



University of Essex

# **Foundation Degree Dental Hygiene**

## **Course Handbook**

### **2026-27**

Please note that this document should be read alongside the HSC Undergraduate Student Handbook which can be found [here.](#)

| <b>Content</b>                          | <b>Page</b> |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|
| The Foundation Degree in Dental Hygiene | 3           |
| • The awards                            | 3           |
| • Aims of the programme                 | 3           |
| • Content and structure                 | 3           |
| Module outlines                         | 4           |
| Timetable arrangement                   | 5           |
| • Teaching and learning                 | 6           |
| Attendance                              | 6           |
| University based assessment             | 6           |
| Placement based learning                | 6           |
| • Assessment                            | 7           |
| Mapping against the GDC competences     | 7           |
| University based assessment             | 7           |
| Work based assessment                   | 8           |
| Course Contacts                         | 9           |
| Professionalism                         | 9           |
| Appendix 1: Rules of assessment         | 10          |

## **The Foundation Degree in Dental Hygiene**

### **The award**

The programme leads to an award of Foundation Degree in Dental Hygiene from the University of Essex and enables registration with the General Dental Council as a dental hygienist.

### **Aims**

This Foundation Degree prepares individuals for a career as a dental hygienist; they are expected to be able to practice safely and competently at the end of 88 weeks. While the competence of individual professionals is critical to the delivery of safe patient care, the limitation of individual effort is increasingly recognised. The Kennedy Report<sup>1</sup> and other high-profile enquiries highlight the important role of teams and team working in health care. Aiming to improve team working, the students of the Foundation Degree will study core modules, e.g. learn about general clinical governance principles-professional learning opportunities will help to promote understanding and mutual respect, and facilitate team working in practice.

The teaching methods employed are designed to foster the habit of lifelong learning to enable continuing professional development to meet the future needs of patients and society

The foundation degree is also intended as the first step on an educational ladder. During the second year of the FdSc, students could choose to transfer to the 3 Yr programme that leads to registration as a dental therapist.

### **Content and structure**

#### **Module outlines**

The Foundation Degree is based on the General Dental Council's Safe Practitioner framework and is kept under continual review to ensure that students are 'fit for practice' upon qualification. The content is organized into modules; a module is a discrete unit of learning with pre-determined learning outcomes, content and assessment.

The programme consists of the following modules:

#### **Year 1 Term 1**

- **Introducing Clinical Practice**; a full-year module encompassing time spent in the clinical skills lab and placement. Skills will be introduced and

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<sup>1</sup> Kennedy Report - *Learning from Bristol: the report of the public inquiry into children's heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary 1984 -1995*

developed in the skills lab until the student is able to pass a formative Gateway Assessment demonstrating that they are safe to use the skill on placement under supervision. Placement will involve working in teams under the supervision of a Clinical Educator. There will be a mixture of formative and summative assessment at placement. The formative assessments will focus on the delivery of professional behaviours and will strongly encourage the development of insight and reflective skills. The summative assessments will focus more on the practical elements of the students' learning.

- **Lifelong Professional Skills:** a full-year module designed to embed all aspects of professionalism, as well as focusing on study skills. Insight, reflection, ethics, clinical governance, professionalism, academic reading and writing will all be covered.
- **Underpinning Sciences:** this module will cover anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, psychology, histology, cytology, and microbiology needed to aid understanding of all other modules. There will be a special focus on how this relates specifically to the head and neck, although it will not be solely limited to this region.

### **Year 1 Term 2**

The above modules plus:

- **Dental Public Health:** this module will focus on all aspects of health policy and public health relating to common dental diseases. It will encourage students to engage widely with information from the numerous public bodies that focus on oral health.

### **Year 1 Term 3**

**Introducing Clinical Practice;** as above

**Lifelong Professional Skills;** as above

**Dental Public Health;** as above

### **Year 2 Term 1**

- **Advancing Clinical Practice:** Similar to the Introducing Clinical Practice module in both structure and assessment, this module will focus on developing the more advanced skills of the Dental Hygienist.
- **Critical Appraisal and Research Skills:** An existing full-year module for the current iteration of the FdSc which develops the students' knowledge

of research and helps them grow in confidence in becoming evidence-based practitioners. Termly summative assessment is currently via a series of assignments, as well as a critical appraisal exercise.

- **Holistic Management of Patients with Complex Needs:** this module will develop an appreciation of how dentistry sits alongside the wider healthcare family, the impact of systemic diseases, including mental health, on both the oral cavity and general health and, in turn, how this impacts the management of patients. Community-based and aspects of Special Needs dentistry will also be considered.

### **Year 2 Term 2**

As Term 1 plus:

- **Management of Oral and Dental Diseases:** this module focuses on deepening the understanding of the most prevalent and relevant dental diseases, as well as developing knowledge of the other diseases and conditions that may be seen in the oral cavity and associated structures, and their management within the relevant Scope of Practice.

### **Year 2 Term 3**

**Management of Oral and Dental Diseases:** as above

**Advancing Clinical Practice:** as above

**Critical Appraisal and Research Skills:** as above

### Timetable arrangement

The timetable is arranged on a termly basis. As a working schedule, it is posted on Moodle prior to the beginning of term. Students and CEs are advised to check the timetable on a regular basis.

## **Teaching and learning**

### Attendance

The programme consists of learning spread over two years. Each week students spend 2 days at the University, 14 hours a week in placement and undertakes 7 hours of guided educational activities. The learning, which continues throughout the summer and summer break, does not conform to the normal academic term times.

Attendance is closely monitored; **sickness and absenteeism may delay the completion of studies.**

### Learning at the University

All modules have theory-based and practice outcomes: the theoretical understanding is taught using a wide range of stimulating and supportive teaching methods including: problem-based learning, tutorials, e-learning and seminar based teaching. Moodle is the e-learning platform used extensively to support student learning; the virtual classroom created is available to all teaching staff including CEs. Accessing the virtual classroom enables CEs to follow programme delivery on a session- by- session basis.

The practice outcomes, which include communication and clinical skills, are taught in our state-of-the-art clinical skills laboratory, using the very latest equipment and IT facilities to assist effective learning and the acquisition of new skills.

All pre-clinical and placement related assessment takes place through an electronic portfolio called ePad. This is available to all academic and placement staff.

### Placement-based learning

Each student will experience a variety placements in the 2 years of training.

The learning outcomes to be practiced and assessed are defined module-by-module; the development of a student's practical skill base is an ongoing process which is monitored both at the University and in placement – the programme team will determine when they deem a student competent to practice a clinical task under supervision in placement via Gateway assessments. CEs will be notified of the expected date that their students can undertake clinical tasks in advance.

Students and CE's should refer to the FdSc Oral health Placement Handbook for further guidance.

### **Assessment**

#### Mapping against GDC competences

GDC learning outcomes are used to ensure that the programme meets GDC requirements (see individual module guides for details).

The assessment methods for each module learning outcome are published in the module guide.

Each module is assessed independently and students must pass the module assessment in order to progress. All students are entitled to a second attempt of an assessment. Failure at second attempt will normally result in termination of

training; details regarding assessment is provided in the Rules of Assessment (Appendix 1).

#### University-based assessment

There are formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment is designed to gather information so that the teaching staff know how students are progressing and where they are having problems, and use this information to make necessary instructional adjustments, such as providing additional teaching sessions, trying alternative teaching approaches, or offering more opportunities for practice. Formative assessment also promotes reflective self- assessment in students. Typically, formative assessment includes discussions of topics or areas of practice, formative feedback, working on group tasks and clinical skills assessment in the skills lab.

Summative assessment is the formal testing of learning attainment at the end of the module. These are either coursework assignments in the form of an essay or a case study, or assessment under examination conditions, the latter includes Short Answer Tests (SATs), Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCEs), Case Presentations and Unseen Case Presentations.

The pass mark for all summative assessments is 40%.

Students are permitted a second attempt at any University based assessment. Failure at second attempt ordinarily results in termination of training.

#### Work based assessment (WBA)

CEs are responsible for work based assessment

The competencies to be assessed and the pass/fail criteria are defined and, along with other assessment documentation, is available on-line.

Evidence of student performance is collected by means of :

- Direct observation of procedure (DOP); this is a formal assessment process where the CE completes a DOP form recording the outcomes of assessing an area of competence based on direct observation; the competencies to be assessed are defined by the module outcomes
- Case based discussion (CbD); this is also part of the assessment process where the CE establishes the student's knowledge underpinning clinical skills, the CE is required to conduct one case base discussion per month on average.
- Clinical logs: clinical logs capture in detail the student/patient interaction, the diverse patient experience and the frequency with which the student practices particular skills.

The CE makes an evidence based judgment on the student's performance and completes the summative assessment documentation. In addition, CEs are expected to provide on-going feedback to students to enable progression; this is done formally by adding comments to the logs in ePad within 14 working days of the log being uploaded by the student.

Completed assessment documentations are submitted on the ePad to the students electronic portfolio.

Work-based assessments are of a pass/fail nature. Each term the work-based assessment component of each module must be passed for progression to occur.

A student who fails to achieve a competent grade is offered a second attempt at the placement but in another location, this may require an extension of the period of study or an intermission. Failure to secure a competent grade in the second attempt results in termination of training.

WBA records are reviewed at the end of the term by student advisors and an education supervisor form is completed.

### **Contact Details:**

| <b><u>Core programme team</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b><u>Programme Administrator</u></b>                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| .....Stacie De Klerk...<br>Programme lead<br>Contact : <a href="mailto:sd20189@essex.ac.uk">sd20189@essex.ac.uk</a><br><br>Mick O'Regan<br>Subject Team Lead<br>Contact: <a href="mailto:moregan@essex.ac.uk">moregan@essex.ac.uk</a> | Catarina Cosstick-Wright<br><br>Email: <a href="mailto:oralhealthadmin@essex.ac.uk">oralhealthadmin@essex.ac.uk</a> |

### **Professionalism**

The course leads to a registerable qualification with the General Dental Council and there is an onus upon you, the student, to behave professionally at all times. The concepts underpinning professionalism are interweaved throughout the programme, both at university and at placement.

The School of Health and Social Care has policies on both Fitness to Practice and Whistleblowing and you are expected to read these before commencing your placement. Any questions about their content should be discussed with your Student Advisor.



The GDC also has a number of useful resources on professionalism on their website: <https://www.gdc-uk.org/professionals/students-and-trainees/student-professionalism/sp-guidance>

## APPENDIX 1

### RULES OF ASSESSMENT FOR FOUNDATION DEGREE DENTAL HYGIENE

#### SCHOOL OF HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

**LEVEL & NATURE OF STUDY** Foundation degree is taught by blended learning methods (work-based, e learning, face to face teaching, simulation, role play & coursework).

**LENGTH & MODE OF STUDY** 24 months full time

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| SCHEME STRUCTURE FOR FOUNDATION DEGREE ORAL HEALTH SCIENCE |                               |                                                                                                                                     |             |         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| Module Code                                                | Module Title                  | Assessment                                                                                                                          |             | Credits |
| Year 1                                                     |                               |                                                                                                                                     |             |         |
| <b>HS106</b>                                               | Introducing Clinical Practice | <b>Electronic Practice Assessment Document &amp; Core Knowledge Test (MCQ) Pass/Fail</b>                                            | <b>Core</b> | 30      |
| <b>HS107</b>                                               | Lifelong Professional Skills  | <b>Multiple Choice Questions (50% weighting) &amp; Open Book Exam (50% weighting)</b>                                               | <b>Core</b> | 30      |
| <b>HS108</b>                                               | Underpinning Sciences         | <b>Multiple Choice Question Test (30% weighting) Short Answer Test (30%) Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) (40%)</b> | <b>Core</b> | 30      |
| <b>HS109</b>                                               | Dental Public Health          | <b>MCQ (50% weighting) Poster Project (50%)</b>                                                                                     | <b>Core</b> | 30      |

|              |  |     |
|--------------|--|-----|
| Total Year 1 |  | 120 |
|--------------|--|-----|

|                 |                                                    |                                                                                           |             |     |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----|
| Year 2          |                                                    |                                                                                           |             |     |
| <b>HS320</b>    | Advancing Clinical Practice                        | <b>Electronic Practice Assessment Document – pass/fail</b>                                | <b>Core</b> | 30  |
| <b>HS734</b>    | Critical Appraisal and Research Skills             | <b>Literature Review (30%)<br/>Research proposal (40%)<br/>Open Book SAT Exam 30%)</b>    | <b>Core</b> | 30  |
| <b>HS321</b>    | Holistic Management of Patients with Complex Needs | <b>SAT (30% weighting)<br/>OSCE (30%)<br/>Case Study (40%)</b>                            | <b>Core</b> | 30  |
| <b>HS322</b>    | Management of Oral and Dental Diseases             | <b>OSCE (30% weighting)<br/>Case Study Essay (40%)<br/>Unseen Case Presentation (30%)</b> | <b>Core</b> | 30  |
| Total Year 2    |                                                    |                                                                                           |             | 120 |
| Overall Credits |                                                    |                                                                                           |             | 240 |

## PROGRESSION

- Credit is awarded to the student in recognition of achieved learning at the end of the component. A pass mark of 40% is required for all summative assessments
- Each module has a final module mark which can be derived from course work and/or exam marks, rounded to a whole number.

- Progression is based on passing all assessments and core modules. The Board of Examiners will not condone a failure in any element or module in this programme of study. Students will be offered only one opportunity to resubmit these where they are failed unless there are Extenuating Circumstances accepted as valid by the Board of Examiners.

## **PROGRESSION FROM YEAR ONE TO YEAR TWO**

- A student is normally permitted to proceed to the second year if they have achieved a pass in each module that is sat at Stage One. The only exceptions to this are modules HS107 and HS109 where the first resubmission may be trailed into the next Year of study.
- A student who fails to meet the required standard as specified above, shall be deemed to have failed, but may be permitted to resit or resubmit the failed elements, including work-based assessments, at the next available opportunity.
- For students who pass an element of assessment on re-sitting or resubmission, their modular mark will be capped based on their aggregate element marks at first submission. Where this modular mark is less than the minimum modular pass mark the modular mark will be capped at the minimum modular pass mark, unless the Board of Examiners decides not to apply capping in the light of extenuating circumstances. A maximum of one resit or resubmission opportunity is permitted for each element of assessment.
- A student who, after reassessment fails to meet the required standard, will be required to withdraw from the programme.

## **AWARD OF A FOUNDATION DEGREE**

- For each module, the Board of Examiners receives the marks for each element of assessment from which a final aggregate module mark is derived.
- A year mark is derived from the module marks for the purposes of determining degree classifications, weighted in line with the credit value of each module and rounded to a whole number.
- A student is normally permitted to be considered for the award of a Foundation Degree if they have achieved a pass in each module (including both academic and all aspects of work-based assessment).

- A student who fails to meet the required standard as specified above, shall be deemed to have failed, but may be permitted to resit or resubmit the failed elements, including work based assessments at the next available opportunity.
- For students who pass an element of assessment on re-sitting or resubmission, their modular mark will be capped based on their aggregate element marks at first submission. Where this modular mark is less than the minimum modular pass mark the modular mark will be capped at the minimum modular pass mark, unless the Board of Examiners decides not to apply capping in the light of extenuating circumstances. A maximum of one resit or resubmission opportunity is permitted for each element of assessment.
- Each candidate is assigned a classification on satisfactory completion of all modules of the Foundation Degree based on the arithmetic average for Year 2.
  - 70% and over: Distinction
  - 60 – 69%: Merit
  - 40 – 59%: Pass

## **SUMMARY OF VARIATIONS FROM STANDARD RULES OF ASSESSMENT**

- Progression is based on passing all assessments and all modules.
- Any failed element may be resubmitted on one occasion only for a capped mark. A fail at second attempt will lead to a requirement to withdraw.
- Work will normally be resubmitted within four weeks of students receiving their marked work. An External Examiner can review both the submission and the resubmission. However, the final decision on when a reassessment should occur lies with the Programme Lead and has to make consideration for allowing the student to be adequately prepared for their reassessment.
- All placement/work-based assessments are assessed as pass/fail.

Please refer to the Rules of Assessment variation document online: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/rules-of-assessment/roa-3-year-honours-degrees> and <https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/rules-of-assessment/roa-ug-other>