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Reed, Debbie (2010) *New degree course for Dental Care Professionals(DCPs). Team in Practice*, 7 (1). pp. 4-5. ISSN 1741-9379.

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TEAM IN PRACTICE

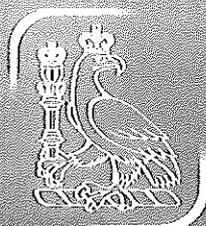
Volume 7 Issue 1 January 2010

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- New Editor of *Team in Practice* appointed
- Book review
- Events calendar

Team in Practice

Inside this issue:

- Domiciliary dental care – who can do it and how
- Professionalism and the GDC: how to lose your registration
- Prison dentistry: testimonial from a dental therapist
- New BSc course for DCPs at the University of Kent



Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)
The Royal College of Surgeons of England

Team in Practice



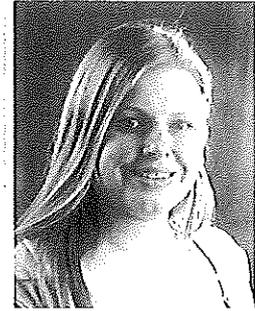
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Registered Charity No. 212808



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New degree course for DCPs

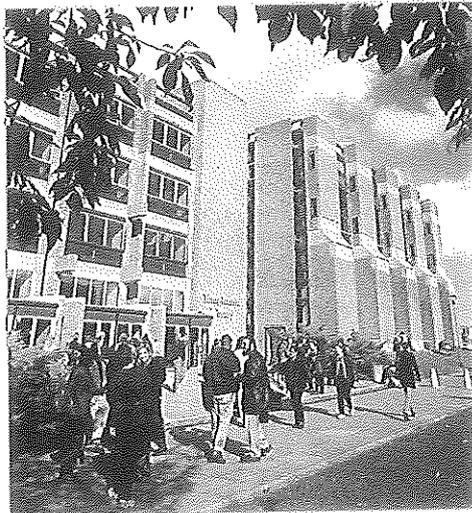
Debbie Reed

In 2008 the University of Kent launched a groundbreaking new honours degree in primary dental care, aimed at dental care professionals (DCPs). Programme director Debbie Reed explains more about what the course involves and the opportunities it affords.

The University of Kent's BSc in Primary Dental Care aims to enhance the quality of patient care through the development of generic personal and professional skills, embracing and promoting the principles supporting whole team dentistry; leadership, inter-professional and collaborative working, within the bounds of ethical frameworks and the team members' professional capabilities. The BSc provides DCPs with the research skills which promote critical evaluation of evidence with regards to ethics, methodology, feasibility, implementation and outcomes. The programme aims to develop and broaden professional knowledge as well as general and specific skills and attitudes, and has been specifically designed with the flexibility to meet the needs of professionally qualified practising DCPs.

The work-based learning element involves study based on the student's role within the workplace. Students have the opportunity to assess the nature of their professional contribution via personal journals and professional peer group discussions, and apply skills and knowledge to enhance their abilities and raise standards of professional practice. Students are required to undertake workplace-based learning and investigation, underpinned with taught theory, and to

demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes through assignments and evidence portfolios. The flexible programme delivery means that students can participate for between three years' full-time study, six years part-time, or a combination. This design allows DCPs to develop their abilities through



higher education whilst maintaining their professional role.

To encourage inclusion and wider participation, candidates who have already received prior education (such as those who have already completed the FGDP(UK)'s Key Skills assessment) can make an application under the University's accredited prior experiential and certificated learning (APECL)

criteria. If the application is successful, they can count the work that they have already completed towards their degree. The Division of Dentistry also has over £15,000 available in scholarship funds.

Flexible learning

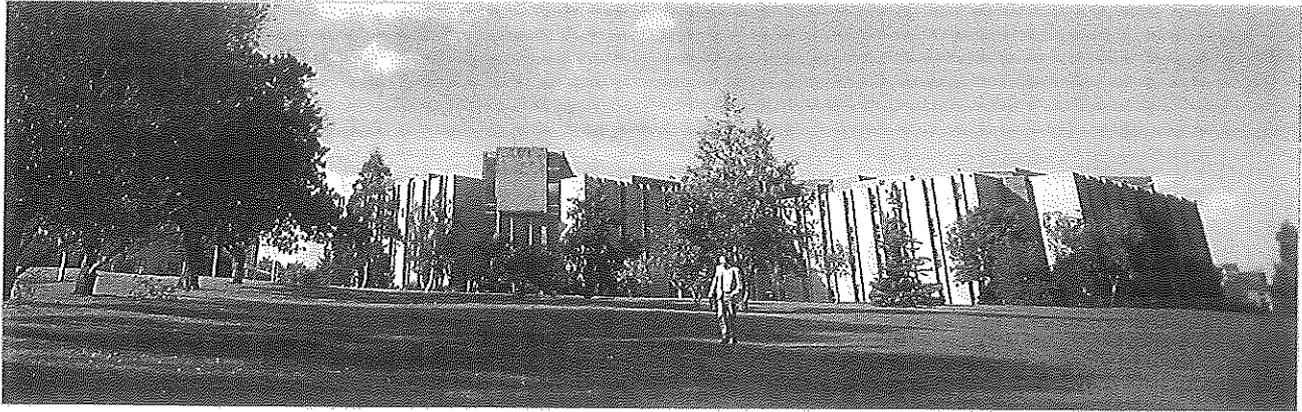
The overall programme is made up of three stages at Higher Education Certificate, Diploma and Honours level, each consisting of 120 credits. Each stage is divided into modules that have a value of 15, 30, or 45 credits. One credit represents approximately 10 hours' student learning and assessment. Each level has to be completed successfully before moving onto the next.

In terms of commitment, a 30-credit module (representing 300 hours of learning) will typically include 30 hours' class time and tutorial support during the induction week and module weekend (Friday-Sunday). As well as face-to-face tutorials, additional support is available via telephone, email, and an online virtual learning environment. The remainder of the programme is delivered through a blend of work-based learning, personal reflection and self-study. Teaching is primarily delivered in the forms of tutor-

and peer-led discussion and study sessions. Theoretical input is delivered both by tutors with specialist expertise and those actively working in the field of dentistry, in the form of interactive lectures, seminars and tutorials.

The Core Skills Module in Stage 1 of the BSc addresses individual best practice, covering the General Dental Council's core CPD areas and reflected in a number of the

Debbie Reed, Programme Director, University of Kent Division of Dentistry.



Key Skills identified by the FGDP(UK). This module covers themes which are considered to be essential to continuous professional development and fundamental to competent and safe dental practice standards.

During this module students gain knowledge of the processes and protocols needed to conduct audits within the primary dental care setting, and are encouraged to approach the individual themes from a perspective of the whole team sharing responsibility. The FGDP(UK) Key Skills are an excellent basis for structuring continuous professional development for all members of the dental team. Including Key Skills in the module also offers students the additional benefit of working towards an additional award whilst studying for the BSc. As mentioned previously, students who have completed Key Skills can apply for APECL, and if successful gain partial exemption from this element of the course.

The wide choice of elective modules in Stage 2 ensures that all members of the dental team will be able to select something which suits their particular talents or needs, or which will recognise their prior achievement through APECL.

Applying oneself

All applicants will be interviewed prior to being accepted on to the programme; they should be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the programme and discuss

how it will benefit their professional practice and contribute to raising standards of oral healthcare. In addition, candidates will be expected to show evidence of their ability to cope with the demands of the course, a current and continuous commitment to professional education and development, and a personal development portfolio.

For those interested in applying for the course, the University holds regular information days, offering the opportunity to meet with the staff involved in developing and delivering this course, to hear about the opportunities that a higher education qualification can offer, and to understand how the programme works and how it can help to develop DCP professional skills. There is also an opportunity to ask any questions and tour of the excellent facilities at the University of Kent's Medway Campus.

Providing for the profession

Future dental provision requires the most appropriate use of targeted professional skills, as well as effective regulation of the dental team, all delivered in a framework of fully integrated and devolved teamworking. With this in mind, registered DCPs are being encouraged to seek and embrace increased responsibility and participation. It will therefore be necessary for DCPs to develop critical, analytical and evaluation skills regarding evidence-based best practice.

As one student commented: "Completing

the Critical Appraisal of Dental Health-Related Publications module has made me question everything I read and has stopped me taking articles and lectures at face value. The important skills I learnt during this module have enabled me to determine the worth and validity of professionally relevant literature before choosing to apply it to my clinical practice. Learning the skills to be able to retrieve credible literature electronically has assisted me in improving my evidence-based dentistry, which I feel has in turn improved patient care."

The BSc promotes subject-specific knowledge and competencies in preparation for entry into the emerging primary dental care career pathway. It facilitates an ethos of academic understanding, reflection and lifelong learning, therein improving the quality of patient care. The FGDP(UK) and the University of Kent share a number of mutual aims and values, particularly the commitment to academic dentistry. It is hoped that in the future the BSc, along with other DCP academic qualifications, will take its place as part of a recognised career progression framework in primary care dentistry.

For further information about the BSc, contact Debbie Reed at the Division of Dentistry at D.Reed@kent.ac.uk