic achievement is not considered further in subsequent parts of the application process. e.g additional A levels or A\* results do not give further advantage.*

#### **Use of UKCAT to identify those for interview**

**For BDS applications only:** Applications fulfilling the academic thresholds will then be assessed on their UKCAT scores. The UKCAT threshold may vary depending upon the route of entry for example Widening Participation. This threshold may differ in each admission cycle as it is dependent on the scores achieved by those applicants who apply to our Dental School in the current cycle. If the UKCAT Administrator awards you a **UKCAT Exempt** it is important that you read **section 10)** for information on the process we use to deal with these applications and the evidence you need to provide.

**For both BDS and ODHS:** Applications above the threshold will be passed to the next stage. The application will be allocated scores based on interest motivation and commitment to dentistry as evidenced in the personal statement, amount and variety of dental work experience (a minimum of 10 days must have been obtained – this must be appropriate for the course applied to); where possible this should be within various fields of dentistry, evidence of teamwork and leadership, personal achievements, voluntary and/or mentoring activities, paid or unpaid work. The referee statement is scanned for any negativity.

These scores will be used to determine in which of the following categories an applicant is placed:

- to interview
- unsuccessful

#### *b) Interview*

The purpose of the interview is to confirm whether the candidate has the aptitude, motivation and personal qualities to succeed as a dental student in Newcastle University and as a potential Dental professional of the future. **Interviews will be held between mid-January and March.**

The interview will be conducted by two selectors and will last approximately 20 minutes. At the conclusion of the interview each selector will grade the candidate's performance and complete an assessment form. These grades are used as the basis for the decision making process for actual offers. Selectors will not convey their grades to the candidates at the time of the interview or at any time thereafter.

We will try to take applicant requests on limited availability for interview into consideration, but this cannot always be guaranteed.

At interview applicants will be assessed and graded under 6 main categories:

- Preparation and motivation for dental school
- Effective Learning skills
- Team working
- Personal qualities/resilience
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Empathy, integrity and professionalism

Performance at interview will be the sole basis on which the selectors will make their judgement.

*c) Making Offers*

Candidates who have been unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage will normally be informed by March.

The final ranking of a candidate at interview will determine whether or not they receive an offer of a place on the course and offers will be made to candidates in order of merit. To ensure equity, offers will be made in writing by school, following interview, once all of the interviews have been completed. The official offer will be sent via the UCAS system. All offers will normally be made by the end of April.

**Note:** All qualification results must be confirmed and received by August to coincide with the release of the 'A' level results. **REMARKS** - Those applicants who hold an offer and are appealing an A level grade must inform the University as soon as possible to discuss the impact of their appeal on their entry to the programme. If an applicant requests a re-mark of their A-Levels and achieves the offer grades before 31 August, we will endeavour to admit them to the BDS/ODHS programme for the academic year they applied. This is subject to places being available on the course. If the course is full, a place will be guaranteed for deferred entry one year later.

**10) UKCAT (BDS applications ONLY)**

All applicants will be required to complete the UKCAT. The definition of 'valid UKCAT Scores'; UKCAT scores can only be used in the year you achieved them. More information is available at [www.UKCAT.ac.uk](http://www.UKCAT.ac.uk) The UKCAT scores will be used to identify those we wish to interview. The UKCAT threshold may differ in each admissions cycle as it is dependent on the scores achieved by those applicants who apply to our Dental School in the current cycle.

**UKCATSEN (applicants taking this test must have been formally assessed by a Psychologist or Education Psychologist as requiring extra time for their study and be able to provide us with an appropriate report)**

- Those applicants with extenuating circumstances, who arrange to sit the extended test (UKCATSEN), will be required to provide the University with the relevant evidence or appropriate assessment reports to support their extenuating circumstances. Assessment reports submitted to support UKCATSEN must have been written by a Psychologist or Education Psychologist when the applicant was 16 or over. If an applicant who sat the UKCATSEN is made an offer, receipt of an appropriate assessment report previously mentioned will be made part of the conditional offer.



### **UKCAT Exempt**

- If the UKCAT Administrator provides you with a UKCAT Exempt ID number your UCAS application will be considered and scored on your academic achievement, predictions, personal statement and reference to identify whether you are to be offered an interview.
- **All UKCAT Exempt applicants must send the appropriate evidence to support the UKCAT exemption to the University by 30<sup>th</sup> November.**
- **EVIDENCE:** If you are exempt for **geographical** reasons because there is no test centre in your country, you will be expected to provide the University with a timeline that shows and confirms your residential status from May to October.
- **EVIDENCE:** If you are exempt for **medical** reasons, you will be expected to provide formal supporting evidence detailing the reason for the exemption. Please note that the UKCAT test can be taken over a period of several months. Applicants should sit the test at the earliest opportunity as medical exemptions will not be accepted for short term health problems. If candidates are unable to rebook their test, the University will expect evidence to show the timeline of their bookings to UKCAT and confirmation that there are no test slots available, in addition to the supporting medical evidence.
- The evidence you provide to support your exemption will be considered by the University and a final decision made on whether an interview will be offered.
- **Failure to provide the University with the appropriate supporting evidence for the UKCAT exemption by 30<sup>th</sup> November will result in the application being rejected.**

**WARNING** – The UKCAT results are only valid in the year you achieve them therefore if you are reapplying through UCAS you will need to resit the UKCAT. All applicants should register and book a UKCAT test as early as possible as applications will not be considered without a current test (excluding exempt countries or applicants who hold an exemption from the UKCAT Administrator).

### **11) Widening Access**

#### **Applicants through the PARTNERS Programme at Newcastle University**

Eligible applicants will be considered through the Newcastle University [PARTNERS](#) Programme which operates in partnership with schools and colleges within the Northern region. Applicants wishing to be considered through this route must check that their school or college participates in this programme. The applicant must ensure they meet the PARTNERS eligibility criteria before they apply to the programme. For further information, please visit the website at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/partners/> or email: [PARTNERS@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:PARTNERS@ncl.ac.uk). PARTNERS' applicants wishing to apply for a deferred entry must complete the Summer School within the year of their original application.

**(All applicants must have valid UKCAT scores, see section 10)**

#### **Applicants through the Realising Opportunities programme at Newcastle University**

Eligible applicants wishing to be considered for the programme through the Realising Opportunities route of entry must be participating in the national Realising Opportunities programme. For further information, please visit: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/schools/access/realising.htm>

**(All applicants must have valid UKCAT scores, see section 10)**

Internal Transfers: as part of the Newcastle widening participation practice

**Newcastle BSc BMS and ODHS students may apply to Stage 1 of the BDS programme:** available only to those students registered on Stage 1 of one of the Bioscience or Biomolecular degree programmes offered by the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Newcastle University or ODHS degree programme. There are a limited number of places available and students wishing to apply must be in good academic standing and are required to achieve a minimum average Stage 1 mark of 75% with individual module grades of above 65% (those studying BMS) or for the ODHS programme – an overall merit mark for all stage 1 courses. All applicants will be ranked in accordance to their grades, for those most highly ranked their application statement will be considered and scored, the statements scored most highly will be interviewed. All students are required to provide UKCAT scores at the point of entry (see section 10).

## **12) Deferred Entry**

We will consider applications from candidates who wish to defer entry by one year only provided they use their time constructively. Any further additional deferral requests will require extenuating circumstances. Once offers have been made deferrals will not normally be granted.

## **13) Transfers**

Due to the integrated nature of our dental degree programme(s), we do not normally consider students wishing to transfer from another dental school. Such students would be expected to apply to Stage 1 entry, via UCAS, provided they have not previously been considered and declined by us. Applicants should initially contact the University with supporting evidence explaining why they wish to leave or have left their previous dental degree programme. The circumstances will be considered and a decision made on whether an application would be considered to stage 1 through the UCAS system. Requests from dental students who have been required to withdraw from other dental schools due to failure to progress will not be considered.

## **14) English Language Test**

### *International applicants*

We welcome applications from candidates not qualifying for UK or EU status, who would thus be liable for Overseas Student fees. There is a separate quota of 3 places for international students onto the BDS course. Applications are processed and assessed separately but by the same method and with the same academic, work experience and UKCAT requirements as for home/EU students described above.

An interview is a necessary part of the selection process. We are able to arrange special one-off interview sessions for such people to fit in with their travel schedules

For applicants in Malaysia, Singapore and surrounding countries we are able to interview in Kuala Lumpur, generally in February. Whereas this facility is relatively inexpensive for such applicants, they are none-the-less encouraged to visit the UK including Newcastle, and we will be very happy to arrange a tour of the School.

All applicants required to provide an English Language qualification must have achieved/achieve a minimum score of 7 in each domain (IELTS) or equivalent qualification.

(see Newcastle University web site <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/international/requirements/> for further information)

#### 15) Scholarships

A range of scholarships are available from Newcastle University. For further information see our web sites:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/finance/>

NHS bursaries are available to eligible English domiciled students, see the NHS Business Services web site for further information

<http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/981.aspx>

New students applying to study dentistry at Newcastle who live in the Tyne and Wear and Northumberland areas may also be eligible for Patch Fund Bursary for Dentistry. Three bursaries of approximately £800 will be available to new students for each of the first four years of their course. Patch Fund Bursaries will be awarded on the basis of various criteria and must be used to offset tuition fee costs.

#### 16) Late Applications and Clearing/UCAS Extra/Adjustment

Late applications are not normally considered. Applicants eligible for Clearing/UCAS Extra or Adjustment may be considered by the BDS senior admissions tutor should vacancies arise late in the admissions cycle. These applicants will be interviewed and will be required to have a valid UKCAT.

#### 17) Extenuating Circumstances

Applicants with extenuating circumstances that may affect their preparation or performance in an examination must inform their school/ college/ university at the earliest opportunity. Being self aware and seeking help is a key part of being a Dental professional. The applicant's school/college should liaise with the relevant examination board to inform them of the extenuating circumstances. The examination board will make a decision as to the validity of the extenuating circumstances and whether allowances should be made. The medical school **will not** make any additional adjustments/ allowances.

We are unable to consider school management issues as sufficient extenuating circumstances. (*Examples of school management issues we will **not** consider: difficulties with school staffing; school providing incorrect information to their student; compensating for the schools responsibility to inform relevant exam boards of student illness/family issues or any prolonged issue of concern.*)

In other, extreme situations, applicants with extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis by the Admissions tutor. All correspondence will be treated confidentially and applicants are encouraged to inform us of extenuating circumstances as early as possible, as prior knowledge ensures the correct level of support and advice. Extenuating circumstances may be considered to enable an applicant to apply or reapply with resit AS or A level grades. Extenuating circumstances **will not** be accepted to enable an applicant to be considered without the relevant academic entry qualifications.

If an applicant has extenuating circumstances which they feel may impact on their interview performance they must inform the Dental School before the interview. We will not accept any retrospective information regarding pre-existing extenuating circumstances.

**18) Feedback**

Feedback will be given to unsuccessful applicants upon written request. An e-mail request will not be sufficient. Applicants should note, however, that this cannot be provided until **after March** at the earliest. Newcastle University will not enter into discussions relating to the professional judgement underlying the scoring at interview.

**Please note:** In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 such feedback can only be given to the applicant. Specific feedback can only be provided to a third party when written consent has been provided by the applicant to the University.

**19) Age**

Whilst we do not impose an entry age limit to study it may be necessary to impose a lower age limit due to Enhanced BBS and/or NHS regulations therefore it may not be possible to consider an applicant under the age of 17 on entry.

**20) Appeals and Complaints**

Applicants who feel they have grounds to Complain/Appeal about the administration of the BDS Admissions Policy may obtain a copy of the Undergraduate Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure by contacting

Telephone: 0191 208 3333

Enquire online: [www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries)