

King's College London – Dental Institute

Personalised Examination Provisions

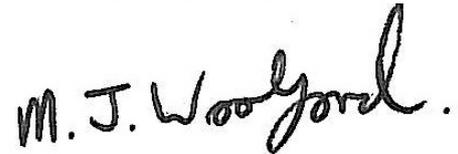
The General Dental Council (GDC) set standards of proficiency for entry to the Dental Register. It is essential to note that on successful completion of the programme a dentist is able to practice without supervision. There is no period of further supervised training that is mandatory at the present time. The student must therefore be adequately prepared for independent and unsupervised practice (GDC- The First Five Years, 2004: GDC-Preparing for Practice, 2012). In the GDC document Standards for Dental Professionals it is stated that dentists must put patient interests first and act to protect them. In so doing dentists must keep accurate and complete patient records. Dentists are able to prescribe potentially life threatening medication if used in inappropriate situations. It is the responsibility of the dentist to act if they believe patients may be at risk because of professional performance. Accurate patient records are paramount for good patient care.

Students with specific learning disabilities on professional programmes leading to registration with the General Dental Council (GDC) should not be permitted a note to be included with written exam scripts informing the examiner that the student has a specific learning disability and providing guidance as to how to mark the script accordingly (i.e. in terms of spelling, grammar etc.). The Dental Institute does not allow scripts to be identified for those with learning disabilities as this is contrary to the guidance of the GDC. Healthcare students must be able to write legible records, read the records written by others and provide legible prescriptions for the safety of their patients. This is assessed during examinations and additional allowance cannot be made for this. These are crucial learning outcomes defined and published by the GDC and to which we will be held responsible for teaching and assessment. These students already receive extra time for the examination as allowed by the PEPC. Alternate format of examination can be considered for those unable to perform appropriately due to difficulties in working with some systems, such as on-line assessment. The Dental Institute does not believe that additional allowance is required for these students. The prime consideration is the safety of patients in their care, there is no other factor with a bearing on this.

The Dental Institute is content with the concept of supportive equipment (e.g. laptops, recorders etc) in acute situations but would wish to be consulted and Fitness to Practise frameworks reviewed if they were required on a long-term basis. The Dental Institute and College would be unhappy with the concept that the failure to grant a particular provision would remove the student's chance to prove they have demonstrated a core competency and professional requirement of the programme. The Dental Institute does not support the regular use of scribes, but would potentially allow a student to be granted a laptop (if appropriate under standard PEPC guidance) to type their answers to assessment questions as they would then be physically producing the work themselves (and because Dental Healthcare workers potentially could use electronic devices in practice). We wish to note that all Year Examinations, including Finals, contain assessments using on-line MCQ formats.

All students should be assessed similarly and in a valid way, all scripts are double marked by internal examiners and fail scripts would always be reviewed by at least one external examiner at a professional examination, but no allowance can be given for illegible, uninterpretable, or inaccurate writing, which may in the future put a patient at potential harm. We believe that this approach provides some assurance that the KCL Dental Institute assessment system protects the public at the point of registration of our dental and dental care professional graduates.

Overall the Dental Institute wishes to support students in every way possible, but this must not contradict the absolute requirement to ensure future safety of patients within the care of healthcare workers.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. J. Woolford." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Dr Mark Woolford
Director of Education, KCLDI
February 2012