

NATIONAL EXAMINING BOARD FOR DENTAL NURSES

NEBDN Student Fitness to Practise Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate NEBDN's approach to meeting the General Dental Council's Standards for Education, specifically requirement 8 under Standard 1 – Protecting Patients, which states:

'Providers must have a student fitness to practise policy and apply it as required. The content and significance of the student fitness to practise procedures must be conveyed to students and aligned to GDC Student Fitness to Practise Guidance. Staff involved in the delivery of the programme should be familiar with the GDC Student Fitness to Practise Guidance. Providers must also ensure the GDC's Standards for the Dental Team are embedded within student training.'

Scope

This policy applies to:

1. any student enrolled or wishing to enrol on a course leading to the NEBDN National Diploma in Dental Nursing which leads to eligibility to apply for professional registration with the General Dental Council (GDC);
2. any NEBDN accredited course provider offering training leading towards the National Diploma in Dental Nursing.

Policy statement

NEBDN is committed to protecting patient safety by meeting the GDC's Standards for Education. We will do this by having the necessary guidance, policies and procedures in place to monitor fitness to practise of students through our network of accredited course providers and centrally record any reported issues and outcomes.

Responsibilities

Students – must:

- Ensure they are familiar with the GDC's guidance for students on Student Professionalism and Fitness to Practise;
- Act in a way that is consistent with their development towards meeting the Standards for the Dental Team (dental nurses);
- Discuss with their course provider any concerns about themselves or other students not meeting the standards;
- Discuss any patient safety concerns with their course provider.

Accredited Course Providers – must:

- Meet NEBDN Standards for Accreditation and GDC Standards for Education, including having a robust Fitness to Practise policy and procedures in place which are communicated to students and employers and are actively monitored;
- Deliver guidance and support to students from the beginning of the course and explain to students what support and guidance is available;

- Promote ethical principles in the way in which they conduct the course and in their interactions with those connected with the course;
- Ensure students understand what might be classed as a fitness to practise issue and what the GDC may consider an issue that calls into question their fitness to practise;
- Ensure students have received and understood NEBDN’s Candidate Code of Conduct and Student Fitness to Practise Policy;
- Ensure students have access to and understand the information on the GDC’s website about Student Professionalism; Student Fitness to Practise; Raising concerns; Professional Duty of Candour; Social Media guidance as well as Standards for the Dental Team (dental nurses);
- Follow GDC guidance and procedures for monitoring, identifying, investigating and reporting Student Fitness to Practise issues;
- Compile a report for NEBDN’s quality assurance team on any Fitness to Practise issue. The report should include details of the investigation, the remedial action taken and the outcomes. The report must be emailed to QA@nebdn.org within 30 days of conclusion of the investigation. The quality assurance team will acknowledge receipt.

NEBDN – must:

- Ensure accredited course providers have and apply an appropriate fitness to practise policy (Quality Assurance Auditors);
- Support, monitor and quality assure accredited course providers, including their responsibilities in regard to student fitness to practise (Quality Assurance Auditors, Quality Assurance Committee);
- Set out the standards of professional conduct it requires candidates to observe during examinations in its Candidate Conduct Policy (Diploma Committee);
- Record fitness to practise issues reported by accredited course providers (Quality Assurance team);
- Complete the GDC’s Annual Monitoring Form, including details of fitness to practise issues and the outcomes (Chief Executive or Operations Manager).

While NEBDN has arrangements through its course providers to establish, monitor and investigate student fitness to practise issues, the organisation recognises that it is responsible for ensuring that accredited course providers meet this requirement and alerting the GDC where there are specific concerns.

NEBDN collects and centrally records information about fitness to practise issues reported by its network of accredited course providers, as described below.

When NEBDN receives a Fitness to Practise report from a course provider it takes a set of actions dependent on the issue and the outcome.

Outcome of fitness to practise case received from provider	Action taken by NEBDN as a result
Student nurse expelled from course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NEBDN operations team withdraw entry of candidate to examination 2. NEBDN Quality Assurance team send a letter to the candidate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. advising them of their withdrawal b. recommending that they do not attempt to apply again

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. informing them that the matter will be reported to the GDC d. informing them that should they try to register with NEBDN through another provider, we will have to disclose relevant information to the provider <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. NEBDN Operations Manager informs the GDC of the issue 4. NEBDN Operations team record the incident in NEBDN's fitness to practise issue log 5. NEBDN Operations team file the report from the course provider together with a copy of the letter to the student
Student nurse suspended from course	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NEBDN operations team withdraw entry of candidate to examination(s) affected by the suspension 2. NEBDN Quality Assurance team send a letter to the candidate advising them of their withdrawal from that examination 3. NEBDN Operations Manager informs the GDC of the issue 4. NEBDN Operations team record the incident in NEBDN's fitness to practise issue log and on the candidate's record on its database 5. NEBDN Operations team file the report from the course provider together with a copy of the letter to the candidate 6. When NEBDN receives confirmation from the course provider that the student nurse has re-joined the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operations team updates the candidate record on its database to reflect the new target examination date (subject to RoE validity) b. Quality Assurance team writes to the candidate to confirm amended status
Student nurse given a warning / remedial action is imposed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NEBDN operations team withdraw the candidate from the examination until such time as the effect of the remedial action has been reviewed by the course provider and notified to NEBDN 2. NEBDN Quality Assurance team send a letter to the candidate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. advising them of their withdrawal from that examination b. recommending that they do not attempt to apply again until such time as the effect of the remedial action has been reviewed by the course provider and NEBDN has been notified

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. informing them that the matter will be reported to the GDC and should they try to register with NEBDN through another provider, we will have to disclose relevant information to the provider <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. NEBDN Operations Manager informs the GDC of the issue 4. NEBDN Operations team record the incident in NEBDN's fitness to practise issue log and on the candidate's record on its database 5. NEBDN Operations team file the report from the course provider together with a copy of the letter to the candidate 6. When NEBDN receives confirmation from the course provider that the student nurse has re-joined the course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operations team updates the candidate record on its database to reflect the new target examination date (subject to RoE validity) b. Quality Assurance team writes to the candidate to confirm amended status
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- NEBDN's quality assurance team collates fitness to practise data;
- NEBDN's quality assurance team compiles and submits an annual report to the Board of Trustees;
- The Operations Manager completes the GDC Annual Monitoring Form.

Definitions

Student – for the purposes of this policy, 'student' means 'trainee dental nurse', that is someone who is *not* already registered with the General Dental Council but who is studying a course leading to eligibility to apply for GDC registration as a qualified dental nurse.

Student professionalism – in the GDC's document 'Student professionalism and fitness to practise – guidance for students', student professionalism is defined as:

'Student professionalism is the way you respond to the standards required of you and the issues you may face during your training. It is how you demonstrate the appropriate attitudes and behaviour with patients and your colleagues (staff on the training course, employers and other students) and develop the ability to know when to seek advice and support in terms of your learning, your clinical work or technical work and health. It also encompasses the way you respond when you are made aware of issues and offered advice and support. These are behaviours or attributes a patient expects a dental professional to demonstrate.'

Fitness to Practise – is a key part of managing risks to patient safety and in meeting specific requirements relating to clinical and academic work, professional behaviour and health.

References

General Dental Council:

- 'Student professionalism and fitness to practise' – guidance for students. Link [here](#)
- 'Student professionalism and fitness to practise' – guidance for training providers. Link [here](#)
- 'Standards for the dental team'. Link [here](#)
- 'Preparing for Practice'. Link [here](#)
- 'Standards for Education'. Link [here](#)
- 'Dental patients: information about receiving care and treatment from students'. Link [here](#)
- 'Guidance on using social media'. Link [here](#)
- 'Advice on raising a concern'. Link [here](#)

NEBDN:

- Candidate Conduct Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Qualification Handbook
- Social Media Policy
- Accredited Course Provider Handbook
- Whistleblowing policy
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Information Management policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Disciplinary policy
- NEBDN Standards for Accreditation

Course Providers:

- Fitness to Practise Policy

Questions

If you have any questions about this policy, please email NEBDN at info@nebdn.org and your enquiry will be directed to an appropriate member of staff or committee.