

ORTHODONTIC THERAPIST

Details of standard

Occupation summary

This occupation is found in Dentistry.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to become a registered professional who fits, adjusts and removes braces to patient's teeth, working to the prescription of an orthodontist or dentist competent in orthodontics. They provide holistic advice on maintaining oral and general health for patients who are undergoing orthodontic treatment.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with patients of all ages who present with dental malocclusions (problems with the development, alignment and the way teeth fit together), the wider orthodontic and dental team, parents, guardians and carers.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for undertaking reversible orthodontic procedures, which include bonding brackets on the teeth, fitting and changing wires and accessories that connect to the brackets, fitting removable appliances and retainers, following an appropriate prescription. They will respond appropriately to a treatment plan from the orthodontist, gaining valid consent from the patient and guardian, and giving appropriate advice. They will be able to make appliances safe in the absence of the dentist and respond appropriately to emergencies.

The scope of practice for orthodontic therapists is set out by the General Dental Council who regulate this occupation. Further details of the regulatory requirements can be found in the following General Dental Councils documents: 'Preparing for Practice,' 'Standards for Education' and 'Standards for the Dental Team'.

Orthodontic Therapists work as part of wider dental team that includes dentists or orthodontists, dental nurses, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental technicians, clinical dental technicians, practice managers, administrators and laboratory staff. Depending on the practice they work in, Orthodontic Therapists may supervise colleagues, trainees or students. The dentist or orthodontist prescribes the treatments that an Orthodontic Therapist will carry out, including taking impressions, placing fixed brackets and arch wires on teeth, fitting tooth separators, undertaking radiographs and occlusal bite registration.

During the apprenticeship apprentices must be supervised by a suitably trained orthodontist on the specialist list maintained by the General Dental Council.

They must be a Registered General Dental Council dental nurse, dental hygienist, dental therapist or dental technician prior to commencing this apprenticeship

Typical job titles include:

Orthodontic Therapist

Entry requirements

Must be registered on the General Dental Council Register as a registered dental nurse, dental hygienist, dental therapist or dental technician. Employers usually require applicants to have a period of clinical post-qualification experience (usually at least 2 years).

Occupation duties

Duty

KSBs

Duty 1 Work to current best practice for orthodontic therapy and patient care

K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 K6 K7

S1

B1 B2

Duty 2 Work safely and independently in a patient's mouth in accordance with the orthodontist's prescription

K8 K9 K10 K11 K12

S2 S3 S4 S5 S6 S7

B1 B2

Duty 3 Use appropriate communication at all times and through all media

K13 K14 K15 K16 K17 K18 K19 K20

S8 S9 S10 S11

B1 B2

Duty 4 Involve patients, parents and guardians in the patient's care and decision making

K15 K21

S12 S13 S14

B1 B2

Duty 5 Take impressions or scans of the teeth

K22

S15 S16

B1 B2

Duty 6 Identify, select and use equipment, instruments and materials

K23

S7 S17

B1 B2

Duty 7 Clean and prepare tooth surfaces

K24 K25 K26

S18

B1 B2

Duty 8 Fit orthodontic appliances	K25 K27 S15 S19 S20 B1 B2
Duty 9 Make a patient's orthodontic appliance safe in the absence of the orthodontist	K28 S21 S22 B1 B2
Duty 10 Change or repair archwires inside a patient's mouth	K29 S23 B1 B2
Duty 11 Remove fixed appliances, orthodontic adhesives and cement	K25 K30 S24 B1 B2
Duty 12 Provide holistic advice on maintaining oral and general health	K31 K32 K33 K34 K35 K36 S25 S26 S27 B1 B2
Duty 13 Seek advice and receive referrals made by other healthcare professionals	K37 K38 K39 S28 S29 S30 B1 B2
Duty 14 Recognise and deal with medical emergencies	K40 K41 S31 B1 B2
Duty 15 Be a reflective practitioner within the wider dental team	K3 K17 K42 K43 K44 K45 K46 K47 S30 S32 S33 S34 B1 B2

KSBs

Knowledge

- K1:** The General Dental Council scope of practice, your role as an orthodontic therapist and that of others in the dental team, local clinical guidelines and policies
- K2:** The principles of an evidence-based approach to learning, clinical and professional practice
- K3:** Ways to maintain your professional knowledge and competence
- K4:** The principles of clinical decision making and your role in the decision-making process
- K5:** What is meant by patient-centred care, the importance of safeguarding and your duty of care, the signs of abuse or neglect including local and national systems and ways to raise concerns where appropriate
- K6:** The scientific principles of medical ionizing radiation and statutory regulations
- K7:** Current health and safety policy legislation related to your role as an orthodontic therapist
- K8:** The range of contemporary orthodontic treatment options, their impact, outcomes, limitations and risks
- K9:** The need for an accurate and current patient history, the importance of each component of the patient assessment process and the needs of different patient groups including children, adults, older people or those with special care requirements throughout the patient care process
- K10:** The importance of an orthodontist's s prescription
- K11:** The cause of malocclusion and its possible impact of a poor bite or malpositioned teeth on medical, psychological and sociological aspects of health.
- K12:** The potential routes of transmission of infectious agents in dental practice, mechanisms for the prevention of infection, the scientific principles of decontamination and disinfection and their relevance to health and safety
- K13:** A range of communication methods, including verbal and non-verbal, listening skills and be aware of the barriers to communication
- K14:** The importance of maintaining confidentiality and protecting all data relating to patients and their treatment
- K15:** The need to explain and check patients' and guardians' understanding of treatments, options, costs and informed consent
- K16:** How to manage anxiety or challenging behaviour including relevant behavioural change techniques
- K17:** How to manage lines of communication within your team or with wider healthcare professions
- K18:** The principles of information governance
- K19:** The use of a range of communication methods and technologies and their appropriate application in support of clinical practice
- K20:** The importance of and the need to maintain accurate and current records in accordance with legal and statutory requirements and best practice

K21: The need to treat all patients equally, with respect and dignity, appreciating the importance of patient and guardian choice

K22: Dental, craniofacial anatomy and physiology relevant to orthodontic therapy, the range of normal human structures and functions and the principles that derive from the biomedical, behavioral and materials sciences as they apply to the practice of orthodontic therapy

K23: A range of orthodontic equipment, instruments, materials and appliances such as braces, retainers, headgear, face bows, pliers, archwires, brackets, bands, cements and adhesives including their uses and limitations

K24: The scientific principles underpinning the use of biomaterials and their limitations with emphasis on those used in dentistry

K25: Different types of adhesives and cement, when to use them and how to apply or remove them from teeth

K26: Types of instruments for cleaning and preparing tooth surfaces

K27: A range of orthodontic appliances such as fixed and removable braces and retainers, their use and ways to fit them

K28: Problems associated with orthodontic appliances, how to recognise them and the appropriate action to take

K29: How archwires that fit into appliances affect the patient's mouth, teeth and overall wellbeing and when to change or repair them

K30: When and why appliances should be removed in accordance with the prescription

K31: The cause of oral disease in relation to dental decay and gum disease and basic facial structure formation with a focus on abnormalities and acute conditions that may arise

K32: The significance of changes in patients reported oral health

K33: A range of common oral health problems and the need for appropriate follow-up care

K34: The principles of preventive care and the importance of providing patients with comprehensive and accurate preventive education and instruction

K35: The role of health promotion, how health promotion strategies are implemented including demographic and social trends and the principles of planning oral health care for communities to meet needs and demands

K36: Ways to encourage self-care and motivation, the health risks of poor diet, substance misuse and substances such as tobacco and alcohol on oral and general health

K37: The need to monitor and review treatment outcomes including when to seek advice

K38: The referral process, the management and organisation of local referral networks

K39: The importance of an appropriate and timely referral

K40: The types of medical emergencies that may occur and ways to deal with them

K41: The risks around the clinical environment and manage these in a safe and efficient manner complying with current best practice guidelines

K42: Your own role in relation to the rest of the dental team and to any trainees or students you may supervise including when to escalate and report

K43: The importance of appraisal, training and ongoing review including ways to give and receive feedback

K44: The importance of maintaining your own network of dental professionals, specialists and other stakeholders involved in the care and support of patients

K45: The wider dental and healthcare system you work in

K46: A range of reflective models and how to use them in your own practice and in maintaining your own professional development portfolio

K47: The importance of quality and ways to encourage continual improvement

Skills

S1: Adhere to legal and ethical responsibilities in line with General Dental Council requirements, taking responsibility for the integrity of own actions and completed work recognising the limits of your competence and experience

S2: Identify normal and abnormal facial growth, physical, mental and dental development

S3: Take a patient medical and social history, checking the patient's level of experience and expectations

S4: Carry out screening for the orthodontic need for treatment either under the direction of an orthodontist or direct to patients

S5: Recognise the early stages of chronic problems with the soft tissues of the mouth

S6: Recognise urgent care problems related to orthodontic treatment and take appropriate action in line with their scope of practice

S7: Implement and perform effective decontamination and infection control procedures

S8: Communicate appropriately, effectively and sensitively

S9: Maintain patient confidentiality at all times

S10: Assess and manage patient anxiety, discomfort or challenging behaviour through effective communication, reassurance and relevant behavioural techniques

S11: Create, update and store contemporaneous patient records

S12: Make effective decisions regarding the care of patients in line with the orthodontist's treatment plan and in partnership with the patient and their parent/guardian

S13: Put patients' interests first and act to protect them

S14: Respect patients' dignity and choices obtaining and documenting valid consent for all treatments and personal care delivery

S15: Take impressions or scans of patient's teeth as prescribed by the referring practitioner

S16: Use impressions or scans of the teeth to produce study models

- S17:** Select and use the correct orthodontic equipment, instruments and materials to ensure appropriate and safe orthodontic care of the patient
- S18:** Clean and prepare tooth surfaces ready for orthodontic treatment
- S19:** Undertake a basic orthodontic assessment of a patient's mouth
- S20:** Fit the brackets and wires which make up braces in accordance with the prescription
- S21:** Fit, adjust, remove or repair a range of orthodontic appliances that the patient may wear as prescribed by the orthodontist. In the absence of a prescription, be able to make safe removable and fixed appliance components
- S22:** Make the appliance safe and ensure continuing care is provided as soon as possible
- S23:** Insert, ligate, remove, trim or repair archwires from appliances under prescription
- S24:** Remove the brackets and wires which make up appliances and the cement from the tooth surface that has held the bracket to the tooth safely and as prescribed, without causing damage to the tooth surface
- S25:** Contribute to relevant tests and diagnostic procedures
- S26:** Apply evidence-based oral health advice including toothbrushing, interdental cleaning, care of braces and removable orthodontic appliances, diet and hydration advice
- S27:** Encourage and support self-care and motivation providing appropriate advice
- S28:** Recognise and manage patients with acute oral conditions and know the referral process
- S29:** Identify where patients' needs may differ from the treatment plan or prescription and direct patients for advice where appropriate
- S30:** Work with colleagues in a way that is in the patients' best interests
- S31:** Recognise and manage medical emergencies
- S32:** Take part in appraisal and ongoing review
- S33:** Co-operate with members of the wider dental or healthcare team, taking responsibility for establishing personal networks
- S34:** Reflect on own practice, recognising how reflection can be used to continually improve the quality of patient care and professional development

Behaviors

- B1:** Act in a manner consistent with the GDC standards for the dental team which include communication, professionalism, teamwork and clinical skills
- B2:** Act in a non-discriminatory manner respecting diversity and upholding the rights, dignity and autonomy of others

Qualifications

English & Maths

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

Additional details

Occupational Level:

4

Duration (months):

13

Review

Version log

VERSION	DATE UPDATED	CHANGE	PREVIOUS VERSION
1	22/05/2019	Standard published	Not available