

School of Dental Sciences

Admissions Policy

2024 Entry

A206 BDS, Dental Surgery

A207 BSc (Hons), Oral and Dental Health Sciences (Dental Therapy)



Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Equal Opportunities	1
3. Disability.....	2
4. Confidentiality.....	3
5. Health Requirements	3
6. Occupational Health.....	4
7. Fitness to Practise.....	4
8. Disclosure of Criminal Convictions and Cautions	5
9. Providing False or Misleading Information.....	6
10. The Admissions Process	7
11. University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)	10
12. Widening Participation.....	11
13. Internal Transfers to BDS	12
14. Deferred Entry	12
15. Transfers	13
16. English Language Requirement.....	13
17. Scholarships.....	13
18. Late Applications and Clearing	14
19. Extenuating Circumstances.....	14
20. Feedback.....	15
21. Age	15
22. Appeals and Complaints.....	15

1. Introduction

The admissions process is administered by the admissions team in the School of Dental Sciences, acting on behalf of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies of the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The Admissions Policy is intended to ensure that the process of student selection is free from discrimination. It is based on guidelines from the Dental Schools Council produced in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality. In considering all applicants, the Dental School will take into account the General Dental Council's (GDC) standards in *Preparing for practice: Dental team learning outcomes for registration* and other guidelines published by the GDC (<https://www.gdc-uk.org/>).

The admissions policy is reviewed annually by the School of Dental Sciences Admissions team. Changes to the policy are not made part-way through an admissions cycle.

As a member of the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) consortium, Newcastle University require valid¹ UCAT scores as part of the entry requirements for BDS (A206) via the standard admission route. (See <https://www.ucat.ac.uk> and section 11 for further information).

2. Equal Opportunities

We aim to ensure equality of opportunity for applicants and for all students in teaching, learning, assessment, and support. We aim to create conditions whereby students are treated solely based on their academic achievement, aptitude, and potential, regardless of age, religion, belief, ethnicity, gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, or disability. However, to be selected for a dental degree course applicants must have the potential to fulfil the duties of a dental professional as stated by the GDC in their document *Standards for Education* (<https://www.gdc-uk.org/education-cpd/quality-assurance>).

¹ UCAT scores are only valid for the in which they are achieved and cannot be used in subsequent years.

Our values also align with those of the [NHS Constitution](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england)<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england> which are:

- Working together for patients
- Respect and dignity
- Commitment to quality of care
- Compassion
- Improving lives
- Everyone counts

Interviews are conducted by admissions selectors drawn from the Dental School including individuals from both a dental, non-dental, clinical, and non-clinical background. All selectors and staff involved in the selection process are aware of their responsibility to implement the University's policies on equal opportunities and have undertaken appropriate training. Any selector who is found to be in breach of the Admissions Policy will be required to stand down. As part of our policy review, admission statistics on ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic background are regularly monitored.

3. Disability

We are committed to the principle of equal treatment of people with disabilities and the proper application of the Equality Act 2010. Thus, an applicant who is judged academically suitable, subject to the provisions of the Act, will not be treated less favourably or placed at a disadvantage on the grounds of disability unless this can be justified within the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to disclose their disabilities, of whatever nature, on application to allow us to provide appropriate support. Applicants with a disability, or other health condition where relevant, may wish to contact the General Dental Council who can provide guidance on the impact of their condition. We encourage such applicants to contact the Dental School and

[Student Wellbeing Service](#) to discuss the requirements of the course and any concerns they may have.

Any applicant who (a) meets the academic requirements, (b) is called for interview, and (c) has declared a disability on the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) application, may be contacted by the Student Wellbeing Service to discuss their support requirements, and may be invited for an information visit to ascertain if there are any further needs. On receiving an offer to study applicants will be automatically contacted by the University Student Wellbeing Service to discuss support requirements.

Whilst the School and the University will ensure reasonable and appropriate support is provided to applicants and students with disabilities or other health condition where relevant, all applicants must be considered able to meet the outcomes of the GDC document *Preparing for Practice* (<https://www.gdc-uk.org/education-cpd/quality-assurance>) and the outcomes of the programme for which they have applied. This is because the ability to provide clinical care for patients is an absolute requirement of both the A206 and A207 programmes.

4. Confidentiality

We are unable to discuss or disclose any information about an application to any party other than the applicant without the express consent of the applicant.

5. Health Requirements

We have an overriding duty of care to the public, with whom students come into close contact. All students are required to comply with the Department of Health's guidance on health clearance for healthcare workers. Early clinical contact means that students will be asked to provide proof of their immunisation status by completing an occupational health questionnaire on entry. Evidence of immunisation is required against polio, tetanus, varicella

(chicken pox), diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella and tuberculosis. Students are also required to receive any other immunisations required for healthcare workers by the Department of Health and NHS at the time of entry or during their studies.

Early in the course, students will be screened for hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV. All aspects of students' medical records will be bound by the same duty of confidentiality as for any doctor-patient interaction and informed by the same ethical guidance. Students commencing the programme will be immunised against hepatitis B by our occupational health provider, the cost will be covered by the School of Dental Sciences.

6. Occupational Health

All successful applicants are required to complete and return an occupational health questionnaire by the date stated in any offer received through UCAS. From the information provided, our occupational health provider will assess immunisation status, and students will be required to fulfil any stipulated requirements identified from this assessment.

In certain circumstances, it may also be necessary for applicants to undergo an occupational health assessment with an occupational health practitioner, appointed by the University, before we are able to confirm their offer of a place. This assessment is designed to help us ensure that applicants receive any support necessary and also to ensure students have the potential to undertake the requirements of the programme for which they have applied. Students must be able to provide clinical care to patients and to meet the programme outcomes in line GDC standards defined in *Preparing for Practice*.

7. Fitness to Practise

For all applicants and students, issues of fitness to practise are taken into account at admission and throughout the degree programmes.

The School of Dental Sciences and the University have a duty in the interest of the public to ensure that students studying on degree programmes leading to professional health care qualifications meet the relevant professional standards and are fit to practise. The University is responsible for protecting patients, fellow students, staff, and vulnerable individuals, and for taking appropriate steps to minimise risk of harm to these groups during the training of dental students. The welfare and safety of patients is the University's chief concern. In addition, the University has a duty of care to its students and must ensure that any decisions are made in best interests of the student as part of its support and welfare strategy. This includes being sure, as far as possible, that a student is fit to undertake the rigours of a demanding programme of study and to become a member of a demanding profession.

The Faculty of Medical Sciences' Fitness to Practise procedure incorporates guidance provided by appropriate healthcare professional bodies. The Procedure can be found at: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/student-progress/policies/procedures/fitness%20to%20practise/>
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/regulations/fitness.htm>

8. Disclosure of Criminal Convictions and Cautions

All students must undergo an enhanced disclosure check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This type of disclosure is designed to check the background of individuals who will have contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. Under our duty of care to the community, patients, staff, and students, any reprimand, warning, caution, or conviction declared at application or disclosed in a DBS will be scrutinised by the University and appropriate decisions made, and/or conditions set, for any future studies at the University.

An enhanced disclosure will detail every conviction (including spent convictions), caution, warning, and reprimand which is recorded in the central record, or it will state that there is no such information held. Additionally, any

information which, in the opinion of a Chief Police Officer, might be relevant will also be included in the certificate. Additionally, this level of disclosure will provide clarification as to whether the applicant is banned from working with children or vulnerable adults.

Applicants must disclose this information on application and if they receive a criminal conviction after they submit their application. Failure to disclose will be taken seriously and students are reminded it is their duty to disclose all information in relation to these matters at the earliest opportunity. Our policy on considering such applications is aligned to that applied by the regulating authority, the General Dental Council, and published in their guidance documents.

Newcastle University will consider any disclosure made during an application to the A206/A207 courses, however the University is not able to predict any decision of the General Dental Council (GDC) in relation to any disclosure at the time of registration with them following an award of the degree. The GDC will normally investigate such disclosures at the time of registration, in line with their rules and guidance. The University is also unable to influence or predict any decisions in relation to disclosures by future employers.

Newcastle Dental School requires that this check is carried out on entry to Stage 1 (for both BDS and BSc Oral and Dental Health Sciences (ODHS) students) and again prior to the start of clinical teaching (Stage 3 for BDS students), and we reserve the right to withdraw or discontinue your studies on receipt of an unsatisfactory disclosure. In Stage 1, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application process is normally conducted during the first week of term. **On receipt of the enhanced disclosure check the student must bring the disclosure to the Dental School Office.**

9. Providing False or Misleading Information

Applicants suspected of providing, or found to have provided, false information or applicants whose application is overly similar to others, shall be referred to

UCAS if their application was originally submitted through that service. The University reserves the right to cancel an application and withdraw any offer if it is found that the application contains false, plagiarised, or misleading information.

10. The Admissions Process

Applications are received from UCAS in the period from early September to the UCAS submission deadlines in October (for BDS) and January (for BSc ODHS). We do not normally consider applications which have been submitted to UCAS after the submission deadlines. The selection process involves three stages: shortlisting, interview of shortlisted candidates, and making offers.

10.1 Shortlisting

For both BDS and BSc ODHS, applications are assessed initially to check the acceptability of qualifications. Predicted or achieved grades are required, with the exception of access courses for BSc ODHS only, for which predicted grades are preferred but not essential. Applications fulfilling the academic requirements will be passed to the next stage of the process. Academic entry information can be found at:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/a206> and
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/a207>

Resit qualifications: We do not normally accept resit grades where grades have been obtained in different examination years except in exceptional circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.

We do not consider applications from candidates who have previously commenced a dental degree at another institution and have failed to progress for any reason.

Once the academic screening criteria have been met, academic achievement is not considered further in subsequent parts of the application process, i.e., additional A levels or A* results do not give further advantage.

For applications to the BDS course which meet the academic threshold, scores from the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) will then be used to determine which applicants are selected for interview (see section 11, UCAT).

For applications to the BSc ODHS course which meet the academic threshold, applications will then be allocated scores based achieved/predicted grades, evidence of interest in, motivation towards, and commitment to a career in dental therapy and evidence of transferable skills in working with people.

For all applications, we usually look for a minimum of ten days of *relevant* work experience. This must be appropriate for the course applied to and selectors will usually look for evidence of work experience within dentistry, evidence of teamwork and leadership, personal achievements, paid or voluntary work and/or mentoring activities. We acknowledge that securing dental work experience may prove challenging for some applicants. We **strongly** suggest that applicants with little dental work experience make it clear in their application how they have gained insight into a career in dentistry. Finally, the referee's statement is read to identify any negative comments.

Successful applicants at the shortlisting stage are then offered an interview, and those who are not offered an interview are unsuccessful in that round of admission. Candidates who have been unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage will normally be informed by March.

10.2 Interview

The interview is a semi-structured panel interview, and its purpose is to determine which candidates most strongly demonstrate the aptitude, motivation, and personal qualities to succeed as a student at Newcastle School of Dental Sciences and as a future dental professional.

Interviews are usually conducted between December and March and will take place online via Zoom. Interview times will be released online for candidates to select. We advise booking early to ensure availability of a suitable slot.

The interview will be conducted by two admissions selectors from the School of Dental Sciences and will last approximately 20 minutes. At the conclusion of the interview each selector will independently grade the candidate's performance based on predetermined criteria across 6 domains:

- Preparation and motivation for dental school
- Effective learning skills
- Team working
- Personal qualities and resilience
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Empathy, sensitivity, integrity, and professionalism

Applicants' performance at interview is the sole basis on which selectors assign interview scores; they will not have information about predicted/achieved grades or UCAT scores. Selectors will not convey interview scores to candidates at the time of the interview or at any time thereafter. Official photographic identification will be checked at the time of the interview (e.g., passport, driving license, or alternative official document).

10.3 Making Offers

Interview scores will then be used as the sole basis on which the decision to offer of a place on the course is made. To ensure equity, offers will be made only once **all** interviews have been completed. The official offer will be sent via UCAS. All applicants will normally be contacted by the end of April, and all offers/or unsuccessful outcomes will be made by the UCAT offer deadline. A small number of offers may be made after the UCAT deadline via UCAS Extra.

For applicants holding an offer, all qualification results must be confirmed and received by the School of Dental Sciences by the date of publication of examination results by the Joint Council for Qualifications ("A Level results day"). Applicants who are appealing any qualification result must inform the University as soon as possible to discuss the impact of their appeal on entry to the programme. If an applicant requests a re-mark of their qualification and achieves the offer grades before 31 August, we will endeavour to admit them to

the relevant programme in the academic year for which they applied. This is subject to places being available on the course, and where this is not possible, a deferred place will be offered for entry the following academic year.

11. University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)

All applicants to BDS (not BSc ODHS) are required to complete the UCAT. UCAT scores are only valid for the year in which they are achieved and cannot be used in subsequent years (except for the internal transfer to BDS). More information is available at <https://www.ucat.ac.uk/>. UCAT scores are one of the main criteria used for shortlisting. We do not have an absolute UCAT score below which we will not accept applications, however, applicants will be ranked on UCAT score, and once the maximum number of interviews it is possible to conduct has been reached, then no more interviews will be offered. The UCAT score below which interviews are not offered differs between each admissions cycle as it is dependent on the scores applicants achieve in each cycle. The UCAT score required may vary depending on the route of entry, e.g., PARTNERS or Widening Participation applications.

Applicants who have particular needs to allow them to sit the UCAT (e.g., extra time, rest breaks) must arrange this with UCAT. Further information can be found on the UCAT website <https://www.ucat.ac.uk/register/access-arrangements/>. The University requires copies of confirmation of eligibility from UCAT to sit an extended version of the UCAT test (e.g., UCATSEN) and we may ask for copies of the original evidence submitted to UCAT to confirm eligibility.

Applicants who live in a country without a UCAT test centre are expected to travel to their nearest test centre. The only acceptable reason for not sitting the UCAT test is if the UCAT test centre is unable to accommodate an applicant's particular needs or disabilities. **UCAT exempt applicants must send the appropriate evidence to support the UCAT exemption to the University by 30th November.** UCAT testing is offered over a period of several months. Applicants should sit the test at the earliest opportunity as medical exemptions

will not be accepted for short term health problems. If candidates are unable to rebook their test, the University will expect evidence to show the timeline of their bookings to UCAT and confirmation that there are no test slots available, in addition to the supporting medical evidence.

The evidence you provide to support your exemption will be considered by the University and a final decision made on whether an interview will be offered.

Failure to provide the University with the appropriate supporting evidence for the UCAT exemption by 30th November will result in the application being unsuccessful.

12. Widening Participation

12.1 PARTNERS Programme

Eligible applicants will be considered through the Newcastle University PARTNERS Programme. For further information, please visit the website at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/partners/> or email: PARTNERS@ncl.ac.uk. PARTNERS applicants wishing to apply for deferred entry must complete the Summer School in the year of their original application. All applicants must have valid UCAT scores, see section 11.

12.2 Realising Opportunities programme

Eligible applicants wishing to be considered for the programme through the Realising Opportunities route of entry must be participating in the national Realising Opportunities programme. For further information, please visit: <https://www.realisingopportunities.ac.uk/>. All applicants must have valid UCAT scores, see section 11.

13. Internal Transfers to BDS

Students in Stage 1 of the BSc in Biomedical Sciences (BMS) and BSc in ODHS programmes offered by the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Newcastle University may apply to transfer to Stage 1 of the BDS programme in the subsequent academic year. There are a maximum of two places available per year and students wishing to apply must be in good academic standing.

BSc BMS students must achieve a minimum average Stage 1 mark of 75% with individual module grades of above 65%, and BSc ODHS students must achieve an overall merit grade for the academic component of the Stage 1 examination.

Applications for this scheme are highly competitive and we recommend that students do not enrol on BSc BMS or BSc ODHS programmes with the sole intention of applying for the transfer to dentistry as most students are unsuccessful. Summative and formative assessment grades achieved in the first term at University will be used to determine which students are offered an interview. For BSc ODHS applicants this includes applicants' performance in the *formative* December/January assessment in Stage 1 BSc ODHS (A207). For students with acceptable academic performance, applications will be considered, and the most highly ranked applications will be interviewed. All students applying through this route are required to provide UCAT scores achieved within 2 years of commencing their BSc BMS or ODHS programme on application to the BDS transfer scheme (see section 11). A suitable chemistry qualification is also required for entry to the BDS (A206) programme.

14. Deferred Entry

We consider applications from candidates who wish to defer entry by one year provided they plan to use their time constructively. Deferral should be requested at the time of application, and any subsequent deferral requests (e.g., after interview or offer) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

15. Transfers

We do not normally consider students wishing to transfer from another dental school except in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, a request from the student's existing Head of School will be considered. Students would be expected to apply to Stage 1 entry, via UCAS, provided they have not previously been considered and declined by Newcastle School of Dental Sciences. Applicants should initially contact the University with supporting evidence explaining why they wish to leave or have left their previous dental degree programme. The circumstances will be considered, and a decision made on whether an application would be considered. Requests from dental students who have been required to withdraw from other dental schools due to failure to progress will not be considered.

16. English Language Requirement

All applicants who are required to provide an English Language qualification must have achieved/achieve a minimum score of 7 in each domain (IELTS) or equivalent qualification. For further information see the Newcastle University web site: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/language/#overview>

17. Scholarships

A range of scholarships are available from Newcastle University. For further information see our web sites: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/fees-funding/scholarships-bursaries/> and <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/dental/study/scholarships/>

NHS bursaries are available to eligible English domiciled students, see the NHS Business Services Authority web site for further information <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-bursary-students>.

18. Late Applications and Clearing

Late applications are not normally considered. Applicants eligible for Clearing, UCAS Extra, or Adjustment may be considered by the Director of Admissions should vacancies arise late in the admissions cycle. These applicants will require an interview and valid UCAT score and will usually be drawn from those applicants who have already been interviewed.

19. Extenuating Circumstances

Applicants with circumstances affecting their preparation for or performance in an examination must inform their school/ college/ university at the earliest opportunity. The applicant's school/college/ university should liaise with the relevant examination board to inform them of the extenuating circumstances. The examination board will make a decision as to the validity of the extenuating circumstances and whether allowances should be made. The Dental School **will not** make any additional adjustments/ allowances to achieved exam results.

We are unable to consider school management issues as sufficient extenuating circumstances. (Examples of school management issues we will **not** consider: difficulties with school staffing; school providing incorrect information to their student; school's failure to inform relevant exam boards of student illness, family issues, or any prolonged issue of concern.)

Applicants with other extenuating circumstances will be considered on an individual basis by the admissions team. All correspondence will be treated confidentially, and applicants are encouraged to inform us of extenuating circumstances as early as possible, as prior knowledge ensures the correct level of support and advice. Extenuating circumstances may be considered to enable an applicant to apply or reapply with resit A level grades. Extenuating circumstances **will not** be accepted to enable an applicant to be considered without the relevant academic entry qualifications.

If an applicant has extenuating circumstances which they feel may impact on their interview performance, they must inform the Dental School before the interview. Attendance for interview is taken as an indication that a candidate is fit to be interviewed. We will not accept any retrospective information regarding pre-existing extenuating circumstances.

20. Feedback

We do not routinely offer individualised feedback.

21. Age

Due to Enhanced DBS and/or NHS regulations it may not be possible to consider applications from applicants under the age of 17 at the point of entry.

22. Appeals and Complaints

Applicants wishing to make a complaint about admissions to the School of Dental Sciences or appeal a decision may obtain a copy of the Undergraduate Admissions Complaints and Appeals Procedure by contacting: Telephone: 0191 208 3333, or online: www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries