



A guide to Applying for Orthodontic Training

This document has been produced by the British Orthodontic Society

BOS

Foreword

Congratulations on making the fantastic choice of a career in orthodontics. Orthodontics is a rewarding, fulfilling and enjoyable specialty and you will not regret your decision to become part of this exciting specialty. Now all you need to do is get on a training course!

This handbook has been compiled by the Training Grades Group of the British Orthodontic Society, with assistance from the Consultant Orthodontic Group. This handbook is intended to be a guide to help prospective applicants with competitive entry into an orthodontic Specialty Registrar training post, through the National Recruitment process. This is not a definitive guide to the application process and therefore prospective applicants are encouraged to refer to the websites provided and seek advice from current trainees, orthodontists, training programmes and deaneries.

We hope that the handbook will provide a useful starting point to guide your application into an orthodontic training programme.

Wishing you the best of luck!

Chris Barker

TGG Chair 2013

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Glossary of Terms

BOS	British Orthodontic Society
CCST	Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training
COG	Consultant Orthodontic Group
DwSI	Dentist with Specialist Interest
FTTA	Fixed Term Training Appointment (Senior Registrar). This term has now been replaced by 'Post CCST Trainee'.
GDC	General Dental Council
Non-NTN	Self funded trainee studying equivalent course without accrediting with a CCST
NTN	National Training Number
SAC	Specialist Advisory Committee
StR	Speciality Registrar / Trainee
TGG	Training Grades Group
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

Introduction

Currently on the TGG database there are around 234 orthodontic trainees in the UK.

These include:

- 126 NTN Specialty Registrars in post
- 45 NTN Post-CCST Trainees in post
- 63 Non-NTN (over-seas) trainees in post

There are at present 15 specialist orthodontic training programs in the UK with the highest concentration of these in the South East. All UK units are associated with well-established training programmes and tend to have a high degree of retention of trainees in proximity of the training programs

- The salary scale ranges from £31K to £47K

The Training Grades Group

The Training Grades Group (TGG) is part of the British Orthodontic Society and membership is open to all UK and GDC registered international trainees on recognised Orthodontic training programmes in the UK. Those interested in a career in orthodontics may join the BOS TGG Group as an associate.

What is the benefit to you?

We are an organisation that represents the interests of orthodontic trainees in all aspects of training and assessment. TGG membership also ensures discounted rates at the BOS meetings and the annual conference, as well as at numerous courses organised by orthodontic trade companies. We regularly update our membership with various job opportunities both in specialist practice and in the hospital service.

How do I get involved?

We are always keen to have our membership involved in helping us serve the needs of the over 230 trainees we represent. At a local level you can volunteer to be a TGG representative for your training programme. This involves disseminating information about courses, conferences and job opportunities to fellow trainees as well bringing training issues to the attention of the committee.

TGG Committee

The TGG Committee is made up of trainees who are members of the BOS. The committee changes each year.

You can find details of the current committee by clicking on this link: [TGG Committee](#)

Local TGG Representatives

These often change on a yearly basis as trainees finish their training or take up Post-CCST positions. Details for the most current TGG representative for each training programme can be obtained from the TGG secretary, tggsec@hotmail.com.

TGG Meetings

TGG Spring meeting, January

Venue rotates between London and Manchester

This is an opportunity to meet colleagues training in units across the country. There is always a fantastic range of lectures, aimed at trainees preparing for the MOrth examination. There are lectures on the exam structure and the MOrth Gold medal winner presents their experience of the examination. The Geoffrey Fletcher elective prize winner also presents their elective project. During the final session of the day, trainees are encouraged to present a clinical pearl to the group, with a chance to win a prize.

ISFE study day, July

Venue rotates between London and Manchester

This is a day for FTTAs and 3rd year trainees as well as consultant trainers to learn about the structure of the ISFE exam, as well as hear the experiences of people who have recently taken the exam. There are often presentations from examiners about the organisation and level of the exam.

TGG/OSG study day, July, biannual

BOS headquarters, London

This event is aimed at trainees wishing to pursue a career in specialist practice, with lectures from specialist practitioners, giving an insight into life in practice and ways to succeed

AGM at the BOS Conference, September

The AGM is a forum where any changes in the TGG constitution can occur and where any training issues can be discussed. The executive committee present their reports from the committee activities over the last year, and updates from the TGG representation on the various BOS committees. This will also be the opportunity for nominations for elections of committee members for the next year.

'So you want to be an Orthodontist', October/November

Venue rotates between BOS, London and Leeds/Sheffield

This event is aimed at dental trainees wishing to apply for orthodontics and gain further information on the specialty and the application process. The event has lectures from distinguished speakers on National recruitment, Orthodontic training programmes and research, life as a specialty registrar and careers in Orthodontics.

What the BOS can do for you?

The British Orthodontic Society (BOS) is the umbrella organisation for a number of constituent orthodontic groups, including the Training Grades Group (TGG).

The Training Grades Group represents all Specialty Registrars (StRs & Post-CCST StRs) in the UK.

The Definition for membership of the TGG is:

Membership of the Training Grades Group shall be open to members holding an appointment in an orthodontic training grade post approved by the relevant SAC (or equivalent body) or working on an approved course in the United Kingdom leading towards a recognised post-graduate qualification in orthodontics which entitles the holder to a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training and registration by the GDC as a specialist in orthodontics. Membership shall also open to non-EU nationals who are attending an equivalent course to the above in parallel with EU nationals.

Associate TGG members are:

- Recently qualified orthodontists who have not yet taken up a substantive post following the completion of their training contract. They shall reapply for continued associate membership annually until such time as they commence a substantive post.
- Consultants or Specialist Practitioners who have held an appointment for orthodontic training within the preceding year may attend meetings (provided they hold the MOrth or MSc in Orthodontics).
- Orthodontic trainees on accredited programs within the Republic of Ireland.
- Dental foundation/core trainees/registered dentists wishing to be members of the TGG and wish to pursue a career in orthodontics

Associate TGG members shall not have voting rights in matters of the TGG.

Members elected to the Group Committee before the end of their training may extend their membership of the group for up to two years after they complete their training and pay the postgraduate rate of subscription during this period provided they also join the Group appropriate to their current field of practice.

BOS Background

The British Orthodontic Society is a registered charity, and a company limited by guarantee, not having share capital. [More about the BOS.](#)

The board of trustees is the ruling body of the Society. It is responsible for managing the Society's affairs and ensuring that it pursues its charitable objects. The members are the Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and the Directors of Clinical Governance, Clinical Practice, Education, External Relations, Professional Development and Research. The President attends Board meetings but is not a Trustee or a Director. All groups are represented at the Group Chairs forum. The Group Chairs and the Executive of the Society meet twice a year to discuss Group issues or concerns and Society affairs generally. The TGG Chair represents the TGG at the Group Chairs forum, thereby guaranteeing trainee representation at the highest level of BOS.

Core Activities

The main core activities of BOS are the administration of the Society; the background organisation of educational events; the production of Society publications; the provision of advice to the public and membership, and the financial well being of the Society.

The BOS office support is provided by:

Mrs Ann Wright, Administrator

Mrs Ann Humphreys, Assistant Administrator

Mr Tony Kearney, Office Manager

Charitable activities

The central reasons for BOS are its charitable activities:

Education: BOS provides education through an annual Conference; Group meetings; a variety of supplementary courses; distance learning via a virtual learning environment (VLE) site for StRs, postgraduates and Post-CCST StRs; and CPD for all members through meetings and VLE.

Communication: Patient Information Leaflets; Advice Sheets; Guidelines; 3 BOS Newsletters; 2 Orthodontic Business Supplements; IOTN, Orthognathic, Patient Guidance and Referring Dentist Guidance DVDs; a website and Public Relations Consultant.

Research: Projects awarded by the [British Orthodontic Society Foundation](#); 4 Journal issues; 2 Audit Newsletters; and [Awards](#).

All of these activities are provided within the context of good Charitable Governance, focused Public Benefit and absolute Transparency and all are available to members of the TGG.

The TGG Section of the BOS website

The Training Grade Group (TGG) section of the BOS website is an invaluable tool whilst completing your orthodontic training pathways. Features include:

- Find out about the TGG committee, what they do and how to contact them.
- Download TOPAS database, which is a particularly useful logbook for cases you treat during your training.
- Downloads to application forms for TGG events and online booking.
- Access to some surveys carried out by the TGG.

[TGG website](#) Login using your BOS login and password (You will obtain this when you become a BOS member)

If you are searching for specific items the Search engine is an excellent way of finding what you need.

If you have any ideas on how you would like to develop the site further please contact the TGG Secretary.

Applying for Specialty Training

The Specialty Registrar Grade was introduced in Orthodontics on 1 July 1998 comprising a three year training programme. Entry to the training programme in orthodontics is highly competitive. Structured training takes place in hospital departments linked to university dental schools. Table 1 shows the distribution of posts in the UK. The trainee pays course fees to the university. The total payable is variable between the different training programmes and discussed later in more detail.

	NHS StR posts (NTN)	Overseas trainee posts (Non-NTN)	NHS Post-CCST posts
Belfast	0	0	0
Birmingham	9	0	3
Bristol	7	2	5
Cardiff	7 + 2 armed forces	6	2
Dundee	3	2	1
Edinburgh	1	5	0
Glasgow	2	2	2
KCL (incl. Guy's)	18	27	6
Leeds	6	0	1
Liverpool	8	3	3
Manchester	5	7	2
Newcastle	4	0	3
Sheffield	6	3	4
QMUL (Royal London)	12	2	6
UCL (Eastman)	17	17	8

Table 1: Distribution of active UK training posts by academic base as of mid-2013

Eligibility for application for training varies but it is essential to hold a dental degree registered with the GDC (usually UK or EU). It is recommended that applicants should have; completed a period of vocational training or equivalent, achieved a post-graduate qualification (MFDS / MJDF) and gained experience in a broad range of dental specialities.

The three-year training programme involves completion of a University higher postgraduate degree, which incorporates a research component. Successful completion of training is assessed through WBAs (Work Based Assessments) and ARCP (Annual Review of Competence Progression) throughout the three years. On completion of

training and achievement of the IMOrth or MOrth the General Dental Council (GDC) awards a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCST) in order to become a GDC accredited specialist in Orthodontics.

The University fees for the higher postgraduate degree vary and it would be sensible to enquire about the expected fees for the University that you will be applying to, so you know what to budget for. Recent fees varied greatly for NTN home or EU students and for overseas students it is considerably more. Fees can be subject to annual increases which need to be factored in.

Once on the specialist list a number of career choices are available. A specialist may:

Work in the primary care setting within: specialist, general practice/the salaried / community dental service.

Or

Continue training in a post-CCST job to further develop their skills in managing more complex orthodontic cases and hospital management, with a view to becoming an NHS Hospital Consultant or University based Academic Consultant. Or work in a combination of these positions.

Where to Apply For Orthodontic Training

Orthodontic training in Deanery approved posts are affiliated to the following Universities and their associated dental schools and hospitals:

Belfast	Leeds
Birmingham	Liverpool
Bristol	Manchester
Cardiff	Newcastle
Dundee	Queen Mary University of London (Barts and the London)
Edinburgh	Sheffield
Glasgow	University College London (Eastman)
Kings College London (incl. Guys)	

Some training schemes advertise posts on a yearly basis and other schemes take new registrars once every 3 years. The number of posts available on each occasion may also vary. Most posts are split between a dental hospital and a district general hospital. Jobs are advertised in the British Dental Journal. Recruitment is on a national basis and organised by COPDEND.

When thinking of where to apply, most people's overriding concern is location. Some may be unable to move from their current home and are therefore restricted to only applying to nearby units. This obviously makes the choice quite simple, but does reduce the odds of successfully gaining an orthodontic training post in any given year.

If you are fortunate enough to have more flexibility there are many factors to take into account. It is worthwhile looking online, talking to peers as well as visiting each unit following the interviews to find out more about each individual course. Specialty Registrars currently in training are valuable sources of information so it is useful to try to "interrogate" them on such open days.

Type of Course/Learning Structure

Some courses offer teaching by problem based learning, whereas others provide more didactic style teaching. A certain teaching style may better suit your method of learning and hence this is another factor to take into account.

Alongside this, training courses often join forces to provide some elements of their teaching on a regional basis. Therefore the universities based in the North of England participate in the Northern Universities Consortium (NUC), hosting several teaching days each year around the region. As well as providing teaching such programmes are a fantastic opportunity to meet trainees on other programmes. Barts and the London and King's College London run a combined academic teaching programme called the pan London lecture programme that invites speakers to lecture the StRs and Postgraduates. Teaching is usually held on Fridays either at the Royal London Hospital or at Guys Hospital.

Course Fees

This is covered in a later section on the cost of orthodontic training. For accurate information, it is worthwhile looking on the university websites.

Type of Postgraduate Degree offered

All registrars will be expected to undertake a postgraduate degree as part of their training. There are a variety of degrees on offer across the different training schemes at either Master's or Doctorate level including MPhil, MCLinDent, MDentSci, MRes, DDS or DDSc. Information can generally be found on each university website. Some higher-level degrees are taught and others are research based; this will affect the length of the dissertation and also whether exemption for the written section of MOrth/IMOrth examination will be provided.

Distance between Units

Most trainees will be based in two sites, generally a dental hospital and district general hospital. When considering applying for positions it is important to consider the amount of travelling that will be required; some posts can be separated by over an hours commute. Some schemes however, have put in place measures to reduce travelling for registrars such as providing web-based teaching.

Number of Other Trainees & Yearly Intake vs. 3 Yearly Intakes

The value of training alongside your peers cannot be underestimated. Participating in a training programme in orthodontics can be hard work and having friends on hand who are also undergoing the same difficulties and stresses is so important. Therefore, it is important to consider the trainee numbers within a training scheme and the availability of support from peers.

Alongside this some units take on new trainees on a yearly basis, whereas other units take on a larger cohort every 3 years. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages, such as the lack of support from more senior registrars contrasting with the support provided by a larger cohort in a year group. Such factors would have to be weighed up on an individual basis.

Peer Recommendation

Talk to current and former trainees – their advice is invaluable! The Training Grades Group of the British Orthodontic Society can be contacted for advice and this group also runs an annual course for potential orthodontic registrars. This course is currently run twice a year, once in the north of England and once in London. Gain input from as many people as possible and you will make the correct decision for you.

How do I apply?

[COPDEND](#) (Committee Of Postgraduate Deans and Directors) co-ordinate National Recruitment for Orthodontic StR training posts in England, Wales and Scotland. Applications are completed online via the [London Deanery website](#) and there are a number of online documents available that give specific and detailed information on the application process and person specification.

It is important that you download and carefully read through these necessary guidance documents, which include:

Orthodontics StR National Applicant Guide

- Guide to completing your Orthodontics StR application form
- Person specification
- Open day dates

Further details about the individual training units/programmes and a job description can also be found on the [London Deanery website](#).

Interviews are usually held in May and visits/open days to the units will be allowed after the selection interviews. The opportunity to visit enables applicants to decide on their preferences, which will need to be confirmed in early July.

Offers of posts are usually made in July. Dependent on the MOrth results and the number of free posts available, successful applicants will be given a single offer for their highest available preference in early July and have 48 hours to accept or reject the offer.

Do I need publications on my application?

The need for publications when applying for orthodontic SpR training is a debated issue. Although it is not essential to have publications, it will be looked on very favourably if you do. It is important that your publications are reported accurately and you are aware of phrases associated with publications:

In Preparation - still writing the manuscript;

Submitted - actually received in the editorial office of the journal;

In Press - accepted by the journal although not published.

Abstracts can count but need to be correctly referenced as do full papers. Ideally the person who does the work should be first author.

Job descriptions typically include a person specification, and publications are normally listed as 'desirable'. Everyone applying for orthodontic SpR posts will have similar qualifications and experience, so publications are a key factor in helping you stand out from the rest – meaning you are more likely to get shortlisted for the post you want.

In summary – it is a very good idea to have a least one publication when applying for an orthodontic SpR post.

How do I get a publication?

Don't panic! No one expects you to have completed and published a multi-centre randomised controlled trial in the short time since you qualified.

It is worth speaking to the orthodontic consultants in your region, to see if they would like any help with research they are carrying out, or whether they have any small projects waiting to be undertaken. Doing this has two advantages: firstly you will get a publication and secondly, it gives you the opportunity to let the orthodontists in your region know that you are interested in applying for an orthodontic StR post.

Important: it doesn't matter if your publications are not based on orthodontic research projects. The people short listing for interviews are looking to see that you have an interest in research and audit, not that you have done orthodontic research.

You may already be involved in a research project in your department. If so, make sure you take an active role in writing the project up for publication so that your name is included. If not, don't worry – there are several simple ways of getting publications. Below are a few suggestions:

A case report write-up

You may have seen an interesting or unusual case recently, and if so, ask your supervisor whether you could write this up as a case report.

If you have not seen any interesting cases yourself, ask your senior colleagues or a local orthodontist. It is likely that at least one of them will have seen something interesting, and they will usually be only too glad to let someone else do the writing.

Good examples of case reports can be found in Orthodontic Update, Dental Update and the Journal of Orthodontics.

An audit project report

No doubt you will have been involved in audit projects in your department and if your audit project is of sufficient quality, why not write it up for publication?

The British Orthodontic Society produces a biannual Clinical Effectiveness Bulletin (CEB) composed of orthodontic audit reports. If you would like to undertake an orthodontic audit, ask a local orthodontic consultant. They will usually be happy for someone to help them carry out an audit and write it up for publication in the CEB.

If you have carried out an audit in another specialty, there may be similar journals or bulletins – ask your senior colleagues. Alternatively, you could consider sending your audit write-up to journals such as Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons.

A poster presentation at a conference

If your project is simple or if you are having trouble getting it accepted for publication, you may be able to use your findings for a poster presentation at a conference.

To apply for a poster to be accepted for a conference, you will need to submit an abstract in advance. Abstracts for posters accepted for presentation are published as a supplement to the main journal associated with the conference. For example, if your poster is accepted for presentation at the British Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons conference, your accompanying abstract will be published in a supplement of the British Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. You can then put this on your application as a publication, plus you get a poster presentation too!

Note: abstracts for poster presentations usually need to be submitted at least 3 months in advance of the conference, so make sure you don't get caught out and miss the deadline. Instructions on completing abstracts can normally be found on the conference website. Follow the instructions carefully or your poster will not be accepted!

Ask to write up a project for someone else

Sometimes, people complete research projects, but don't have time to write them up. Ask around – it may be that someone that you work with has just such a project. Normally, people are only too happy for you to do the hard work for them in writing the project up. You will also get to put your name on the publication.

How to list publications on your application

It is good practice to list your publications, as they would appear in a reference list in a journal. For example:

Smith AB, Jones CD. Age at presentation for orthodontic SpR interviews: a cross-sectional survey. Annals of Interesting Facts 2009;1(4): 234-236.

You can include publications even if they haven't been published yet. If you have sent a paper to a journal and are waiting to hear whether it has been accepted, you can list the paper as 'submitted'. For example:

Smith AB, Jones CD. Facial features of an individual with Ortho-Trainee syndrome: a case report. Journal of Weird Syndromes (submitted)

If your paper has been accepted but not yet published, list it as 'in press'. For example:

Smith AB, Jones CD. An audit of satisfaction levels amongst SHOs using the BOS guide to applying for an SpR post in orthodontics. Journal of Exciting Audit Projects 2009 (in press)

You may also be asked to bring along your published/accepted publications, so get them printed on high quality paper using a colour printer.

A final word of caution

For orthodontic speciality training there is often a large number of applicants and therefore it is essential you present yourself well.

Don't be tempted to "enhance" your application by including information that is not truthful, you will be caught out and it will not enhance your professional reputation.

The Costs of Orthodontic Training Courses

Introduction

Since the inception of the modern Specialist Registrar Post in 1998 all specialist training posts are subject to competitive entry to salaried posts. The salary scale should follow national pay scales, although on occasion some pay protection may be possible. The current salary range progresses from £31k to £47k in 9 annual increments, although most trainees will not exceed point 5 on the scale (£39k). A small extra allowance is paid monthly to NHS employees that work within London. The costs incurred by potential trainees are variable from scheme to scheme, with absolute figures unavailable we can offer a guide to approximate course fees and also highlight some additional costs that may be payable throughout training.

Academic Fees

Orthodontic trainees are registered as part or full time postgraduate students at their respective dental schools or affiliated universities to undertake a masters (or doctorate) level post-graduate degree. The fees for these degrees are payable to the individual universities and generally comprise two components: bench fees and course fees. The cost of both components is set centrally by the individual university and varies from course to course, and fees may be payable over either a two or a three year period.

University fees are available from the documentation provided during national recruitment (Table 2) and these can change on a yearly basis. The total fees can range for the entire duration of the training programmes. You are advised to review the fees on the appropriate website of the relevant University to ensure the most up to date information.

University	Total Course Fees (£)
Belfast	3,000 (correct 2009)
Birmingham	7,200
Bristol	23,000 (correct 2012)
Cardiff	34,350
Dundee	3,600
Glasgow	15,000
Edinburgh	24,000 (correct 2012)
KCL (incl Guys)	33,000
Leeds	7,000
Liverpool	18,696
Manchester	22,350
Newcastle	25,500
Sheffield	12,800
QMUL (Barts and The London)	20,200
UCL (Eastman)	15,750

Table 2 – Total course fees correct as of 2013 unless stated

Additional Costs

In addition to the expense of the university fees StRs may incur other costs over their training period. We will try to illustrate some examples of these, and this is neither an exhaustive list nor does it apply to all schemes.

Computers

Trainees may be expected to purchase an appropriate lap-top computer, although universities may provide access to computers on campus

Photography

Some schemes provide access to appropriately trained medical photographers for StR patients, others provide clinical cameras whilst some expect trainees to provide their own clinical cameras. The use of digital photography has removed some processing costs; however there are additional problems in relation to the storage and transfer of digital images. The one off cost of an SLR digital camera can be in the region of £750 to £1300 or even more depending on the specification. This is a very expensive undertaking and StRs are well advised to extensively research the market and speak to senior colleagues for advice before purchase. Discounts may be available from retailers if a group purchase is arranged. StRs are also advised to insure their camera on purchase.

Travel costs

Some training schemes are spread over a large area with great distances between many peripheral units and the central base. This will have an impact in transport costs. When travelling from your assigned base unit, expenses may or may not be reimbursed. Some schemes now use internet based conference teaching to limit some of the difficulties with this.

Photocopying and printing

All universities have access to a wide range of on-line medical and dental journals. However there is always a need for photocopying and the majority of this will be charged to the students.

Books

Many common orthodontic texts are reasonably priced, but some may be in excess of £100. Not all are necessary and will depend on local recommendations or personal choice. University libraries will hold a certain stock of orthodontic textbooks. Loans are also available free of charge from the British Dental Association library for members.

Tax

Some incurred costs, such as books and photocopying may be subject to tax relief by HMRC. Course fees may be exempt from tax-relief. A sample letter for trainees wishing to claim tax relief on course fees is available on the BOS website.

Summary

Orthodontic training can incur a significant financial burden, which can be exacerbated by higher living costs particularly in larger UK cities. However the long term earning potential for an orthodontic specialist makes specialist orthodontic training a good investment.

Previous experience and exams prior to applying for a Specialty Registrar post in Orthodontics

Career progression and qualifications:

After completing your 5 year undergraduate training in dentistry and obtaining your BDS degree, it is preferable for you to obtain a wide experience in dentistry which would involve working in hospital, community and general dental practice for 2-3 years.

Initially, you will start by completing vocational training or a general professional training (GPT) scheme (2 years) that will help you gain some of the necessary experience. During this time you will gain your VT Number, which you will need if you eventually want to work in the primary care services. The second and third years post a BDS are normally spent in a combination of primary or secondary care environments.

General professional training (GPT) in dentistry has become well established in the UK and has provided a broad based clinical training in primary and secondary care dentistry to prepare the newly qualified dentist for subsequent training in the career of their choice. More information on modernising medical and dental careers and GPT can be found on the RCS and COPDEND websites listed below.

The Royal College of Surgeons of England have introduced a new examination, Membership of the Joint Dental Faculties (MJDF RCS(Eng)) to replace the existing MFDS and MFGDP. This new examination reflects the changes in the first two years following primary qualification and aims to assess knowledge and understanding of the processes necessary to provide good quality dental healthcare - whether you choose to embark on specialist training or a career in general practice. The MFDS and MJDF are similar in structure. See the individual College websites for more information on the examination. You will be advised to study for this examination, which will take about 2 to 3 years to achieve if you are thinking of pursuing specialist training in any dental specialty in the future. However, this qualification is no longer essential to enter specialist training but the majority of applicants will have this diploma and it is desirable to have it before you start applying for a specialist registrar post.

Further information on MJDF/MFDS/MFD can be found at:

<http://www.mjdf.org.uk/> (Royal College of Surgeons England)

<http://www.rcsed.ac.uk> (Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh)

<http://www.rcps.ac.uk> (The Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Glasgow)

<http://www.rcsi.ie> (Royal College of Surgeons Ireland)

Further information:

Becoming An Orthodontist: www.bos.org.uk

Audits and Presentations

Audit is an integral component of Clinical Governance and in the UK all dentists have a requirement to carry out audit. As part of your General Professional Training, you will have participated in audit projects taking place in your clinical environment.

When applying for a StR post, it will be important to highlight the types of audit projects you have been involved with. You should also be clear about your level of participation in any particular project. For example, whether you were involved in data collection only, data processing or involved in the completion of the entire project and the audit cycle.

The projects you may have participated in will range from small local projects, for example an audit of the availability of patient notes in a department, to larger projects such as those dealing with the implementation of national guidelines. You may have also taken part in national audit projects.

The key principle in any audit activity is that it should result in improved quality of care for patients. Therefore, when applying for a training post, it is important to highlight how your audit has contributed to achieving this. The project may have resulted in direct improvement in clinical practice, increased efficiency or more cost-effective service. Ideally, you will have 'closed the audit loop', repeating the audit project to demonstrate that change has been achieved.

Presenting audit outcomes:

It is important to formally report the findings of all audit activity so that the results can be acted upon. This also provides opportunities for learning for all staff involved in the care of patients. You may have had the opportunity to do this as a verbal presentation at your departmental audit meetings, practice meetings or training days. You may have also reported your work as a poster presentation at a conference or as a publication and it is important to highlight these details.

There will be an opportunity to list your involvement in audit activity on your application form. At your interview, you may be asked to discuss these and possible questions might relate to your direct involvement, your findings and how you applied your findings to improve clinical practice.

Further information

Royal College of Surgeons, Faculty of Dental Surgery. Methodologies for Clinical Audit in Dentistry. January 2000:

http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/publications/docs/methodologies_dentistry.html

NICE Guidelines:www.nice.org.uk

The Interview

Introduction

Being invited for an interview can be stressful and exciting all at the same time. First of all – Congratulations! Remember you have done extremely well to get to this stage and you have demonstrated with your Curriculum Vitae or application form, qualities that make you a desirable choice for the vacant position.

This section in the handbook will help prepare you for your interview.

The Interview Process

The current method of recruitment for Orthodontic Specialty Registrars in Scotland, England and Wales is through National Recruitment. It is coordinated by COPDEND and interviews are usually held in May/June each year, although this may be subject to change.

The National Recruitment process involves assessment of the candidate through clinical scenarios, presentations and interviews.

If you are applying elsewhere for an orthodontic trainee post, recruitment may involve only an interview or a combination of different methods of assessment. It is therefore useful to make yourself familiar with these.

Making a good first impression

First impressions are important in the case of the interview process. The interview panel has to judge you based on a single day of assessments and you want to show that you are a professional and reliable individual who will be an excellent colleague and trainee.

It may seem simple but it is important to consider the following:

1. Professional Attire

Ensure your clothes and accessories are clean and smart as this will exude professionalism and you will feel more confident. In addition, your clothing should be comfortable. If you feel awkward or uncomfortable, this may come across in the interview.

2. Punctuality

Read all the instructions sent to you about your interview including the start time and venue. Build in extra time to get to the venue in case of traffic or problems with public transport. If you have to travel to a different city, arriving the day before the interview may be better than travelling long distances on the day of the interview. Remember, being organised and arriving early will help you stay calm and perform better.

3. Communication

When under stress it can be difficult to be yourself. Try and smile and give good eye contact. The panel will be assessing your non-verbal cues as well as your answers to the questions.

Interview preparation

The key to performing well in an interview is to be prepared.

The person specification states the essential and desirable criteria for the post you have applied for. This will be the basis of how you are judged in the interview. It is a good idea to see how you match these criteria through the skills and experience you have gained. For example, if they have listed 'good communication skills' under essential criteria - try and think of examples of how you have shown good communication skills.

Most interviews and clinical scenarios will cover key important areas. It is useful to look over these and consider how you will answer the questions.

The key areas may include:

4. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Know your CV well. The interview panel may want to know about your research or a paper you have published and if you cannot talk about it comfortably, this will not make a good impression.

5. Clinical Governance

Try and describe clinical governance in your own words. If you memorise a definition, it may be one the panel have heard several times and does not necessarily demonstrate understanding. Questions are often asked about audit, therefore have an example of an audit you have recently carried out (and ensure it is actually an audit!).

6. Research

You may get asked about research so ensure you know the difference between audit and research. A lot of candidates commonly use the two interchangeably and this shows poor knowledge.

7. Teaching/Training

You may get asked about the training post you are applying for and about assessment methods. Make sure you are familiar with 'A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK' - The Gold Guide, 4th Edition, June 2010.

8. Difficult scenarios

There may be questions based on difficult situations you may encounter or have dealt with in the past. These include scenarios such as a poorly performing colleague. It is important you can discuss how you would deal with such a situation and who you would contact.

9. Skills and attributes

Often the interview panel will want to know if you have the skills to perform well as a trainee, such as good organisational skills. Again think of examples which show you have these skills. In addition, do not forget to prepare for some negative questions, for example 'what are your weaknesses?' If unprepared, this type of question can often catch a candidate out.

10. Current political issues

You may get asked about current issues within the specialty or more broadly within healthcare. If you are able to discuss this confidently, it will demonstrate that you have an active interest in the specialty and have done your homework.

11. Future aspirations

Have a think about what you want to achieve and where you see yourself in 10 years.

Once you have prepared for the interview speak to senior colleagues and arrange mock interviews. As well as preparation, practising your interview skills can be very beneficial and may identify any areas of weakness.

Helpful hints

- If you get asked a question you have not understood, ask for further clarification. The interview panel is not trying to catch out.
- Within reason, it is a good idea to answer a question with “I” rather than “We”. This gives the impression that you made a significant contribution to a project and sounds more confident.
- At the end of the interview you may get asked if you have any further questions. Only ask questions if it is relevant.

Sources of information

Ask your colleagues who have been on similar interviews how they prepared. Interview books can be a useful guide on how to structure questions. Additional sources of information are available on the Internet. You may find the British Orthodontic Society, British Dental Association, General Dental Council and the Department of Health websites helpful.

Useful websites:

www.dh.gov.uk

www.gdc-uk.org

www.bos.org.uk

www.bda.org

Summary

Although the interview is a stressful situation, it is also an opportunity to show off your many qualities and skills. Stay calm, always remain professional and be positive. Remember you are an excellent candidate and you have been selected for interview for a reason. Good Luck!

Training Grades Group (TGG) of the
British Orthodontic Society, February 2015

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