

Training Pathways in Prosthodontics

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Training in Prosthodontics involves the study, practice and research of the reconstruction and replacement of teeth and associated soft and hard tissue defects or pathology. This involves using prostheses that may be tissue, tooth and implant supported. Prosthodontic rehabilitation plays a key role in oral health and quality of life by addressing both functional and aesthetic impacts of tooth and tissue loss.

A Specialist Prosthodontist should be able to lead and deliver prosthodontic services by:

- Providing comprehensive patient care for complex cases
- Managing patient referrals
- Working in a shared care approach with a general dental practitioner - Collaborating with other specialists when necessary.

There are two main pathways for entering training in Prosthodontics within the UK. This is either through an NHS commissioned Dental Specialty Training programme, or a self-funded programme such as a Master of Clinical Dentistry (MClindent) or Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (DClindent) in Prosthodontics. In England, a third route is available through undertaking an Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) in Prosthodontics, funded in partnership by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), NHS Organisations and Dental Schools.

These pathways follow the Prosthodontics Specialist Training Curriculum approved by the General Dental Council (GDC). Quality Assurance of Specialty Education and training is carried out by:

- NHS England (NHSE)
- NHS Education for Scotland (NES)
- Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW)
- Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA)
- Royal College of Surgeons (RCS)

Understanding the Roles in Postgraduate Dental Training

General Dental Council (GDC):

- Responsible for approving all curricula for education and training in specialist dentistry.
- Holds and approves entry onto specialist lists, including awarding a Certificate of Specialist Training (CCST).

Specialty Advisory Committees (SACs):

- Develop the specialist training curriculum for the dental specialties.
- Ensures the training programmes cover all aspects essential to train a person to consultant level.

Royal College of Surgeons (RCS):

- Conduct examinations to certify dental specialties, including the Membership of Prosthodontics Examination (MPros), which will be replaced by the Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations (DSFE) in 2026, and Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Examinations (ISFE).
- Provides a recognised qualification to be listed as specialists on the GDC register.

The UK Committee of Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors (COPDEND):

- Plays a leading role in the co-ordination of postgraduate dental education and training programmes.
- Publishes the Dental Gold Guide which sets out the arrangements agreed by the four UK health departments for Core Training and Specialty Dental Training programmes.

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR):

- Works in partnership to fund health-related research for Academic Clinical Fellowships.
- Aims to provide a clinical and academic training environment for trainees that typically leads to a PhD or a Postdoctoral Fellowship.

Entry into the Programmes:

1. NHS Commissioned Specialty Training Programmes

Entry onto an NHS Specialty Training Programme is through competitive application to Restorative Specialty Training. This gives the option of proceeding with:

- 3-year full-time training in one of the specialties; Prosthodontics, Endodontics or Periodontics, or
- 5-year full-time training in Restorative Dentistry

These programmes follow the respective specialty training curriculums in Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics as approved by the GDC. Prosthodontic specialty trainees must also spend time in training with specialists in Restorative Dentistry, Endodontics and Periodontics to gain experience in providing integrated care for patients as part of the curriculum.

Trainees undertaking this pathway must satisfy the entry requirements to the specialty list, including succeeding in the specialty summative assessment administered by one of the UK Royal Colleges and satisfying non-examination criteria. For Prosthodontic specialty trainees, they are required to complete the MPros/DSFE examinations. For Restorative Dentistry specialty trainees, they are required to complete the ISFE. Those who undertake training in Restorative Dentistry are no longer eligible for recommendation for the award of a CCST in a single specialty. Trainees in Restorative Dentistry will still, however, have the option of submitting an application for entry onto a single specialty specialist list via the Specialist List Assessed Application process (see 'Useful Links' section).

The available training posts vary in number each year, depending on the needs of the service. Specialty training within the UK is recruited nationally by NHS England using the Oriel Platform; a UK wide portal for recruitment to postgraduate dental training as well as medical, public health, healthcare science and foundation pharmacy training. Details for the available posts each year and a timeline for recruitment is available on the [NHS England website](#). Specialty training positions for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland may also be advertised for, and recruited for, locally.

The recruitment process will ensure that applicants are assessed against the essential and desirable criteria contained within the person specification. Currently, this process is through an application form including a points-based self-assessment which is then benchmarked for an interview. National self-assessment requirements may vary each year depending on the service needs. Local recruiters will also have their own specific points-based self-assessment. Further information on the recruitment process can be found on the 'Useful Links' section.

2. Self-funded Specialty Training Programmes

An MClintDent or DClintDent in Prosthodontics is a 3-year Masters or Doctorate programme, respectively, designed for dentists who aspire to be specialists or clinical academics in Prosthodontics, and follows the Prosthodontics Specialist Training Curriculum. Successful completion of this programme as well as succeeding in the MPros or DSFE Examinations can lead to Membership/Fellowship in Prosthodontics with one of The Royal College of Surgeons. This is one of the requirements for entry on the specialist list, along with other non-examination criteria.

Advertisements and the application process are directly through the postgraduate course provider and may vary in requirements. Typically, applicants are required to have a primary qualification in Dentistry (BDS or equivalent) and two years full-time post qualification clinical practice of dentistry including evidence of specific relevant experience in prosthodontic care.

3. Academic Clinical Fellowship (England Only):

Training within an Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF) role combines both clinical specialty training and academic development, with the intention of becoming a clinical academic. Depending on available posts, trainees may undertake an ACF in Restorative Dentistry or an ACF in Prosthodontics, both of which follow the relevant specialist training curriculum. Applicants for academic posts typically go through both a national recruitment process and local academic selection. This is to ensure that they meet the benchmark for appointment as a specialty trainee. Available posts are advertised through NHS England and the Oriel platform.

ACFs are typically fixed-term for 3 years. At the end of this term, the candidate will be expected to have applied for competitive funding for a training fellowship, such as a PhD, or equivalent. If awarded a Fellowship, trainees typically spend 3 years completing this before returning to clinical training as required, with the option to apply for an NIHR Clinical Lectureship if eligible.

Specialty Training Programme	Avg Length of Training (full-time)	Qualification
Restorative Specialty Training	5 years	FDS(RestDent)
Specialty in Prosthodontics	3 years	MPros/DSFE
Academic Clinical Fellowship in Restorative Dentistry	3 years +/- 3 years for PhD or Post-doctoral Fellowship + clinical training	FDS(RestDent) +/- PhD
Academic Clinical Fellowship in Prosthodontics	3 years +/- 3 years for PhD or Post-doctoral Fellowship	MPros/DSFE +/- PhD
DClinDent	3 years full-time	MPros/DSFE
MClinDent	3 years full-time	MPros/DSFE

Useful Links:

1. NHS England Recruitment to Dental Specialty Training:
<https://dental.hee.nhs.uk/dental-trainee-recruitment/dental-specialty-training>
2. NHS England Recruitment to Restorative Specialty Training:
<https://dental.hee.nhs.uk/dental-trainee-recruitment/dental-specialty-training/restorative-dentistry>
3. Restorative and Specialty Entry Criteria and Person Specification:
<https://dental.hee.nhs.uk/dental-trainee-recruitment/dental-specialty-training/person-specifications-for-dental-specialty-training-dst-recruitment/restorative-dentistry-st1-person-specification>
4. Restorative and Specialty Self-Assessment for National Recruitment:
<https://dental.hee.nhs.uk/dental-trainee-recruitment/dental-specialty-training/restorative-dentistry/overview-of-restorative-dentistry/restorative-dentistry-self-assessment>
5. Dental Specialty Fellowship Examinations: <https://dsfe.org.uk>
6. Oriel Portal: <https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web>
7. NIHR ACF Guidance:
<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/2025-academic-clinical-fellowship-dental-guidance-recruitment-and-appointment#tab-360531>
8. COPDEND statement on Joint Restorative Dentistry and Specialty CCST:
https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/registration/specialist-lists/2022-02-10-revised-copdend-statement-on-joint-restorative-dentistry-and-monospecialty-ccst51d8d8b6-47b5-4cd0-9c1b-b565ac22df6a.pdf?sfvrsn=ffba9d9_5
9. Specialist List Application Process:
<https://www.gdc-uk.org/registration/your-registration/specialist-lists/specialist-list-application-pack>

Specialty Training Curricula

Both the Prosthodontics Specialty Training Curriculum and Restorative Specialty Training Curriculum are approved by the GDC and demonstrate the GDC's Principles and Criteria for Specialist Listing. Trainees must hold full GDC registration and have a National Training Number (NTN). A Postgraduate Dental Dean issues NTNs to trainees on a recognised specialist-training programme to assist with managing educational progression of trainees and plan the workforce within each country in the UK.

The SAC has formulated a clinical syllabus for Restorative Dentistry and Faculty of Dental Surgery (FDS) Royal College of Surgeons of England for both Restorative Specialty Training and Specialty Training in Prosthodontics. This sets out the clinical competence requirements to be awarded the Certificate of Completion of Specialty Training (CCST).

A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Dental Core and Specialty Training in the UK, also known as the Dental Gold Guide, sets out the arrangements for core and specialty dental training programmes. Its purpose is to help those who propose to enter training, those already in training, and those who quality assure and deliver training. It is agreed by the four UK health departments and is maintained and published through COPDEND.

Training will be continuously monitored throughout the programme to ensure longitudinal progression, providing reassurance to the trainee, employer, and public that the required specialty outcomes have been achieved. This is carried out by completing a mandatory portfolio, using the Intercollegiate Surgical Curriculum Programme (ISCP), which shows the trainee's learning over time. This includes clinical cases, reflective logs, Supervised Learning Events (SLEs), Workplace-Based Assessments (WBAs), and Multi-Source Feedback (MSF).

The trainee's portfolio on ISCP is formally reviewed, typically on a yearly basis, as part of an Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP). This provides an effective mechanism for the trainee, trainers and the Postgraduate Dental Dean to review the evidence related to a trainee's performance in the training programme.

Completing Specialty Training

Successful completion of the relevant Specialty Training Programme and assessment results in the award of a Certificate of Completion of Specialty Training (CCST). This allows candidates to apply for inclusion on the GDC specialist list and use the title of "Specialist in Prosthodontics."

To recommend a CCST, programme providers must ensure that the specialty trainee:

- Has achieved all learning outcomes outlined within the specialty curriculum.
- Is fit to practice at the level of a specialist in their field.
- Successfully completes the appropriate specialist examination with one of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Prior to May 2021, completing the Specialist Training Programme in Restorative Dentistry allowed candidates to be listed as specialists in Restorative Dentistry and another single specialty. However, the GDC requires dentists training under the new Restorative Dentistry curriculum to meet the specific entry requirements for each specialist list individually, in order to qualify as a specialist within the specific specialty. This may be applied for via the Specialist List Assessed Application process.

Specialty Trainees in Prosthodontics are required to successfully complete the Membership in Prosthodontics Examination, or from 2026, the Dental Specialty Fellowship Examination with one of the UK Royal Colleges, leading to a Membership/Fellowship in Prosthodontics (MPros/DSFE). Restorative Dentistry trainees are required to complete the Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowship Examination (ISFE) with one of the UK Royal Colleges, leading to a Fellowship in Dental Surgery in Restorative Dentistry.

Further information regarding the process of applying for and undertaking speciality training in Prosthodontics, and Restorative Dentistry, can be found below.

Recommended Reading:

1. Person Specification for Restorative Dentistry and Specialty Training (2025):
<https://dental.hee.nhs.uk/binaries/content/documents/dental/components/national/donload-cards/recruitment/dental-specialty-training-dst/restorative-dentistry-and-monospecialties-st1/restorative-dentistry-and-monospecialtiesst1/hee%3AfileLinks/hee%3Afile?forceDownload=true>
2. Person Specification for Academic Clinical Fellow (2025):
<https://dental.hee.nhs.uk/binaries/content/documents/dental/components/national/donload-cards/recruitment/dental-specialty-training-dst/academic-clinical-fellowships-acfsperson-specification/academic-clinical-fellowships-acfs-personspecification/hee%3AfileLinks/hee%3Afile?forceDownload=true>
3. GDC – Restorative Specialty Training Curriculum (15th December 2022):
https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/education-and-cpd/dental-specialtytraining/specialty-curricula/restorative-dentistry-specialty-training-curriculum2022_a.pdf?sfvrsn=2a892640_11
4. GDC – Prosthodontics Specialty Training Curriculum (15th December 2022):
https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/education-and-cpd/dental-specialtytraining/specialty-curricula/prosthodontics-specialty-training-curriculum2022_a.pdf?sfvrsn=9c0d4ac1_11
5. COPDEND Dental Gold Guide for Postgraduate Dental Core and Specialty Training (2023):
<https://www.copdend.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/DGG4-v10-2023.pdf>
6. Faculty of Dental Surgery (FDS) RCS England Syllabus for Higher Specialist Training in Restorative Dentistry (2024):
https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/-/media/Files/RCS/FDS/Dental-curricula/Rest-Dent-SAC-Final--Restorative-Syllabus-2024-for-SAC_.pdf
7. Faculty of Dental Surgery (FDS) RCS England Syllabus for Higher Specialist Training in Prosthodontics (8th January 2024):
<https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/-/media/Files/RCS/FDS/Dental-curricula/Pros-ProsthodonticsSyllabus-final.pdf>
8. GDC Standards for Specialty Education:
https://www.gdc-uk.org/docs/default-source/education-and-cpd/education-provider-guidance/standards-for-specialty-education_201957938ec311144e9ba74d9565d7b1b118.pdf?sfvrsn=ee7e7ba9_5