

New degree for Primary Dental Care

The University of Kent Dentistry Division has launched the BSc (Hons) in Primary Dental Care – a flexible study programme for Dental Care Professionals. *BDNJ* looks at the programme and details how it will be set out...

THE University of Kent is delighted to announce the BSc (Hons) in Primary Dental Care. This exciting and flexible programme of study for Dental Care Professionals (DCP): dental nurses, orthodontic therapists, dental hygienists, dental therapists, dental technicians and clinical dental technicians, who are both professionally qualified and registered with the General Dental Council (GDC).

Innovation in DCP learning

This innovative new programme has been designed by the Division of Dentistry at the University of Kent; in response to the Kent, Surrey and Sussex (KSS) Deanery's drive for a Bachelors level qualification which formalises Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for DCPs. The programme seeks to provide access for all DCP professionals to develop and achieve through a Higher Education (HE) route.

The academic programme will make available an Honours Level Programme in Primary Dental Care. It widens participation and offers vocational progression, in university teaching activity to professionally qualified undergraduate Dental Care Professionals (DCPs) and access for professionally qualified DCPs to progress on a Graduate Level programme of study.

The programme's modular design is a reflection of the Department of Health's facilitative aspiration for all future DCP training, in an attempt to encourage career progression, skills development and achievement for those maintaining a professional role within dental sector employment.

UK first

The BSc in Primary Dental Care is the first BSc programme for professionally qualified DCPs in the UK, and announces the strength of the University of Kent's position with regards to future developments in dental continuing professional education and development.

In providing access for DCPs, the programme provides the University of Kent with an opportunity to significantly contribute to the Department of Health's aspiration to advance evidence-based oral health promotion and its wider dissemination.

University of Kent Division of Dentistry

The Division of Dentistry aims to support dental professionals to provide the highest quality of care for their patients. The Division provides courses for the whole dental team, which enable career development, encourage skill-mix and enhance clinical and non-clinical skills and competencies.

The Division of Dentistry is the latest group of health professionals to join the University of Kent's well established and proactive Centre for Work and Learning, based at the University of Kent's new Medway Campus. Only 45 minutes away from London, the Medway campus is located next to Chatham's Historical Dockyard.

Professional leadership

The University of Kent is delighted to be leading the way for DCP academic progression. Through the development of a combination of generic academic and research skills, along with contemporary extended professional skills and leadership, successful participants will exemplify a dental care professional who is academically able and professionally credible. Such DCPs will be capable of contributing to the highest standards of patient care as an equal member of the dental team at local and national levels, both now and in the future.

Supportive response

The University of Kent's BSc (Hons) in Primary Dental Care has, understandably, received a tremendously supportive response from the national DCP representative bodies and many other dental educational institutions.

The programme delivery is intended to reflect the business needs of the dental profession it serves. The Division of Dentistry understands the demands placed on people working within dentistry, who may be apprehensive about returning to study, particularly if they have not studied for some time, as well as being concerned about managing and combining study and a busy lifestyle, offering support accordingly.

Commitment to learning

Each stage of the BSc is 1,200 hours of learning. The attended taught sessions are approximately 10 per cent of the total learning hours, delivered via an induction week and a number of weekends (Friday - Sunday) at the University of Kent Medway Campus in Chatham. Learning will be facilitated through interactive lectures, seminars and tutorials encouraging the sharing of information and best working practices through participation in peer discussion. The sessions will be led by tutors with specialist expertise and those actively working in the field of dentistry.

Work-based learning

The remaining hours of learning will be delivered through a blend of work based learning, personal reflection and self study. The work based learning element involves study based on the student's role within the workplace. Students will have the opportunity to assess the nature of their contribu-

Programme Outline

BSc (Hons) in Primary Dental Care

Stage 1

- Lifelong Learning and the Academic DCP
- Critical Appraisal of Dental Health Related Publications
- Introduction to Primary Dental Care in a Social Context
- Development of Core Skills Through Audit

Stage 2

- Oral Health in a Social Context
- Communication
- Mentorship
- Introduction to Research

Plus a choice of optional modules to include: Radiography; Diet and Nutrition; Health Promotion; Law, Ethics and Governance; Extended clinical skills

Stage 3

- Teamwork and Leadership
- DCP in an International Context
- Dissertation Project

tion within the workplace using personal journals and professional peer group interaction. They will apply skills and knowledge to enhance their professional contribution and ultimate ability to raise standards of professional practice within their workplace setting.

Assessment of learning

Students will maintain a Personal Development Portfolio and an electronic reflective journal throughout which will be assessed and credited at each stage. Students will demonstrate acquisition of the module learning outcomes through assignments and evidence portfolios, based on learning and investigation within a PDC work based setting which is underpinned by theoretic perspective. In addition to the specific dental themed subjects the students will have integrated generic study skills necessary to introduce them to study standards within an academic environment.

Attendance

Each year will commence with a tutored induction week at the Medway campus. The initial week is followed by attended taught weekends Fri-Sun (inclusive). During Stage One this weekend attendance is one weekend per module plus a final weekend (this may be a final week at Level 2 and 3). Attendance on the taught sessions is a requirement for successful completion at each stage.

The first cohort of approximately 15 students will commence the programme in September, 2008. Further details can be obtained from: 0800 975 3777 or Information@kent.ac.uk.