

**University Dental Hospital of Manchester
The School for Dental Care Professionals
Oral Health Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard Level 4 (ST0542)
Factsheet**

Summary

This course is designed for registered dental nurses or other dental care professionals who wish to expand their scope of practice to become Oral Health Practitioners (OHPs).

OHPs work autonomously, providing direct patient care and a wide range of preventive oral health preventative procedures which can involve working in the patient's mouth.

The role complements other dental professionals, positioned above dental nurses but below dental hygienists, therapists, or dentists. Working under the direction of a registered clinician, OHPs carry out dental bacterial plaque indices and debris assessments, apply fluoride varnish, take impressions and clinical photographs, assist with oral health prevention, advice and guidance. They also maintain clinical environments, carry out infection prevention and control, prepare, mix and handle biomaterials.

OHPs often work alone in the community, delivering oral health education and advice to, for example, pregnant and nursing families, early years groups, primary and secondary schools, care homes and care at home situations, mental health settings, in hospitals, primary and secondary care or other healthcare settings.

They also provide general health screenings, including blood pressure checks and/or diabetes monitoring in the form of finger-prick blood samples.

This pathway builds on existing clinical experience, enabling dental nurses and other GDC-registered professionals to practice autonomously within their scope of practice, under referral or guidance from dentists, hygienists, or therapists.

Course content, delivery and qualification structure

You will be working towards the Oral Health Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard Level 4. For the purposes of this programme and any associated documentation, you shall be formally designated as an 'apprentice' throughout the duration of the programme.

The programme is designed to develop the required Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSBs) needed to successfully achieve the qualification and demonstrate competence in the role.

The course duration is 14 months. Study days shall encompass all theoretical instruction and practical training required to meet the programme curriculum. Delivery will be via a blended learning model, comprising face-to-face workshops and online sessions delivered through Microsoft Teams. Accordingly, you are required to have access to a suitable electronic device equipped with a camera and microphone.

Learning will not always be delivered by the education provider/ the school. It will also take place within your workplace, where you will enhance your knowledge, skills and behaviours in line with the practical aspects of the course requirements.

Progress will be monitored throughout the course, with tripartite reviews every 12 weeks to keep you and your employer informed of your progress. The timetable for study days and activities will be shared during the pre-interview.

The Team who delivers the qualification

The team responsible for delivering this qualification is occupationally competent and comprises professionals who are registered with the GDC and who possess extensive experience within the relevant field. All members of the delivery team are appropriately qualified to support both the academic and practical elements of the programme and are fully committed to supporting apprentices to successfully achieve the requirements of the qualification.

Entry

To be eligible for the course you must:

- Be a dental nurse or other appropriate dental care professional registered with the GDC. (We can verify registration via the GDC register.)
- Hold the relevant certificates in maths and English or successfully complete the required prior learning before entering Gateway -
 - **Maths:** Grade C/4 or above at GCSE (or equivalent) for apprentices aged 16–18. Apprentices aged 19+ may be exempt with employer agreement.
 - **English:** Grade C/4 or above at GCSE (or equivalent) for apprentices aged 16–18. Apprentices aged 19+ may be exempt with employer agreement.
- Have the support of your employer and a registered clinician(s) to guide and oversee your clinical competency activities.
- Commit to 100% attendance on all scheduled course dates.
- Be able to meet the clinical requirements for the required clinical competency requirements.
- Demonstrate professional qualities including trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, empathy, and commitment.
- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect, work effectively as part of a team, challenge concerns appropriately, and follow evidence-based best practice.

Gateway

Gateway is the opportunity for a full and holistic review of your progress and achievement to date.

It involves a tripartite discussion between the employer, training provider, and the apprentice to confirm that:

- All mandatory elements of the occupational standard have been completed, and the employer is satisfied that you are occupationally competent and ready for assessment.

Once Gateway has been successfully completed, you are formally entered into the End-Point Assessment (EPA) process.

End Point Assessment (EPA)

The EPA consists of 3 assessment methods.

Assessment Method 1: Multiple Choice Questions Exam (MCQ).

Overview: This assessment will be conducted in the form of a multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination, designed to assess the knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) aligned with this assessment.

The MCQ exam will be

- 60 minutes duration (1 hour).
- Consists of 40 single best answer questions, including diagram-based questions.

The rationale for this assessment method is:

An MCQ exam is a well-recognised method of assessing underpinning knowledge and understanding. This method is widely used within the health sector and forms an appropriate companion to the other methods selected to ensure that the apprentices are given the best opportunity to demonstrate the full range of KSB's.

Assessment Method 2: Observation of practice and subsequent Q&A session.

Overview: Apprentices must be observed by an independent assessor completing work in their normal workplace, in which they will demonstrate the KSBs assigned to this assessment method.

The rationale for this assessment method is:

An observation of practice allows the independent assessor to see an apprentice during their normal everyday work, carrying out the KSBs in real time. This method of assessment in a real work situation is the most appropriate method due to the practical nature of the occupation.

The live observation of practice

- Is undertaken in the apprentice's workplace
- Must last for 90 minutes (+ 10% at the discretion of the independent assessor, 60 minutes observation with a 30-minute Q&A session).
- Patients are selected by the apprentice as part of their normal workload.
- The 30-minute Q&A session will immediately follow the observation period, and the independent assessor will further explore the KSB's not fully covered during the observation period.

Assessment Method 3: Professional discussion.

Overview: This assessment will take the form of a professional discussion, which must be appropriately structured to draw out the best of the apprentice's competence and excellence and cover the KSBs assigned to this assessment method.

It will focus on analysis of given scenarios, via scenario-based questions, to ensure coverage of prior learning or activity.

The professional discussion

- Must last for 45 minutes.
- Is structured to draw out the best of the apprentice's competence and excellence and cover the KSBs assigned to this assessment method.
- **Clinical Activity Log** – that has been completed on-programme is not formally assessed as part of EPA but can be used by the apprentice to evidence and underpin the professional discussion.
- **Enhanced CPD Personal Development Plan (PDP):** The enhanced CPD PDP, completed in line with General Dental Council (GDC) requirements, is not formally assessed as part of the EPA but can be used by the apprentice to evidence and underpin the professional discussion.

Professional body recognition

Professional body recognition is not relevant to this occupational apprenticeship although, as part of a dental team, apprentices will be expected to abide by the General Dental Council “standards for the dental team.”

Start date

The course will commence in September 2026; this course programme is also supported by NHS England.

Cost

The Oral Health Practitioner Apprenticeship is fully funded through the government’s apprenticeship levy, so it costs you nothing. We will guide you through the onboarding process and explain how the funding is accessed by employers and received by the school.

What can you do once qualified as an OHP, opportunities for further progression?

Once qualified, an OHP can take on a range of clinical and preventive roles within dentistry. These roles focus on oral health promotion, prevention, and supporting dental teams. Key responsibilities and roles include, but are not exhaustive:

- Community Oral Health Educator.
- Oral Health Champion.
- Oral Health Improvement Lead.
- Specialist OHP clinics – fluoride application, plaque score indices, impression taking, photography.

Further information/enquiries

All apprentices must attend for an informal interview prior to being accepted on a course. This will take place by the course facilitator and can be either face to face at the school or via MS Teams.

If you are interested in applying, please complete the attached application form and return it either by post or email to admin.dcp@mft.nhs.uk If you would like to discuss the programme with a member of the team, please telephone; 0161 272 5670.