A Career in
Orthodontic Therapy
The role and responsibility of the Orthodontic Therapist

Orthodontic Therapists are members of a group of dental care professionals (DCPs) who work as part of the dental team. They carry out orthodontic treatment under the prescription and close supervision of a dentist, who would normally be an orthodontist.
The role of an Orthodontic Therapist

The role of an Orthodontic Therapist encompasses:

- cleaning and preparation of tooth surfaces ready for orthodontic treatment
- identification, selection, use and maintenance of appropriate instruments
- insertion of passive removable orthodontic appliances
- insertion of active removable orthodontic appliances adjusted by a dentist
- removal of fixed appliances, orthodontic adhesives and cement
- taking impressions
- casting study models
- making a patient’s orthodontic appliance safe in the absence of a dentist
- fitting orthodontic headgear
- fitting orthodontic facebows which have been adjusted by a dentist
- occlusal records including orthognathic facebow readings
- making appropriate referrals to other healthcare professionals
Training

Orthodontic Therapy Training in Scotland is presently available as a training programme of approximately ten months.

The initial core course - Introduction to Clinical Practice - lasts for 20 days over the first four weeks, after which students will train in their work placements for approximately nine months. During this period of work placement, students will return to the training establishment for a number of training days, which are spread over the remaining nine months, and which will include support and preparation for the final examination. Following satisfactory completion of the course, there is the opportunity for participants to sit the examination for the Diploma in Orthodontic Therapy of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

The examination consists of written papers, case presentations and oral examinations. Successful completion of the examination leads to the award of the Dip. Orth Ther (RCS Ed).

The entry requirements

To be eligible to join the course, applicants need to be registered as a Dental Care Professional with the General Dental Council (GDC). The NEBDN Certificate in Orthodontic Dental Nursing is also desirable. In addition written support of a suitably qualified orthodontist trainer, who is on the Orthodontic Specialist list of the GDC is also required. Trainers must attend a trainer training event to prepare them for their trainer role on the programme.

Positive and recent changes to the profession

Compulsory Registration with the General Dental Council (GDC)

Orthodontic Therapists in training will already be registered with the GDC as DCPs. Registration must be maintained during training.
General Dental Council Ethical Standards

The General Dental Council aims to protect patients within the United Kingdom by regulating dental professionals, assuring the quality of dental education and setting standards for conduct that all dental professionals must adhere to.

For more information on the GDC, access their website at www.gdc-uk.org

The GDC require that all registered DCPs complete at least 150 hours of Continued Professional Development (CPD) every five years to maintain registration. Of these, 50 must be ‘verifiable CPD’ in specific subjects.

Compulsory CPD provides evidence that DCPs’:

- knowledge is up to date and relevant to their practice,
- professional performance is up to the standards needed to maintain registration,
- behaviour meets the standards set out in the GDC’s guidance “Standards for Dental Professionals”.
Contact details

The following regional contacts can provide information on training and development opportunities for DCPs in your area.

**Lead DCP Tutor**
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