

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	Diploma in Dental Hygiene & Therapy
4	Programme Title	Diploma in Dental Hygiene & Therapy
5	UCAS/Programme Code	1117
6	Programme Accreditation	General Dental Council
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Healthcare programmes - Professions Complementary to Dentistry
8	FHEQ Level	Diploma
9	Date written/revised	March 2002/June 2012

10 Programme Aims

The principal aim of the programme is to produce a caring, knowledgeable, competent and skilful dental hygienist/therapist who is able to accept professional responsibility, within the framework of the particular areas of knowledge and competence, that contributes to the safe and effective care of patients, who appreciates the need for continuing professional development, who is able to utilise advances in relevant knowledge and techniques and who understands the role of the patient in decision making. The content and structure of the programme is intended to meet the requirements of the General Dental Council publication 'Curricular for Registerable Qualifications for Professions Complementary to Dentistry' and is guided by the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Healthcare programmes – Professions Complementary to Dentistry.

Additional aims are to:

- enable students to acquire the necessary clinical understanding and competence within the framework of their prospective particular areas of work, and to be aware of their limitations;
- promote acquisition of the skills and professional attitudes and behaviour that facilitate effective and appropriate interaction with patients and colleagues;
- encourage recognition and acceptance of the obligation to practise in the best interests of patients at all times, as outlined in the General Dental Council's guidance on professional and personal conduct in *Maintaining Standards*;
- foster the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes that will promote effective lifelong learning and support professional development.

11 Learning Outcomes**A Knowledge and understanding**

The newly qualified dental hygienist/therapist should understand those aspects of the following topics that relate to the framework of professional responsibilities:

- A1 the scientific basis of dentistry, including the appropriate medical sciences, the mechanisms of knowledge acquisition, scientific method and evaluation of evidence;
- A2 behavioural science and communication;
- A3 the processes of disease and how these affect the appearance and function of normal tissues;

- A4 principles of health promotion and disease prevention;
- A5 organisation and provision of health care in the community and in hospital;
- A6 the care of oral appliances and devices;
- A7 broader issues of dental practice, including ethics, medico-legal considerations, health and safety legislation and the maintenance of a safe working environment.

B Subject specific/practical skills

The newly qualified dental hygienist/therapist/therapist should be able to demonstrate the ability to undertake the following activities that relate to the framework of professional responsibilities:

- B1 a range of clinical procedures that are within their area of knowledge and competence, including techniques for preventing and treating oral and dental disease;
- B2 effective communication with patients, their families and associates, members of the dental team and other health professionals involved in patient care;
- B3 obtaining and recording a relevant history, performing an appropriate physical examination, interpreting a treatment plan or prescription and making secure and timely arrangements for the further management of patients whose treatment is beyond their level of competence.

C Cognitive skills

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the ability to:

- C1 critically assess the quality of information generated by clinical examination;
- C2 present and summarise such information and to critically appraise its clinical relevance;
- C3 critically assess the value and limitations of existing information on a given subject;
- C4 *critically assess the value and limitations of new data in relation to existing information on a given subject, to draw logical conclusions, and to identify appropriate avenues for further study.*

D Key skills

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the ability to:

- D1 exercise initiative and personal responsibility;
- D2 communicate effectively at all levels in both the scientific and professional contexts using verbal, non-verbal and written means;
- D3 work effectively as members of a team;
- D4 use information technology as a means of communication, for data collection and analysis, and for self-directed learning;
- D5 analyse and resolve problems, and deal with uncertainty;
- D6 manage time, set priorities and work to prescribed time limits;

D7 make decisions based on sound ethical, moral and scientific principles;

D8 manage their learning in the context of establishing a philosophy of continuing professional development.

Teaching and Learning Methods

E.M.I. – Extended Matching Items, CBD – case based discussions

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching method	Learning Method	Assessed YES/NO	Method of Assessment
A <u>Knowledge and understanding</u>				
A1	Lectures, Seminars	Independent reading Projects	YES	Written paper, Short answers, E.M.I., Statement/ Reason questions, Research projects, (CBD)
A2	Lectures, Seminars	Role play	YES	OSCE, Competency test, CBD
A3	Lectures, Seminars	Independent reading, Projects	YES	Written paper, Short answers, E.M.I., Statement/ Reason Questions, CBD
A4	Lectures, Seminars, Research Training	Independent reading, Projects	YES	Written paper, Short answers, E.M.I, Statement/ Reason questions, Competency test, CBD
A5	Lectures, Seminars	Independent reading	YES	Written paper, Short answers, E.M.I., Statement/ Reason questions, CBD
A6	Lectures, Seminars	Independent reading	YES	Written paper, Short answers, E.M.I., Statement/ Reason questions, CBD
A7	Lectures, Seminars	Independent reading, Training	YES	Written paper, Short answers, E.M.I., Statement/ Reason Questions, CBD
B <u>Subject specific/practical skills</u>				
B1	Simulation, Clinical training	Laboratory work, Clinical skills work	YES	Competency test, OSCE, Practical examination
B2	Clinical training	Clinical skills work, Role play	YES	OSCE, Practical examination
B3	Clinical training	Role play, Competency test	YES	Competency test, OSCE, Practical

C Cognitive skills

C1	Clinical training	Clinical skills, Peer presentation	YES	OSCE, CBD
C2	Clinical training	Clinical skills, Peer presentation	YES	CBD
C3	Seminars	Problem- solving exercise	YES	CBD
C4	Seminars Tutorials	Problem- solving exercise, Project work	YES	CBD

Transferable skills

D1	Lectures, Seminars, Tutorials	Problem- Solving, Independent learning, Clinical skills	NO	Not applicable
D2	Tutorial	Role play	YES	CBD, Competency test
D3	Seminars	Clinical skills, Problem-solving	NO	Not applicable
D4	IT training, Seminars	CAL	NO	Not applicable
D5	Seminars, Tutorials	Independent reading, Research Projects, Group activities	YES	Research project
D6	Clinical teaching	Self-evaluation	YES	Competency test
D7	Clinical teaching, Lectures	Group activities	YES	Practical examination
D8	Lecture, Seminar	Independent reading	NO	Not applicable

	<i>Intended Learning outcomes</i>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
A	Knowledge and understanding	The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding (A1 to A7) is lectures and seminars. A3 is developed through role play and students are encouraged to supplement their lecture notes by independent reading. Reading material is readily available in the classroom and the students are directed towards the most appropriate texts for each subject. A4 is also taught in conjunction with research projects and clinical training. A1, A3 and A4 may also form a part of course project work.
B	Subject-specific/practical skill	Practical skills (B1) are taught in the clinical skills laboratory and are developed as an integral component of the clinical training programme. B2 and B3 are taught through clinical and chairside training with development through role play and clinical skills work.
C	Cognitive skills	Cognitive skills are introduced and developed as part of clinical (chairside) training (C1, C2) as well as through seminars (C3) and tutorials (C3, C4). Students are encouraged to display and develop these skills as part of their clinical training, as presentation cases (C1, C2) and through problem-solving exercises. C4 is developed through project work.
D	Key (transferable) skills	Transferable skills are introduced in lectures, seminars and tutorials (D1 – D5, D7, D8) as part of good clinical practice and patient management (D6, D7). These skills are developed throughout the course through problem-solving exercises (D1, D3), role play (D2), clinical skills (D3), independent reading (D5, D8), research projects (D5), group activities (D5, D7) and self-evaluation (D6).

Assessment Strategy

	<i>Intended learning outcomes</i>	<i>Methods of assessment</i>
A	Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge and understanding of the subject are primarily assessed by written unseen examination (A1 – A7). This is supplemented by the use of case based discussion (CBD) to assess comprehension of a subject. In the case of A2 and A4 competency tests are designed to test the ability to apply knowledge.
B	Subject-specific/practical skills	The subject specific/practical skills are primarily assessed by practical examination and OSCEs (B1 – B3). This is supplemented by the use of competency tests in B1 and B3.
C	Cognitive skills	Cognitive skills are assessed by CBD (C1 – C4). This is supplemented in the case of C1 with OSCEs.
D	Transferable skills	Transferable skills are assessed by a selection of techniques. D2 and D6 are assessed by competency tests. Assessment of D2 is supplemented by the use of CBD. D5 is assessed by a research project and D7 by a practical examination. The other skills are not assessed.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

(i) Programme features

The programme comprises a curriculum that is delivered over 7 terms (27 months).

The theoretical and scientific basis for dental hygiene/therapy underpins the first year. Teaching and practical skills are initiated in the clinical skills laboratory as a pre-clinical requirement. Clinical practice also commences this year.

The clinical practice of dental hygiene/therapy is further enforced and refined in the second year and theory relating to specialised areas will be developed.

The programme has been designed to give a smooth transition from learning the theory and scientific basis, progressing to practical procedures and culminating in treating patients.

An innovative feature of the course is the development of skills through clinical placements and attachments at regional hospitals, maxillofacial surgery units, community hospitals, and special needs units.

(ii) Curriculum structure

Following the introductory course, the core teaching programme for the basic dental sciences commences. This course runs through the first year of the Diploma, during which time the subjects of professionalism, behavioural science, communication, dental health education, health promotion and disease prevention, health care in the community and issues regarding ethics, health and safety and medico-legal considerations are taught.

Teaching of practical skills is undertaken in the clinical skills laboratory between weeks 3 and 16 of year 1, practical skills teaching for therapy is undertaken between weeks 34 and 45 of year 1.

These clinical skills are developed in clinical practice, which starts in week 19 of year 1 for dental hygiene, and week 2 of year 2 for dental therapy, and continues throughout the rest of the course.

Communication and other subject specific skills, ie communication, clinical examination and history taking, are introduced and developed during the clinical attachment.

As the clinical course progresses, cognitive skills are introduced and developed: the evaluation of clinical information; the ability to appraise critically specific clinical findings; and the ability to assess and evaluate new techniques and treatment strategies against current standards.

In year 2 of the course, aspects of dental health education, diet and nutrition, preventive dentistry and dental radiology are developed further as the teaching of basic science subjects is complete. At this time the students embark upon research projects and case presentations, which enable them to develop and demonstrate key skills, personal responsibility, information technology, time management and moral and scientific principles.

Throughout the 27 months the students are encouraged to attend a series of post-graduate lectures and presentations as part of an optional learning programme. This helps to establish the philosophy and importance of continuing professional development.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

Interprofessional and joint teaching with BDS (dental) undergraduates.
Shared care of patients with BDS students.
Tutors with a wide range of clinical experience.
All assessments are standard set to GDC standards for a professional qualification.
Dedicated vocational qualification with good career prospects.
Wide ranging clinical placements within primary and secondary care including specialist clinics.

Excellent staff student ratio.
Teaching delivered by therapist and dentists.
Course fees paid by NHS.
Students are derived from a mixture of widely diverse backgrounds with varying experiences.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/>

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

Applicants for places should normally have:

- 5 GCE/GCSE level passes, grades A, B or C (or equivalent passes in CSE Grade 1); these should include English Language and either Biology or Human Biology with 3 other separate subjects;
- the National Certificate for Dental Nurses;
- an A level pass in Biology (D grade or higher).

OR

- 2 A level passes(D grade or higher)-one of which must be Biology;
- 5 GCSEs at grades A, B or C or equivalent, including English Language and Human Biology/Biology plus 3 other separate subjects.

Other equivalent qualifications may be considered. Equivalent qualifications include 5 Scottish Standard grades at grade 3 or above, plus 3 Scottish Higher passes at grade C or above. Subjects at either level will normally include English and Biology.

Previous dental nursing experience and a recognised dental nursing qualification is preferred.

Successful applicants will need to pass a medical examination. Protection by vaccination against hepatitis B, and hepatitis C status is required.

(i) Entry with non-standard qualifications

Particular care is taken over the admission of mature students who apply without these qualifications. Whilst it is recognised many such students, particularly those over 20 with dental nursing experience, may have the potential both to gain from and contribute to the programme, all applicants must demonstrate a capability to meet the demands of the programme.

(ii) Selection Criteria

There is considerable competition for places, and a limited number of candidates are invited to attend for interview and assessment. Selection is based on aptitude, personality and communication skills as well as academic achievement.

Interviews are usually held 6 months prior to the start of the course.

The selection criteria adheres to the School of Dental Sciences Admissions Policy.

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/

Pastoral support

Students on admission to the diploma course are allocated a personal tutor who is responsible for pastoral care during the 27 month programme.

Students and personal tutor meet initially at the beginning of the course. Students are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their tutors. Tutors and students meet at the end of each term to discuss any issues arising during the term.

Academic support

Students and personal tutors allocated on admission to the diploma course meet at least once during each term to monitor progress.

Staff/student meeting

The Principal Tutor, and another member of the tutoring staff, may meet the students at the any time during the term to discuss any student issues.

Support for Special Needs

The University has a Disability Unit which is a centre offering advice, guidance and support for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties (Dyslexia). The unit is headed by the Disability Officer and has a Dyslexia Adviser, Co-ordinator for deaf students and a Technical Support Adviser. The unit has a technical resources room with specialist equipment for the use of students and for assessment purposes. The Disability Unit also provides advice and guidance to all university staff to promote effective disability awareness and support for students. The government provides funds for disabled students through the Disabled Students' Allowance to assist students who, because of their disability, incur extra costs. Advice and help on all aspects of claiming Disabled Students' Allowance can be obtained from the Disability Unit.

Learning resources

The Dental Hygiene/Therapy course takes place within the main Dental Hospital & School of Dental Sciences building.

There is one classroom that is dedicated for use by all dental hygiene/therapy students, situated on Level 5 of the Dental Hospital. This has a small library and two PCs with internet facilities.

Students also have access to the Clinical Simulation Unit. Lectures which are given jointly to dental undergraduates and student dental hygienist/therapists are delivered in the main lecture block of the Dental and Medical Schools.

The clinical area used for training is on Level 6 of the Dental Hospital where Hygiene & therapy students train alongside BDS students on the Periodontology & Interprofessional Clinic.

University Libraries

All students have access to all University libraries and, in particular, the Walton Library which is located on the 5th floor of the Catherine Cookson Building. This library has facilities specifically aimed at medical and dental undergraduates.

The Library aims to support the learning needs of the dental hygiene/therapy students, by providing access to a wide range of resources including books, journals and computer databases and a photocopier.

Information Technology

The use of information technology throughout the curriculum is increasing, and the diploma course is increasing its resources. All students have access to computer clusters in the medical school. The largest, Fell cluster, is situated on the ground floor of the Cookson building.

15 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

The standards and quality of the programme are reviewed, evaluated and modified following discussion and direct feedback through the Staff/Student Committee. Components of the course are reviewed on a 3 year rolling programme within the Co-ordinating Committees for Clinical & Academic Studies and then the Board of Studies.

Externally, the Tutors of Dental Hygiene/Therapy and the Directors meet as independent groups on a regular basis to assess Teaching and Learning issues and methods of assessment. A representative of the General Dental Council is usually in attendance at the meeting of Directors.

The Examination Sub-Committee for the Diploma in Dental Hygiene/Therapy meets on 3 to 4 occasions each year to:

- Accept and respond to the External Examiner's report
- Set questions for Year 1 and the Diploma examination
- Review marking and assessment methods
- Undertake standard setting

The External Examiner's Report is also received by the Examinations & assessment committee and then the Board of Studies, the Faculty Teaching Committee and University Teaching and Learning Committee. The Examination Committee draft a response to the report and this response is sent to the Board of Studies.

Student evaluations by questionnaires provide feedback on:

- clinical skills courses;
- plenary lectures by teaching staff;
- the perceived relevance of lectures presented by visiting speakers.

The results of evaluations and any subsequent actions are reported back to the students through the Staff-Student Committee which reports directly to the CCAS and CCCS.

Teaching review

Plenary lectures given by staff are evaluated by a number of methods:

- self review by reflective diary;
- questionnaire feedback by students;
- peer review.

All tutors are required to undertake a teaching qualification. These are available at the University of Northumbria, University of Newcastle, North Tyneside College, Newcastle College and Gateshead College. Teaching staff are also encouraged to attend CPD seminars and workshops organised by the University.

16 Regulation of assessment

(i) Assessment rules and classification

- An in-course written assessment is completed every 4 weeks throughout the 27 months of the Diploma.
- An in-course, continuous, practical assessment is carried out through completion of log books and a **formative** evaluation at the end of every clinical and practical session.
- Clinical and practical **core** skills are assessed by competency tests which must be passed.
- Practical tests are undertaken on completion of the key clinical skills simulation course and at the end of terms 2 and 4. These must be passed to progress.
- The Primary (Stage 1) examination will comprise TWO distinct parts : Stage 1 Part 1 and Stage 1 Part 2. Each Part must be passed independently. Part 1 comprises two written papers and an OSCE. Part 2 comprises a clinical/practical examination to demonstrate instrumentation skills for dental hygiene.
- The Final (Stage 2) examination for the award of the Diploma of Dental Hygiene and Dental Therapy will be at the end of the course and comprise:
 - two written papers;
 - a clinical case presentation of one adult patient (in attendance) for which the student will need to demonstrate care provision for dental hygiene and /or dental therapy;
 - a clinical case presentation of a child patient (not in attendance) and a second adult case (again not in attendance) which demonstrates either hygiene or therapy skills thus that both aspects are examined over the two case presentations;
 - in-course assessment which will comprise clinical grades during the second year of the course, a project and marks from in-course written papers taken at the end of terms 4 and 5.

The project and the Term 5 and 6 examinations will contribute to the continuous assessment component. A moderation assessment will only be held for borderline/fail or merit/distinction candidates.

Both Primary and Diploma examinations are assessed and double marked by internal examiners. The external examiner also has the opportunity to scrutinise all exam scripts.

Performance criteria are determined for all assessments and use the grades: Merit; Satisfactory; Borderline; Unsatisfactory for written work and Merit; Satisfactory; Unsatisfactory for all practical work.

The Primary Examination shall normally be held at the start of the second year in October. The Final Examination shall take place on completion of the course of study, normally in November/December. An external examiner shall be present at both Primary and Final Examinations.

Prior to entry to the above qualifications, candidates must also have shown a satisfactory performance in their assessed exercises as graded by internal examiners.

The academic and clinical performance of candidates during the second year will be taken into account in the Final Examination through an aggregate continuous assessment mark. A complete record of the relevant theoretical and clinical work and tests included in the continuous assessment grade will be available for scrutiny by the external examiner at the Final Examination.

If the candidate's patient for Part 2 the practical examination (Primary) fails to attend, they will undertake a case based discussion based on the clinical records of the patient with the external examiner.

If the candidate's patients are unable to attend either of the clinical case presentations in the Final Examination, the candidate must present the patient's clinical records and other relevant evidence of having planned and completed treatment.

Before presenting himself/herself for examinations the candidate must have attended the prescribed course of study in both the first and second years.

Continuance in the second year of the study will be dependent on the candidate passing the Primary Examinations Parts 1 and 2.

A candidate whose written paper or practical examination does not satisfy the examiners will be referred to the Board of Studies of Dental Hygiene/Therapy who may recommend either:

- (a) resitting the Primary Examination after a further prescribed period of study
- (b) discontinuation of studies

Candidates who fail the Final Examination will be allowed to resit after a further prescribed period of study. A second resit is permitted following discussion between the candidate, the tutor and the course programme director.

A candidate who has repeat failures in the Primary or Final Examinations may be required by the examiners to produce evidence of further study as prescribed by the examiners before presenting himself/herself for re-examination.

Candidates who satisfy the examiners are the first attempt of the Final Examination, and who show special achievement in the examination, may be awarded a pass with Merit or Distinction.

(i) Role of the external examiner

External examiners ensure the maintenance of academic standards so that awards are comparable with those from other Dental Schools in the United Kingdom and meet the requirements of the General Dental Council. They also ensure that the assessment system is appropriate, fair and is operated equitably in the classification of students.

External examiners:

- are full members of the Board of Examiners and attend the Meeting of Examiners after the conclusion of the examination;
- approve the question papers for the written units of assessment in the examination and have the opportunity to recommend modifications to examination questions set;
- have the opportunity to scrutinise a sufficient number and range of scripts and other assessed work from the whole year group to be able to determine that the internal marking was appropriate and consistent;
- participate in the selective oral examinations;
- comment on the content, balance and structure of courses, and on the assessment procedures;
- report to the University.

16 Indications of Quality and Standards

Professional Accreditation of the Diploma in Hygiene & Therapy course was awarded by the General Dental Council in 2005. A score of 23/24 was achieved by the QAA review of the Dental School in 1998.

Conclusion

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.

The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Additional information relating to this course can be found in:

- Prospectus for the Diploma in Dental Hygiene/Therapy
- University Prospectus
- Diploma Programme Handbook

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/>)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

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