



COUNCIL FOR THE PROFESSIONS  
COMPLEMENTARY TO MEDICINE

Benchmarking document

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Dental Hygiene

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**The Council for the Professions Complementary to Medicine is issuing this Benchmarking Document for Dental Hygiene in the performance of its functions as defined by Article 27 of the Health Care Professions Act, Chapter 464 of the Laws of Malta and in terms of Article 28 Health Care Professions Act, Chapter 464 of the Laws of Malta and Subsidiary Legislation 454.16 Professions Complimentary to Medicine (Licence to Practice) Regulations.**

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## **Introduction**

This document outlines the standard of education and language proficiency for dental hygienists as regulated by the Council for the Professions Complimentary to Medicine (CPCM) in Malta. Through this document the CPCM is setting the minimum requirements for dental hygienists in Malta to be registered with the council.

This benchmarking document has been adopted by the CPCM to evaluate and assess applications to be registered as dental hygienists and practice within the jurisdiction of Malta. They also help the CPCM on how to address substantive differences from these standards.

## **Description and Scope of Practice**

### **Occupational Description**

Dental hygienists are registered dental professionals who help clients maintain their oral health by preventing and treating periodontal disease and promoting good oral health practice. They carry out treatment direct to patients or under guidance or prescription from a dentist.

The Dental Hygienist is also an essential member of the Dental Health Team in general practices, the Community Dental Services and Hospital Services. The services of the Dental Hygienist are utilised in programmes for research, professional education, public health, industrial and institutional care.

## **Scope of Practice**

Dental hygienists are registered dental professionals who help clients maintain their oral health by preventing and treating periodontal disease and promoting good oral health practice. They carry out treatment direct to patients or under guidance or prescription from a dentist. The Dental Hygienist is also an essential member of the Dental Health Team in general practices, the Community Dental Services and Hospital Services. The services of the Dental Hygienist are utilised in programmes for research, professional education, public health, industrial and institutional care.

A detailed scope of practice can be found through the following link:

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/regcounc/cpcm/Documents/copdentalhygiene.pdf>

## **Level of Qualification**

The CPCM considers applications from applicants who have successfully completed a Bachelor's degree course at MQF Level 6 in Dental Hygiene of at least 3 years duration at an approved educational institution. The course should be of a minimum of 180 ECTS credits or equivalent study hours in theory and 1010 hours of supervised clinical practice.

The program of study should be recognised by the Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre (MQRIC) within the National Commission for Further and Higher Education in Malta (NCFHE) at MQF/EQF (Malta / European Qualification Framework) at level 6.

### **The applicant needs to:**

- Provide a detailed transcript of theoretical and practical training and studies in hours associated with the Dental Hygiene Qualification. This must be endorsed in the original format by the Institution's Head / Registrar of the University / College. If the original transcript is not in English, then an authenticated translation in English must also be submitted;
- Provide the course description, including study units' details and assessment weightings; and
- Provide evidence that the applicant has carried out a minimum of 1010 hours of supervised clinical practice.

### **Language Proficiency**

The CPCM requires those applicants who wish to enter the Dental Hygiene register, to provide proof of language proficiency as defined in Annex A.

### **Evaluation of Application**

**On evaluation of the application the Council may choose to do one of the following:**

- Grant registration in the dental hygiene register;
- Ask for further clarification when required;
- Ask the applicant to sit for an interview;
- Recommend that the applicant undertakes a period of training and or supervised clinical practice as directed by the Council in area/s where shortcomings in the training of the applicant were noticed;
- Ask the applicant to sit for a written and / or clinical examination/s; and
- Reject the application if the qualification is not adequate and in line with is benchmark.

## **Minimum Curriculum Requirements**

This standard ensures that the curriculum meets the standards for the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes by CPCM and therefore the applicant would be considered fit to practise as a dental hygienist in Malta.

**The main competencies of the Bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene or equivalent are:**

### **Minimum learning outcomes**

The programme of study followed should enable the dental hygienist to:

- Describe the theories of oral and general health and disease.
- Demonstrate the importance of public health and oral health education.
- Safeguard patients' legal and ethical rights in a clinical and community-based setting, using legal and ethically acceptable policies.
- Ensure health and safety precautions of patients under their care in clinical settings using clinically acceptable policies.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills by evaluating current research literature using evidence-based methodology.
- Perform and educate patients on basic and advanced oral prophylaxis techniques in clinical and/or community-based settings.
- Report basic clinical data of patients in treatment records by using clinically acceptable indices.
- Conduct clinical auditing of patient care, and improve the quality of care of patients, using clinically acceptable policies.
- Analyse basic clinical data and interpret and explain clinical records during practical sessions and examinations.

## **Main subjects covered**

- Preventive Dentistry and Dental Public Health
- Evidence Based Dentistry
- Dental Hygiene Theory
- Anatomy and Physiology of the Oral Cavity
- Microbiology and Immunology
- Foundations of Biochemistry
- Foundations of Physiology for Dental Hygienists
- Leadership and Communications Skills
- Head and Neck Anatomy
- Health and Safety, Infection Control and Medical Emergencies in the Dental Practice
- Smoking Cessation
- Clinical Medical Sciences
- Dental Specialties
- Pathology
- Special Care Dentistry and Gerontology
- Research Methods in Dentistry
- Psychiatry, Psychology and Sociology for Dental Hygienists
- Clinical Periodontology
- Jurisprudence and Ethics for Dental Hygienists
- Biostatistics and Health Informatics
- Clinical Governance and Audit

## **Practice and Training**

- Supervised clinical hours 1010

Clinical hours must be supported by documentary evidence in the form of either a student portfolio or a logbook duly signed by a supervisor. These should include the practical sessions undertaken showing the key defined learning objectives.

For those applicants that the Council recommends that prior to registration needs to carry out training and or clinical practice, this practice must be carried out under the direct supervision of a CPCM registered Dental Hygienist and the logbook duly signed.

Other CPCM documents to be considered in conjunction with this Benchmarking Document:

1. Codes of Professional and Ethical Conduct

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/regcounc/cpcm/Documents/Codes%20of%20Professional%20and%20Ethical%20Conduct%20-%20March%202019.pdf>

2. Code of Practice (Dental Hygiene)

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/regcounc/cpcm/Documents/Dental%20Hygiene%20Code%20of%20Practice.pdf>

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This document has been prepared by the CPCM Dental Hygiene Subcommittee committee in consultation with the Faculty of Dental Surgery, University of Malta – March 2020

## ANNEXE A

### **Language Proficiency Requirements by The Council for The Professions Complementary to Medicine**

The Council for the Professions Complementary to Medicine requires applicants to meet the Council's level of Proficiency in the English or the Maltese Language.

All professionals seeking registration are requested to present either one of the following:

1. A Maltese language certificate; **OR**
  - (i) An Ordinary Level MATSEC certificate (MQF level 3); OR  
<https://myexams.gov.mt/matsec-examinations/>
  - (ii) An Advanced/Intermediate Level MATSEC certificate (MQF level 4); OR  
<https://myexams.gov.mt/matsec-examinations/>
  - (iii) A Medical Maltese Proficiency Certificate.  
<https://www.um.edu.mt/arts/malti/korsijiet/medicalmaltesecourse>
2. The applicant can provide evidence that his/her professional qualification(s) (on the basis of which he/she is applying for registration) was/were acquired through the medium of English or Maltese and that practice placements in that/those qualification(s) were undertaken and supervised through the medium of English or Maltese; **OR**

3. The applicant can provide evidence that s/he has **lived in and practised** his/her profession through the medium of English or Maltese in a country that has English or Maltese recognised as the official language of that country for a period of **not less than 2 years in the past five-year period; OR**
4. Any other proof of English or Maltese language Proficiency.

Additionally, should the applicant choose to opt for other forms of proving language proficiency, the applicant can opt for either one of the following Secure English Language Tests.

Should the applicant opt for this, the below is the list of Examining Boards recognized by the Council and the minimum required standards accepted by the Council in terms of the table below (or equivalent);

<b>Examining Board</b>	<b>TOEFL Internet-Based (iBT)</b>	<b>IELTS (Academic)</b>	<b>Cambridge</b>	<b>Occupational English Test (OET)</b>
<b>Required Level</b>	95	6.5	Advanced Certificate	B
<b>Remarks</b>	A writing score of at least 24 is required.	Required with a minimum of 6.0 in all elements.	A pass at a grade C or better is required.	A grade B or better is required in all components.

Any other Secure English Language Tests which are equivalent to those mentioned in the table above will also be considered.