

Programme Regulations: 2026/27

Programme Title: Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS)

Code: A206

Notes

- (i) *These programme regulations should be read in conjunction with the University's Taught Programme Regulations.*
- (ii) *The BDS is a non-modular programme leading to a professional qualification. The degree is equivalent to Level 7 on the University Qualification and Credit Framework.*
- (iii) *As the dental degree, BDS is a qualification leading to professional registration, the University has an overriding duty of care to ensure that all students graduating from the programme not only meet the academic and clinical requirements of the course, but also are physically and mentally fit to practice and are of good character. The case of any student whose fitness for professional practice is a matter for concern shall be considered under the University's Fitness to Practise Procedure.*
- (iv) *Students will be required to undergo appropriate DBS and Healthcare checks as stipulated in University and School policies.*
- (v) *Students will be required to fulfil all requirements for placements (including clinical access) as dictated by the relevant Care Quality Commission Regulated provider.*
- (vi) ***In order to make up any deficit in clinical experience, clinical training may be extended.***
- (vii) The BDS is an attendance-based programme and is principally delivered face to face at the Newcastle City campus and associated clinical locations. Although some teaching and structured guided learning may be delivered online, due to the clinical and integrated structure of the programme, sessions planned for face to face delivery cannot be substituted by other forms of delivery, including blended, online, and remote.

1. Programme Structure

- (a) The programme is only available for study in full-time mode.
- (b) The period of study shall be five years.
- (c) The programme requires students to attend clinical dental practice and to undertake other clinically related studies.
- (d) All students shall take the following compulsory courses:

Stage 1

Orientation and Study Skills
Anatomy of the Head and Neck
Cell Biology
Interpersonal Skills and Shadowing
Introduction to Clinical Practice
Neurobiology
Dental Physiology
Metabolism & Homeostasis

Stage 2

Craniofacial and Tooth Biology
Behavioural and Social Science for Dentists
Basic Pharmacology
Dental Materials Science
Microbiology for Dentistry
Immunology and Healthcare
Nutrition and Diet
Key Clinical Skills

Stage 3

Clinical Introduction Course
Applied Anatomy
Dental Materials Science
Dental Public Health
Human Diseases
Oral Diseases
Clinical Skills courses in Restorative Dentistry, and Orthodontics
Clinical attachments with associated lectures and seminars in Restorative Dentistry, Paediatric Dentistry, Primary Care Outreach (Oral Health Education), Oral Surgery, Dental Emergency Clinic and Radiology

Stage 4

Dental Public Health
Human Diseases
Oral Diseases
Clinical Skills courses in Restorative Dentistry and Oral Surgery
Clinical attachments with associated lectures and seminars in Restorative Dentistry, Paediatric Dentistry and Oral Surgery

Stage 5

Dental Public Health
Gerodontology
Oral Diseases
Clinical attachments with associated lectures and seminars in Restorative Dentistry, Paediatric Dentistry, Primary Care Outreach, Dental Emergency Clinic and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Stages 1- 5

A vertically integrated course on Professionalism and Personal & Professional Development runs through all stages of the programme.

2. Assessment Methods

- (a) A full description of the assessment process is provided on the Virtual Learning Environment. Different methods of assessment are used to assess acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriately matched to the learning outcomes of the Stage of study.

Knowledge and learning

- (b) Written / online examinations are used to assess retained factual knowledge, understanding and analysis and provide an opportunity to demonstrate learning beyond the core material with Single Best Answer (SBA) and Structured Short Answer (SSA) question styles primarily used. They are also used to assess the ability to apply knowledge, solve problems and test clinical reasoning. Objective Structured Practical Examinations (OSPEs) are used to assess retained factual knowledge and understanding together with observational skills.

Skills

- (c) Objective Structured Practical Examinations (OSPEs), Simulated Clinical Assessments, In Course Clinical Assessments (INCCAs), Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) and Multi-station Objective Structured Long Examination Record (MOSLER) are used to assess practical and clinical skills and other tasks.

A wide variety of written assignments, group work, project reports, case reports and portfolios, case based discussions and oral presentations are used to assess the critical skills of retrieval, organization and analysis of information, reasoning, deduction and critical evaluation of evidence, written and oral communication, and attitudinal objectives. Structured clinical assessments determine ability to perform a variety of clinical and technical procedures.

Professionalism

- (d) Professionalism is monitored for dental students and assessed in the Gateway elements of the examinations, as detailed in the Stage regulations. A students' overall performance in all forms of assessment, attendance record, feedback from their tutor and their approach to clinical work including acting within the GDC standards provide the School with information relevant to a candidate's progress and about their overall professionalism.

3. Assessment and Progression

- (a) For each stage of the year students will pass / fail. The outcome is based upon a combination of grades as detailed in the individual stage regulations. Exceptional performance is also recognised as detailed in point (m) below.
- (b) Academic components of assessment are graded on a four point marking scale.:

M – Merit (Pass)
S – Satisfactory (Pass)
B – Borderline (Fail)
U – Unsatisfactory (Fail)

- (c) Clinical components of assessment including, INCCAs and MOSLERs are generally graded on a 4 point scale:

4: Indicates you are currently working above the level of a 'Safe beginner' and would require very minimal/no supervision if you were to repeat that clinical encounter again.

3: Indicates you are currently working at the level of a 'Safe beginner' and would require minimal supervision if you were to repeat that clinical encounter again.

2: Indicates you are currently working just below the level of a 'Safe beginner' and would require supervision if you were to repeat that clinical encounter again.

1: Indicates you are currently working well below the level of a 'Safe beginner' and would require constant supervision if you were to repeat that clinical encounter again.

- (d) In all objective modes of assessment (e.g. SBA, SSA, OSPE, OSCE), progress is measured according to threshold marks specified for each grade.
- (e) Candidates must demonstrate competence in both the knowledge and skills elements of the programme and be in good standing professionally in order to progress from one stage to another and to be awarded the Degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery. The criteria for passing individual assessments, stages and the award can be found in the individual stage examination regulations.
- (f) Candidates who are unsuccessful at first attempt will normally be permitted two resit opportunities. The first resit opportunity will normally be held within the academic year of study. If a candidate fails the first resit, and a second resit opportunity is permitted – see Section (g), the candidate will normally be required to complete an additional period of study, by repeating the year of study as an internal candidate.
- (g) A maximum of two additional resit years, with attendance, is permitted across the programme as a whole. Candidates exceeding this regulation will be unable to continue their studies and, where appropriate, will be considered by the Board of Examiners for an appropriate exit award.
- (h) Candidates who fail the first resit in Years 1 and 2, will register as an internal repeat candidate; full attendance is required, and attendance must be in person. In exceptional circumstances and with explicit permission from the Board of Examiners, a candidate may be granted permission to complete the second resit as an external candidate.
- (i) Candidates who fail the first resit* in Years 3, 4 and 5 will register as an internal repeat candidate; full attendance is required, and attendance must be in person.
- *In-year resits are not offered for Years 3, 4 and 5 clinical assessments. Candidates who fail clinical assessments at first attempt will be required to repeat the year as an internal candidate – this applies to both resit opportunities.
- (j) All candidates undertaking internal repeat years will be liable for the full tuition fee.
- (k) Resit assessments, whether undertaken externally or in attendance are capped at the Satisfactory grade.

- (l) Candidates who have taken an interruption of study will not normally be allowed to resume their studies if they are more than two years in arrears, this applies to both pre-clinical and clinical years of the programme. In recognising that there are various reasons for taking an interruption of study, such decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Examiners, in conjunction with the PEC committee (if appropriate), taking into consideration the student's individual circumstances, academic and clinical profile and University and GDC Preparing for Practice/Safe Practitioner Framework Regulations. In consultation with the Student Progress Service and Student Health & Wellbeing Service, the Board of Examiners may override previous decisions made by the PEC or Fitness to Practise committees where it is felt student and patient safety may be at risk. Where it is agreed that a candidate cannot continue on the programme an appropriate exit qualification will be awarded.
- (m) Candidates who are resitting or are returning after interruption of study may be required by the Board of Examiners to retake and pass clinical and pre-clinical (INCCA) assessments that they may have previously passed. This is to ensure candidates' clinical competences still meet the requirements of the programme and the GDC 's Preparing for Practice/Safe Practitioner Framework.
- (n) Stage Merits and Distinctions are awarded in order to recognise excellence in Stage Examinations and can only be awarded on the first attempt at an examination. Stage Merits and Distinctions result in the award of points which may contribute towards the award of BDS with Honours. In any Stage Examination, a Distinction is equivalent to 3 points and a Merit to 1 point.
- (o) Candidates may be awarded BDS with Honours if they achieve the following criteria;
 - a. Achieve 6 points in total across all Stage examinations (Stages 1-5) with at least ONE overall merit in BOTH the Academic and Clinical sections of Final (Stage 5) BDS.

Or

 - b. Achieve 10 points in total across all Stage examinations (Stages 1-5) with at least ONE overall merit grade in either the Academic or Clinical sections of Final (Stage 5) BDS.
- (p) Candidates who wish to withdraw from study may be considered for the one of the following exit awards on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners, upon withdrawal of studies:
 - (i) Candidates who have satisfied the examiners for the Stage 1 BDS examination, may be awarded without further examination, a Higher Education Certificate in Dental Studies.
 - (ii) Candidates who have satisfied the examiners for Stages 1 and 2 BDS examinations, may be awarded without further examination, a Higher Education Diploma in Dental Studies.
 - (iii) Candidates who have satisfied the examiners for Stages 1, 2 and 3 BDS examinations, may be awarded without further examination, a Degree of Bachelor of Science in Dental Studies.
 - (iv) Candidates who have satisfied the examiners for Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 BDS examinations, may be awarded without further examination, a Pass or Honours degree of Bachelor of Science in Dental Studies*.

* A formula for determining the appropriate degree / classification can be found on the Virtual Learning Environment.

- (q) Candidates exiting with the above awards will not be permitted to resume their studies for the degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery. None of the exit awards listed above are registrable qualifications with the GDC.

4. Transfer

- (a) There are limited opportunities to transfer from another course into the BDS course from other specific courses at Newcastle University. Students wishing to transfer from outside of Newcastle University should apply through UCAS to stage 1 of the course. Further details can be found in the School of Dental Sciences Admissions Policy.
- (b) A student in good standing considering a withdrawal or transfer from the course for whatever reason should seek advice and counsel from the Stage Director for Stage 1 or 2 or from the Degree Programme Director. Such counselling is essential in order to ensure that the student reaches a valid judgement based on sound information and the implications of the decision considered thoroughly.

5. Intercalation

During the BDS programme students have the opportunity to step aside from the mainstream programme to intercalate a period of additional study. Further information can be found on our Virtual Learning Environment.

6. Exemptions to the University's Taught Programme Regulations

- (a) Due to the integrated nature and requirements of the award, the following variations to the University Regulations have been approved:

Non-modular structure

The programme does not operate a modular credit based system, and instead uses an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment. Programme regulations therefore appear different in style and substance from other programmes of study. Regulatory requirements in relation to module and credit are not applicable.

Taught Programme Regulations (Integrated) – Return of Marks

Use of an Alternative marking scheme / Use of Standard Setting

BDS uses an alternative method of marking assessments. Each component of assessment does not necessarily carry a percentage mark and assessments are not weighted.

Standard setting, used to determine the required passing threshold needed to judge a student to have reached the level of a 'Safe Beginner*' / 'Safe Practitioner**' with respect to knowledge or skill or professionalism, is used for a number of assessments. The passing threshold for such assessments will vary depending on the individual assessment. Further information on Standard Setting can be found on our Virtual Learning Environment.

Taught Programme Regulations – Principles of Discretion

Taught Programme Regulations (Integrated) - Progression from One Stage to Another

Taught Programme Regulations (Integrated) - The Award and Classification of Degrees and Use of Discretion

Taught Programme Regulations (Integrated) - Principles of Compensation

In order to meet professional standards and ensure attainment of all learning outcomes students must pass all Stages. To meet these requirements discretion and compensation are not used by the Board of Examiners.

Each component of assessment does not necessarily carry a percentage mark and assessments are not weighted therefore progression and award requirements are individual to the programme. The overall Stage mark is recorded as pass or fail, however students may be awarded Merit or Distinction for Stage Examinations. Classified honours are not standard on the programme, however the Board of Examiners can award the BDS with honours.

Taught Programme Regulations - Reassessment

Candidates who are unsuccessful at first attempt will normally be permitted two resit opportunities. Resit arrangements for this programme may vary and where students have failed clinical aspects of the programme they may be required to resit these assessments with attendance. Further details regarding which aspects of assessment are required to be repeated in the event of a resit year are contained within the stage regulations.

- (b) In the event of any inconsistency between the programme and University regulations in relation to the above section, the programme regulations take precedence over the University regulations. Further guidance is provided on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

* GDC Preparing for practice - [https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/quality-assurance/preparing-for-practice-\(revised-2015\).pdf?sfvrsn=81d58c49_2source/qualityassurance/preparing-for-practice-\(revised-2015\).pdf?sfvrsn=81d58c49_2](https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/quality-assurance/preparing-for-practice-(revised-2015).pdf?sfvrsn=81d58c49_2source/qualityassurance/preparing-for-practice-(revised-2015).pdf?sfvrsn=81d58c49_2)

** GDC Safe Practitioner Framework (relevant to Stage 1 from 2025 intake) https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/education-and-cpd/safe-practitioner/spf-dentist.pdf?sfvrsn=c198211d_5