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| PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION |  |
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| 1 | Awarding Institution | Newcastle University |
| 2 | Teaching Institution | Newcastle University |
| 3 | Final Award | BSc (Hons) |
| 4 | Programme Title | Dental Therapy |
| 5 | UCAS/Programme Code | A207 |
| 6 | Programme Accreditation | General Dental Council |
| 7 | QAA Subject Benchmark(s) | Healthcare programmes - Professions Complementary to Dentistry |
| 8 | FHEQ Level | 6 |
| 9 | Date written/revised | February 2026 |

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| 10 Programme Aims | |
| <p>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 'Preparing for Practice' / "Safe Practitioner Framework" (as appropriate) and is guided by the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Healthcare programmes – Professions Complementary to Dentistry.</p> <p><u>Additional aims are to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <i>Standards for Dental Professionals</i> • foster the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes that will promote effective lifelong learning and support professional development • foster the knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes that will promote effective team working in order to enhance patient care. | |
| 11 Learning Outcomes | |
| A | <u>Knowledge and understanding</u> |

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

- A1 the mechanisms of knowledge acquisition, scientific method and evaluation of evidence
- A2 the scientific basis of dentistry, including biomedical, behavioural and material sciences
- A3 the processes of oral, dental, general & systemic 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 broader issues of dental practice, including ethics, medico-legal considerations, health and safety legislation and the maintenance of a safe working environment.
- A7 the appropriate pathways and personal and professional obligation to raise concerns when patient safety is at risk.

B Subject specific/practical skills

The newly qualified dental hygienist/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 obtain valid consent from patients or their carers
- B4 obtain and record a relevant history, and perform appropriate extra-oral and intra-oral examinations
- B5 recognise changes in a patients' oral health status, and abnormalities in the oral cavity
- B6 contribute to special investigations and diagnostic procedures including radiography
- B7 interpret and plan the most appropriate means of delivery of a treatment plan or prescription
- B8 identify when patient needs may differ from the treatment plan, or when treatment is beyond their individual level of competence and make secure and timely arrangements for the further management of patients
- B9 put patients' interests first and act to protect them, acting with integrity, respecting patients' dignity and choice, and protecting the confidentiality of all personal information
- B10 recognise and act within the GDC standards, other professionally relevant laws and legal frameworks in order to protect and promote the health of individual patients

B11 take a patient centred approach to working with the dental and wider healthcare team.

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 collate, present and summarise such information and critically appraise its clinical relevance
- C3 critically assess the value and limitations of existing information on a given subject
- C4 construct well-argued and grammatically correct reviews of relevant literature, correctly retrieving, referencing and attributing source material.
- C5 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 Transferable/Key skills

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

- D1 communicate appropriately, effectively and sensitively at all levels in both the scientific and professional contexts using verbal, non-verbal, written and electronic means within the principals of information governance
- D2 recognise and comply with systems, processes and protocols that support Safe patient care
- D3 engage in activities that enable recognition of knowledge, values, qualities and skills in order to inform and guide personal and professional development and take responsibility for personal development planning, recording of evidence and reflective practice
- D4 critically evaluate and analyse complex problems (both clinical and non-clinical) including those with incomplete information, identify key issues for action and devise appropriate solutions
- D5 effectively manage their own time and resources
- D6 make decisions based on sound ethical, moral and scientific principles.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Key to assessment Abbreviations

Written Assessments (SBA – single best answer, SSA – Structured Short Answer, OSPE – Objective Structured Practical Examination,)

INSCA – In-course Simulated Competency Assessment, INCCA – In-course Clinical Competency Assessment

CBD – case-based discussions (either based on case report or unseen clinical case),

OSCE - Objective Structured Clinical examination

| Intended Learning Outcomes | Teaching method | Learning Method | Assessed YES/NO | Method of Assessment |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------|--|
| A Knowledge and understanding | | | | |
| A1 | Lectures, Seminars | Independent reading Critical review of scientific papers Problem Based Learning | YES | Written paper, (SBA, SSA, OSPE), In-course assignment |
| A2 | Lectures, Practical Seminars | Independent reading | YES | Written papers (SBA, SSA, OSPE) |
| A3 | Lectures, Seminars, Clinical Attachments | Independent reading, | YES | Written papers (SBA, SSA, OSPE) CBD |
| A4 | Lectures, Seminars, | Independent reading, Projects Problem Based Learning | YES | Written papers (SBA, SSA, OSPE), CBD |
| A5 | Lectures, Seminars | Independent reading Project Problem Based Learning | YES | Written papers (SBA, SSA, OSPE) |
| A6 | Lectures, Seminars | Independent reading | YES | Written papers (SBA, SSA, OSPE), INCCA |

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| A7 | Lectures, Seminars | Independent reading, | YES | Written papers (SBA, SSA, OSPE) |
| B Subject specific/practical skills | | | | |
| B1 | Simulation, Clinical attachment training | Reflection on clinical skills Problem Based learning | YES | INSCA, OSCE, INCCA, CBD |
| B2 | Clinical attachments & training Role Play | Reflection on clinical skills Problem Based Learning | YES | OSCE, INCCA, CBD |
| B3 | Lectures, Seminars, Role play | Role play, | YES | INCCA, OSCE, INCCA |
| B4 | Seminars, Clinical attachment training | Independent reading, Reflection on clinical skills | YES | OSCE, INCCA |
| B5 | Seminars, Clinical attachment training | Independent reading, Reflection on clinical skills | YES | OSCE, CBD |
| B6 | Lectures, Seminars, Clinical attachment training | Independent reading, Reflection on clinical skills | YES | OSCE, INCCA, CBD |
| B7 | Clinical attachment training | Reflection on clinical skills Problem Based Learning | YES | CBD |
| B8 | Clinical attachment training | Reflection on clinical skills Problem Based Learning | YES | CBD |
| B9 | Lectures, Seminars, Clinical attachments | Reflection on clinical skills | YES | Formative assessment of professionalism |
| B10 | Lectures, Seminars, Clinical attachments | Reflection | YES | Formative assessment of professionalism. Lack of issue relating to FtP |
| B11 | Seminars | | YES | CBD |

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| | Clinical attachment training | | | |
| C Cognitive skills | | | | |
| C1 | Clinical attachment training | Clinical skills, Peer presentation | YES | OSCE, CBD |
| C2 | Clinical training | Clinical skills, Peer presentation | YES | OSCE, CBD |
| C3 | Seminars | Problem-solving exercise Problem Based Learning | YES | CBD, |
| C4 | Seminars Tutorials | Independent reading, Literature review Project work | YES | In-course assignment |
| C5 | Seminars Tutorials | Independent reading, Literature review Project work | YES | In-course assignment |
| Transferable skills | | | | |
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| D1 | Seminars Clinical attachments | Critical review Extended writing | YES | INCCA OSCE |
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| D2 | Seminars, Tutorials | Independent reading, Critical review Group activities | YES | In-course assignment |
| D3 | Seminars | Self-evaluation | NO | Timely completion of in-course assignment |
| D4 | Clinical attachments teaching, Lectures | Group activities | YES | CBD, OSCE |
| D5 | Lecture, Seminar | Independent reading | NO | Not applicable |
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| | <i>Intended Learning outcomes</i> | <i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i> |
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| A | Knowledge and understanding | The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding (A1 to A7) is lectures and seminars. A2 is further developed by laboratory based practicals to enhance the students understanding of the physical properties of dental materials. A3 is developed further through clinical attachments that enable students to observe the appearances of normal and diseased tissues within the 'live patient'. Students are encouraged to supplement their lecture notes by independent and directed reading. Reading material is readily available in the University libraries and the students are directed towards the most appropriate texts for each subject. Additional learning resources are provided through the virtual learning environment Canvas. A4 and A5 are enhanced by students writing case reports which enable the students to contextualise the principles and organisational issues with respect to individual patient care. |
| B | Subject-specific/practical skill | Practical skills (B1) are initially developed and practised within the clinical simulation unit. Basic competence is assured through assessment before students progress to clinical attachments and the clinical training programme. B2 and B3 are taught |

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| | | through seminar teaching to ensure key principles are understood before being developed initially through role play and then enhanced and practise within the clinical training environment. |
| C | Cognitive skills | Cognitive skills are introduced and developed as part of clinical (chair side) 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 case reports and case based discussions (C1, C2) and also through critical review of scientific papers. C4 is developed through more extensive critical review. |
| D | Key (transferable) skills | Transferable skills are introduced in lectures, seminars and tutorials (D1 – D4, D5-D9 as part of the development of professional standards, and management of self, good clinical practice and patient management .These skills are developed throughout the course through independent extended writing tasks such as case reports and timely completion of a wide range of in course competency assessments. D6 is developed through Personal development planning regularly undertaken alongside tutors. |

Assessment Strategy

| | <i>Intended learning outcomes</i> | <i>Methods of assessment</i> |
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| A | Knowledge and understanding | Knowledge and understanding of the subject are primarily assessed by written unseen examination using predominantly SBA style questions (A1 – A7). This is supplemented (where appropriate) by the use of case-based discussion (CBD) and In-course clinical competency assessments (INCCA) to assess contextualised comprehension and the ability to apply knowledge in the delivery of patient care. Written examinations using single best answer (SBA), Structured Short Answer (SSA) and Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) questions grade boundaries for U, B, S & M will be determined using a standard setting method. |
| | Subject-specific/practical skills | The subject specific/practical skills are primarily assessed by In-course simulated competency assessments (INSCA), |

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| B | | <p>objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE), presentation of group project work and INCCA's.</p> <p>For OSCE each station will be standard set using a modified Angoff method. This will be validated by use of the Borderline Regression method post hoc.</p> <p>For CBD –each domain of the assessment will be criterion referenced with respect to the unsatisfactory, borderline fail, satisfactory and the merit standard.</p> <p>For INCCA –each domain of the assessment will be criterion referenced with respect to the unsatisfactory, satisfactory and the merit standard. The lack of a Borderline fail grade reflects the nature of these assessments which is to determine the ability of a candidate to perform a clinical task safely.</p> <p>Non-engagement with Fitness to Practice process Formative assessment of professionalism and standards review</p> |
| C | Cognitive skills | <p>Cognitive skills are assessed by CBD (C1 – C4). This is supplemented in the case of C1 & 2 with OSCEs, and for C2 in-course assignments.</p> <p>For the in-course assignments – each domain of the assessment will be criterion referenced with respect to the unsatisfactory, borderline fail, satisfactory and the merit standard.</p> |
| D | Transferable skills | <p>Transferable skills are assessed by a selection of techniques. D3 is assessed by INCCAs. Assessment of D2 is supplemented by the use of CBD. D2 is assessed by an in-course assignment and D4 by a practical examination. The other skills are not assessed.</p> |

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

(i) Programme features

The programme comprises a curriculum that is delivered over 9 terms (3 years). The first year of the programme involves 37 weeks of programmed activity. Year 2

comprises 42 weeks and Year 3 comprises 37 weeks of programmed activity including academic and clinical components – attendance at which is compulsory.

The programme is taught in the School of Dental Sciences alongside dental students and other dental care professionals. This provides an unprecedented opportunity to undertake interprofessional learning and clinical training as part of the dental team.

The theoretical and scientific basis for dental hygiene/therapy underpins the first three terms. Teaching and the development of practical skills are initiated and assessed in the clinical simulation unit as a pre-clinical requirement. The clinical practice of dental hygiene/therapy is developed through clinical attachments in the second year and theory relating to specialised areas will be developed.

The third year focusses on reinforcing and embedding core clinical skills whilst also introducing extended skills, and culminates in the presentation of case reports demonstrating the students' ability to manage a range of clinical problems.

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.

The development of skills is achieved through clinical placements and attachments at regional hospitals, maxillofacial surgery units, community clinics, and special needs units. Shared care and team working with undergraduate dental students and hospital consultants and trainees is a key feature of this course.

An innovative feature of the course is the development of an extended skill set which enables the graduating student to engage in the full scope of practice of the dental therapist.

On satisfactory completion of the course graduates will be eligible for registration as a Dental Therapist with the GDC.

(ii) Curriculum structure

Foundations of Clinical Practice (Stage 1);

Following induction and an introductory course on study skills, the core teaching programme for the 'foundations of practice' commences. The knowledge based components of this course run throughout the first year during which time the subjects of evidence based practice, critical appraisal of research, aetiology, pathology and presentation of oral disease, dental, oral, and craniofacial anatomy, physiology, behavioural science and communication, basic pharmacology, dental materials science, infection transmission & control, professionalism, and issues regarding ethics, health and safety and medico-legal considerations are explored.

Teaching of clinical skills (for hygiene) is undertaken in the clinical simulation unit during term 2 of year 1, and clinical skills teaching for therapy is undertaken during term 3 of year 1.

Development of Clinical Practice (Stage 2); Year 2 commences with an intensive clinical introductory course, and continues with longitudinal clinical attachments to a variety of clinics within the Newcastle Dental Hospital. Subject specific skills relating to patient assessment, i.e., 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.

Running alongside this attachment is further lecture-based teaching in human diseases and the management of medical emergencies, pharmacology, aspects of dental health education, health promotion and disease prevention education, diet and nutrition, clinical investigations, and treatment plan delivery. Further teaching in relation to professional standards and expectations is undertaken.

Enhancing Clinical Practice (Stage 3); Year 3 provides opportunities to extend the clinical experience of the students with on-going and more varied clinical attachments. In addition, students attend restorative and paediatric diagnostic clinics and develop enhanced skills, e.g. in diagnostic skills, radiography, management of patient anxiety and extraction of the primary dentition.

Throughout the course student's clinical progress will be monitored by review of their portfolio data and supported by reflective logs and self-review and personal development planning. Aspects of professionalism will be assessed continuously during years 2 and 3 using clinical episodes and recording of significant events and compliance with policy etc.

Throughout the 3 years 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)

The majority of teaching on this programme is delivered within the School of Dental Sciences and Newcastle Dental Hospital. Students have access to leading dental researchers, high quality teaching staff and Consultant level clinical staff who are experts in their field. In addition, students on this programme work within the superb clinical facilities of Newcastle Dental Hospital.

Interprofessional and joint teaching with BDS (dental) undergraduates culminates in the opportunity for students on this programme to work within a team of dental professionals to deliver shared care for patients.

Tutors have a wide range of clinical experience within not only hospital settings, but primary care practice and community clinics.

All assessments are standard set to GDC standards for a professional qualification.

Dedicated vocational qualification with good career prospects.

In addition to a vocational qualification the BSc (Hons) in Dental Therapy (formerly 'Oral & Dental Health Sciences') will deliver a range of transferable skills which will be highly attractive to future employers.

Wide ranging clinical placements within primary and secondary care including specialist clinics.

Opportunity to develop extended skill sets whilst still an undergraduate.

Excellent staff student ratio.

Teaching delivered by hygienists, therapists and dentists and academic staff.

Students are derived from a mixture of widely diverse backgrounds with varying experiences.

Scope for one or two students per year to transfer to Stage 1 of the BDS course upon demonstration of high academic performance.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

[-RA207_2627_vFinal.pdf](#)

13 Support for Student Learning

Please see the A207 degree programme handbook for further information.

[General Information](#)

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

[General Information](#)

Please see the A207 degree programme handbook for further information.

15 Regulation of assessment

[General Information](#)

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

The University Prospectus <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/#subject>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: [University Regulations](#)

Please note. 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.