

Careers in orthodontics

Advice for dentists

So you want to be an Orthodontist?

I have my BDS and I am interested in practising orthodontics. What are my choices?

You have a number of choices: as a generalist in practice with some limited additional training, or as a specialist in practice, hospital, university, the armed forces or the community dental service. Before making a choice about your future career, it will be useful for you to talk to a variety of people working in these different settings, to get an idea of the different roles they have.

How can I become a specialist in orthodontics?

In order to be accepted onto an orthodontic training programme as a specialist registrar:

- You will need to gain a broad experience in dentistry as a whole – hospital, community and general dental practice. Completing a vocational training scheme (1 year) or general practitioner training scheme (2 years) will help you gain some of the necessary experience. You will gain your VT Number during this time, which you will need if you eventually want to work in the primary care services.
- You would be advised to study for the MJDF/MFDS/MFD examination, which will take about 2 to 3 years to achieve. This is no longer essential to enter specialist training but the majority of applicants will have this diploma.
- You should try to get one or two articles published in a good dental journal, carry out some audit projects and present at meetings. These types of activities will help when applying for a specialist training post.

Where can I train to be a specialist in orthodontics and how long does it take?

Once you have your MJDF/MFDS/MFD you can apply to train at the Universities of Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Dundee, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle or Sheffield.

The courses take 3 years (or equivalent part-time) and consist of clinical training (in a hospital) alongside academic study (at the university). After 3 years you will sit the examination for the Membership in Orthodontics (M.Orth) and, if successful, you will gain a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST). This will allow you to be included on the specialist list and be known as a Specialist in Orthodontics. Trainees are also required to study for a higher degree, such as the MSc or DDS, during their training. You will normally receive a salary during your training, although you will be required to pay tuition fees. Some posts are unfunded (*i.e.* you will not get paid).

What career options are open to me once I'm a specialist?

- Enter specialist practice, usually as a performer (previously known as an associate). Eventually, you may become a partner or own your own practice. You can work under an NHS contract in primary dental care or undertake treatment privately.
- Become a salaried specialist in the community or hospital dental service.
- Train for a further 2 years in a hospital, sit the FDS Orth. exam and become a hospital consultant.
- In combination with consultant training, you can train for 3-4 years in a hospital/university, perhaps gain a PhD/teaching degree and follow a university career. You could eventually become a Professor of Orthodontics.

Do I have to become a specialist to practise orthodontics?

It is possible to train for one session per week over three years, as a part-time clinical assistant, in order for you to be able to carry out straightforward orthodontics for your own patients in general practice. This is a training programme for a primary care dentist in an area which does not have a population to sustain a specialist practice. Places are limited and *you will not hold a specialist qualification* at the end of this additional training. For a primary care dentist with a special interest (DwSI) in Orthodontics in an area which does not have a population to sustain a specialist practice, there is a three year part-time BOS/FGDP(UK) training programme in Orthodontics leading to a diploma in Primary Care Orthodontics RCS(Eng). See www.fgdp.org.uk/education/ for further information.

More detailed information on training pathways is available [here](#) as a pdf

Further information

Useful information about general professional training and orthodontic training can be found on the Royal College of Surgeons of England website (www.rcseng.ac.uk).

