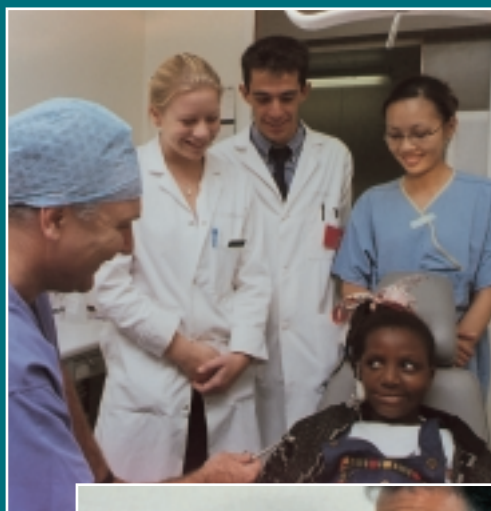


General Professional Training in England and Wales



A PRACTICAL GUIDE
Faculty of Dental Surgery
The Royal College of Surgeons of England

General Professional Training in England and Wales A PRACTICAL GUIDE

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It is a great pleasure to introduce *General Professional Training in England and Wales – A Practical Guide*. It is hoped that this will provide a helpful and practical overview of general professional training for the new graduate and has been written as a companion volume to *Specialisation in Dentistry – A Practical Guide* published by the Faculty in February 1999.

The guide includes sections on the concept of general professional training; the professional bodies responsible for setting and monitoring standards; the components of general professional training; opportunities for the new graduate; the diploma of Membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery (MFDS); and some of the career options available following general professional training. A list of useful contacts from which further information can be obtained is appended.

General professional training provides exciting opportunities for the new graduate and is designed to provide broad based clinical training in several disciplines of dentistry to prepare the graduate for subsequent training in the career of their choice. This is supported by an educational process based on the curriculum of the MFDS diploma which was developed by the Surgical Royal Colleges of the United Kingdom and in Ireland.

The Faculty has developed a distance learning course to assist the graduate preparing for the MFDS examination. This includes study days at the College and support from a network of Faculty Tutors at local level. In the first two years since the introduction of the MFDS examination, around 800 trainees had enrolled.

Graduates are encouraged to become involved with the Faculty at an early stage in their career. Initially this will be during the period of general professional training during which time the MFDS will be taken. If the graduate elects to enter specialist training this link will develop as progress is made towards a Specialty Membership or the Intercollegiate Specialist Fellowship.

Whatever direction the graduate's career eventually takes, a diplomate of the College can benefit from the support and facilities that the College can offer over their practising lifetime. This includes registration for continuing professional development, a varied educational programme, libraries, a computer assisted learning centre, a video library, anatomy and pathology museums, residential accommodation and participation in the many activities of the College.



David Barnard CBE
Dean
March 2001

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INTRODUCTION

Life Long Learning

The General Dental Council launched *Lifelong Learning: Recertification for the Dental Profession* in April 2000. The aim of the scheme is to ensure that all dentists update their knowledge and acquire new skills, both to benefit their patients and to enhance the quality of their professional lives. The scheme formalises good practice and gives all dentists personal responsibility to direct their own learning in the interests of their patients. All dentists should participate in continuing professional development (CPD) in order to satisfy the requirements of the General Dental Council. (Appendix 1)

General Professional Training

The continuum of training and education begins as an undergraduate and continues after qualification over the practising career. General professional training (GPT) is usually undertaken immediately following qualification and has been defined as *the structured further development of knowledge, skills and attitudes common to all branches of the dental profession which will provide a basis for informed career choice and improved patient care* (1). It is felt desirable that for more balanced training, periods should be spent in both the primary and secondary care settings although the content remains flexible.

A consistent and high standard of postgraduate dental education is essential to sustain and improve patient care. A key component in delivering this goal is assuring the quality of training in individual placements and programmes (2). The Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England plays a key role in this process.

The Royal College of Surgeons of England

The Faculty of Dental Surgery is based at The Royal College of Surgeons of England at Lincoln's Inn Fields in central London. The Faculty plays a key role in setting standards for training posts and provides a distance learning course for those aiming to take the examination for the diploma of Membership of the Faculty of Dental Surgery (MFDS). The Faculty is a national and international organisation fulfilling its role through representatives based in every Postgraduate Deanery in the United Kingdom and throughout the world. (Appendix 2)

Website at: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds

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WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING AND STANDARDS?

The General Dental Council

The General Dental Council (GDC) is the statutory regulatory body for the dental profession in the UK, and has a primary responsibility to protect the public. It discharges this role through the promotion of high standards of dental education at all its stages and high standards of professional conduct amongst dentists.

The GDC is the competent authority with statutory responsibility for standards of specialist training. It has defined one of the entry requirements for entry to recognised specialist training programmes as the MFDS diploma or equivalent.

In 1996 an agreement was formalised between the GDC, the Dental Faculties of the Surgical Royal Colleges and other educational bodies defining their respective responsibilities with regard to specialist training. This was termed *The Accord*.

Website at: www.gdc-uk.org

The Committee on Vocational Training

The Committee on Vocational Training for England and Wales (CVT) manages the process of vocational training (VT) in general dental practice and the community dental service. Approved training in primary care within the England and Wales is in vocational training schemes approved by the CVT.

Website at: www.eastman.ucl.ac.uk/cvt

The Dental Faculties of The Surgical Royal Colleges

The Faculties of Dental Surgery of the Surgical Royal Colleges of England and Edinburgh, the Dental Faculty of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow and the Faculty of Dentistry of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland set standards for training and education. The Faculties also set curricula, conduct examinations and award diplomas including the MFDS, Specialty Memberships and Intercollegiate Specialty Fellowships. There is a rigorous inspection process for training posts in hospitals, the community dental service and dental public health for GPT under the MFDS regulations. This aims to ensure that appropriate education and clinical experience is provided for trainees.

The Faculties also develop guidelines for good practice in collaboration with the specialty associations in dentistry and play a leading role in discussions about dentistry within the wider arena of healthcare.

Within England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England manages these functions. In Scotland this is the responsibility of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Faculties although there is reciprocal recognition of training posts under the MFDS regulations.

Further information and contacts can be found on the website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds

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Faculty of General Dental Practitioners (UK)

The Faculty of General Dental Practitioners (UK) at the Royal College of Surgeons of England sets and monitors standards in general dental practice. The Faculty conducts examinations to support career pathways in general dental practice and continuing professional development for the generalist. It also publishes guidance on good practice for the general dental practitioner.

Further information and contacts can be found on the website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fgdp

Postgraduate Dental Deans and Directors of Education

The Postgraduate Dental Deans are responsible for the management and delivery of education and training at a local level. The Deans develop policies and strategies for the educational development and management of high quality dental postgraduate education and training. Training and education are fundamental to the provision of high quality healthcare.

The Regional Adviser in General Dental Practice is a member of the Postgraduate Dental Dean's office and is responsible for the VT training process in each deanery.

Training in the hospital or community service is supported educationally by the Hospital or Community Dental Tutor who is appointed by the Postgraduate Dental Dean. The Faculty Tutors in England and Wales are appointed by the Royal College of Surgeons of England in conjunction with the Postgraduate Dental Deans. The Hospital Tutor, designated by the Postgraduate Dental Dean, and the Faculty Tutor may be the same person. The Deans organise regular appraisal and assessment of trainees to take place through their tutors. They also support the management and payment of study leave.

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Flexibility in Training

The young graduate is advised to gain wide an experience as possible in the early years after qualification. For those intending to take the MFDS examination, there should be a balance between approved experience in primary care and training in approved posts in the hospital or community services. For those going on to pursue specialist careers, it is a requirement that they spend a minimum of two years in a variety of relevant posts gaining broad based clinical experience and training in several disciplines of dentistry. However, the key to GPT remains flexibility.

General Dental Practice

The first year of the general professional training period is usually but not always, one year's vocational training, which is an integral part of all formal GPT schemes. An initial VT year in general dental practice will give experience in the primary care setting.

Eligibility for Vocational Training

In order for a dentist to be eligible to undertake VT, he or she must have a qualification that can be **fully registered** with the General Dental Council. Eligibility does not guarantee entry onto a VT scheme, as the number of places on each scheme is limited and subject to open competition by eligible dentists. Employment of a Vocational Dental Practitioner (VDP) i.e. trainee, by a trainer is by mutual agreement and subject to a written contract (3).

UK and EEA Dentists

Dentists who are UK nationals or nationals of EEA member states who qualify from a dental school in the UK or a dental school outside the EEA **must** either complete VT or show that they have acquired experience or training equivalent to VT before their names may be included on an Health Authority (HA) Dental List. This is necessary in order to enable them to practise as a principal in the General Dental Services, i.e. work unsupervised in National Health Service general practice. However, they may work as an assistant without having done VT and without their name being included on a HA Dental List.

UK or EEA nationals, or spouses of EEA nationals, who are employed or self-employed in the UK, who qualify from a dental school in the EEA (other than the UK or Austria) are exempt from the requirement to complete VT. However, they are eligible to undertake VT provided that a training place is available and they have a fully registrable qualification.

Non-EEA Dentists

Dentists who qualify at dental schools outside the EEA are subject to the same conditions as graduates of the UK dental schools. In other words, before their names can be included on an HA list they must show that they:

- are fully registered with the General Dental Council
- and have completed VT
- or have acquired experience or training equivalent to VT
- or are exempt from the requirement to complete VT



Dentists with an overseas primary dental qualification who wish to have their names included in an NHS dental list should contact the Committee on Vocational Training, (CVT) (3). For full information, visit the CVT website.

Website: www.eastman.ucl.ac.uk/cvt

Hospital Dental Service

The second year of GPT is usually spent as a Senior House Officer (SHO) in a dental teaching hospital or a district general hospital. However, some graduates elect to take up one of the limited number of House Officer posts initially upon graduation. Hospital posts may be part of a formal, integrated two year programme (sometimes referred to as “formal” GPT) or undertaken in an informal self-constructed basis. This gives an opportunity for graduates to explore the possibilities of all areas of the profession with a wide variety of options. Essentially all graduates should be exposed to many aspects of primary and secondary care before making a career decision within dentistry. Flexibility must be an important part of any GPT programme and there should be many choices for trainees rather than a standard package. A working group under the chairmanship of the Chief Medical Officer is likely to recommend changes in SHO training generally and how attaining clinical experience in the grade may evolve.

Community Dental Service

There is an increasing number of training posts approved for MFDS in the Community Dental Service. The nature of the experience within the community service is changing, with some posts concentrating on paediatric dental care and others on dental care of the elderly or the management of patients with special needs.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR GENERAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

There are a number of ways of organising GPT. Specific information should be sought from the Postgraduate Dental Dean or Tutor as to the local options available.

The programme generally takes the form of a two year integrated scheme ("formal" GPT), or may be undertaken on a self-constructed basis through training in primary care as a Vocational Dental Practitioner (VDP) and secondary care as an SHO, or in a community dental post recognised for the MFDS. In England and Wales, around 80% of GPT is undertaken in a self-constructed basis and trainees believe that this is as good as "formal" GPT.

At this early stage there is the possibility of gaining experience in areas which may be of interest for future specialisation such as posts in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Restorative Dentistry, Orthodontics or Paediatric Dentistry. If specialisation is the aim, then an appropriate balance of experience will be necessary and further advice can be gained from the Regional Advisors within the various specialties who are appointed by the Royal College of Surgeons. (Appendix 2)

A list of approved training posts is currently available from the Faculty of Dental Surgery and is also available on the Royal College of Surgeons of England website. Posts are advertised in the professional press and applications must be made to employing authorities.

Details of formal GPT schemes may be sought from Postgraduate Deans. (Appendix 3)

Contacts

- VT information: www.eastman.ucl.ac.uk/cvt
- Approved training posts: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds

Key Points

- A range of GPT programmes is available. It may take the form of a two year integrated scheme, but most dentists currently undertake GPT on a self-constructed basis through one year as a VDP and one year as SHO.
- GPT is flexible, allowing the trainees to choose the components most appropriate for their personal development and career aspirations.
- GPT is voluntary.
- The postgraduate qualification marking the completion of GPT remains voluntary. However, for those wishing to enter specialist training, completion of two years GPT and holding the MFDS diploma are mandatory.
- It has been agreed that the Part A MFDS examination has reciprocity with the Part 1 MFGDP taken after September 1998.
- National standards within GPT in England and Wales are determined by the Committee on Vocational Training (VT) and the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England (approved posts under the MFDS regulations).
- The Postgraduate Dental Deans are responsible for the management and delivery of postgraduate dental education, including VT, SHO and GPT.
- A broad based liaison committee brings together the various interests involved in GPT.

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What Do Trainees Think About GPT?

A survey undertaken by the University of Birmingham, in collaboration with the Faculty of Dental Surgery, provided helpful insight into the attitudes of individuals who are undertaking, or who have undertaken, the distance learning course of the Faculty to prepare for the MFDS examination as part of general professional training. In analysing the responses of 342 trainees several key points emerged:

1. Trainees supported a two year period of GPT, which should be on a voluntary rather than compulsory basis.
2. Personally tailored GPT was considered just as good as a formal programme and more sensitive to the needs and interests of individual trainees.
3. Motives for undertaking GPT included:
 - Gaining a wide range of experience
 - Personal development
 - Increasing knowledge or skills
 - To gain eligibility to enter specialist training
 - To inform career choice
 - To keep options open
4. A postgraduate qualification to mark the completion of GPT was favoured.
5. GPT was generally perceived to improve job prospects.

A full copy of the report *General Professional Training in Dentistry - A survey of participants in the MFDS course of the Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Surgeons of England*, January 2001, may be obtained from:

The Research Office
School of Education
The University of Birmingham
Birmingham B15 2TT
Telephone: 0121 414 4402

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The GDC has agreed that the entry requirements to SAC approved specialist training programmes will be the Diploma of Member of the Faculty of Dental Surgery (MFDS). MFD or FDS are also acceptable. A new graduate who is contemplating a career as a specialist should therefore be familiar with the regulations of the MFDS examination to inform career choice and to keep options open (5). However, many graduates choose to take the MFDS examination but decide not to become a specialist, choosing to follow a career pathway in general dental practice.

Parts A and B of the examination are intercollegiate and Part C is collegiate and specific to the College of the candidate's choice. Regulations are available from the examinations departments of the Surgical Royal Colleges of England, Glasgow, Edinburgh and in Ireland. It should be noted that the Diploma from the Irish College is Member of the Faculty of Dentistry (MFD) which is equivalent to the MFDS. Part A and part B of the examination are identical for all Colleges and run simultaneously.

The educational element of structured training should follow the curriculum of the MFDS examination as detailed in the MFDS regulations. The minimum 1 year of clinical training and experience must be in approved training posts as defined in the MFDS regulations. Within England, Wales and Northern Ireland it is the responsibility of the Hospital Recognition Committee of the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England to inspect hospital and community posts, but there is a reciprocal arrangement for recognition with the other Dental Faculties in Scotland and Ireland.

A list of approved training posts is currently available from the Faculty of Dental Surgery, and is also available on the Royal College of Surgeons of England website.

Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds

To support their clinical training and experience, trainees are strongly recommended to make use of the *Training, Appraisal and Assessment Manual* first published by COPDenD in 1998, which is available through Postgraduate Dental Deans.

A dentist who is intending to take the MFDS should consider enrolling on the distance learning course available from the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. This provides detailed workbooks including self-assessment exercises and study days in the College, and has been specifically designed to enable individuals to study for the MFDS examination while continuing their clinical training. (Appendix 4)

To support the new graduate further in working towards the MFDS, the Faculty has appointed Faculty Tutors in each Deanery to provide accessible advice at the local level. (Appendix 2)

The MFDS regulations have been designed to allow new graduates choice of the areas in which they may wish to work. These reflect the recommendations of the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in the *Report of the General Professional Working Party* in 1995, (6) and in *The First Two Years – General Professional Training* published by the GDC in 1998 (1).

Eligibility for MFDS

To be eligible for the award of the diploma all candidates must:

- possess a primary dental qualification that is acceptable to the Councils of the Surgical Royal Colleges of the UK and Ireland.

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- have completed satisfactorily 24 months whole time equivalent, postgraduate experience in dentistry of which at least 12 months must have been gained in clinical posts in hospital or community practice or dental public health which have been approved for training by the Dental Faculties of the Surgical Royal Colleges of the UK and Ireland. Experience in more than one discipline will be required which should be no less than three months whole time equivalent in each discipline. Normally equivalent part-time training will be acceptable if gained within a period of four years.
- have passed all sections of the MFDS/MFD Diploma examination.
- have complied with all the regulations.

Mandatory Requirements

Part A (Intercollegiate)

To be eligible to sit part A of the examination:

Candidates are required to provide evidence of completion of a minimum of 12 months satisfactory experience in any field of dentistry obtained after gaining their primary dental qualification.

Part B (Intercollegiate)

To be eligible to sit Part B of the examination candidates must:

- have passed part A.
- provide evidence of completion of at least 20 months satisfactory experience, of which 8 months must have been spent in posts in hospital, community practice or dental public health, which have been approved for training by the Surgical Royal Colleges of the UK and Ireland.

Part C (Collegiate)

To be eligible to sit Part C of the examination candidates must:

- have passed Parts A and B.
- provide evidence of at least 20 months training, 8 months of which must have been spent in posts in hospital, community practice or dental public health which have been approved for training by the Surgical Royal Colleges of the UK and Ireland.
- Normally hold a current certificate of successful hepatitis B immunisation from a UK or Irish source, if the examination is being held in the UK or Ireland.

It has been agreed that the MFDS Part A has reciprocity with the MFGDP Part 1 taken after September 1998. This provides maximum flexibility for the graduate who may be unsure in the first years after qualification whether to follow a career in specialist practice or general practice.

Exemption from MFDS Parts A and B has been agreed for holders of MRCS.

Further exemptions have been agreed for experienced practitioners of at least 10 years standing or part time equivalent, who hold the MGDS, MCCD or MFGDP diplomas and can demonstrate agreed requirements for continuing professional development.



Sitting of the MFDS Examination

All parts of the MFDS examination are held twice a year in April and September.

Contact can be made through the Royal College of Surgeons of England's website.
Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/exams

MFGDP

Graduates committed to a career in general dental practice may consider the option of taking the examination for the diploma of Membership of the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners (MFGDP). This does not require the completion of broad based training in approved posts in hospital, the community or dental public health. It should be noted that the MFGDP diploma does not satisfy the entry requirements to recognised specialist training programmes.

Contact can be made through the Royal College of Surgeons of England's website.
Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fgdp

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Dental Specialties

Specialist Training

For those who wish to consider specialist training there is now a much more clearly defined structure. The trainee must satisfy a number of requirements in accordance with *A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training*, February 1998 – the so-called *Orange Book* (7). More detailed arrangements for dentistry are described in *A Manual of Specialist Training in Dentistry in the United Kingdom and Ireland*, published by the Joint Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry (8). An overview of specialisation in dentistry is also provided in *Specialisation in Dentistry - a Practical Guide* published by The Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Surgeons of England (9). This is also available on the College website. A list of recognised training programmes in each speciality is available from the relevant Specialist Advisory Committee (SAC). Details of individual programmes may be obtained from Training Programme Directors at the Dental Schools or training institutions.

Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds

Hospital Dental Service

Specialists may work as consultants, associate specialists or in staff grade posts. There are differing training requirements and responsibilities depending upon both the post and the speciality involved. Advice on the opportunities can be gained by contacting the appropriate Regional Speciality Adviser or the Postgraduate Dental Dean. (Appendices 2 and 3)

Academic Dentistry

The possibilities for academic trainees in any of the dental specialties should be checked by contacting the appropriate Specialist Advisory Committee. An academic trainee will normally undergo an SAC approved clinical programme and will also embark on research leading to a higher degree. This will then give the possibility of becoming a Lecturer, Senior Lecturer or Professor.

Community Dental Service

There are a variety of employment opportunities within the community service for specialists, including the appointment of consultants. Many community dental services employ specialist orthodontists.

Specialist Practice

Since the introduction of specialist lists by the GDC in 1998, there has been an opportunity to work in specialist practice. Specialist practices are particularly found in the restorative monospecialties of endodontics, periodontics and prosthodontics, surgical dentistry and orthodontics.



General Dental Practice

Career pathways in general dental practice have been developed by the Faculty of General Practitioners (UK). Diplomas relating to general dental practice include the Membership of the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners MFGDP(UK), the Membership in General Dental Practice MGDS and the Fellowship of the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners FFGDP(UK).

Further information may be sought from the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners (UK)
Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fgdp

Generalists may work within the General Dental Services, as salaried practitioners within the National Health Service, large organisations, dental bodies corporate or in private practice. There are also dental surgeons contracted to a health authority under the Personal Dental Services (PDS) arrangements, which are specific and in areas of local need.

Community Dental Service

Dental surgeons working in the Community Dental Service are salaried and treat a wide range of patients depending on local dental needs. The service still provides screening for school children and also provides treatment for children with special needs and the elderly with medical or mobility problems. The service has a career pathway, which has been enhanced by the creation of Faculty approved training posts in the period of GPT.

Defence Dental Agency

Opportunities exist for dentists to work within the Defence Dental Agency (DDA). Its role is to provide dental care to the 220,000 members of the Armed Forces and to entitled support staff and families overseas. The DDA runs its own fully accredited VDP scheme and the majority of its trainers have MGDS or equivalent. There is an emphasis on continuing professional development and by the mid-career point after 16 years, 63% of DDA dentists hold a higher postgraduate qualification.

Further details may be obtained from the following:

RN:

Telephone: 023 927 27807

E-mail: MedAppointers@dial.pipex.com

RADC:

Telephone: 01252 340321

E-mail: amdso1dental@hotmail.com

RAF:

Telephone: 01993 897275

E-mail: sdento@brizenorton.raf.mod.uk

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General Experience

General experience in dentistry obtained overseas will count towards one year of the requirements for entry to Part A MFDS.

Opportunities for Training in Approved Hospital Posts

Approved training under the MFDS regulations is available in three ways:

- *SHO Posts in UK*

NHS paid posts recognised under the MFDS Regulations may be applied for in open competition. Application should be made to individual trusts. Posts are advertised in the professional press. A working group, chaired by the Chief Medical Officer is likely to recommend adjustments to improve training and the gaining of experience for all SHOs.

- *Overseas Posts*

There are an increasing number of posts overseas which have been approved by the Surgical Royal Colleges under the MFDS Regulations. Application should be made to individual units. Training which has not been approved by the Faculty will not count towards the requirements under the MFDS regulations.

- *Dental Attachments*

These are unpaid posts that are approved under the MFDS Regulations. The aim of Dental Attachments is to provide initial opportunities for overseas trainees to gain experience in dentistry in the UK within the context of general professional training. Full details of the availability of such posts may be obtained through the National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education (Appendix 3). Details of the requirements for such posts are fully explained in *Dental Attachments and Dental Observerships for Overseas Dentists* published by the Faculty of Dental Surgery in 2001 (11). Dental Attachments must be seen as providing the experience required to provide overseas dentists with the opportunity to obtain a subsequent funded post. However, such arrangements do not provide any guarantee for subsequent appointments, which must be applied for in open competition.

- *Dental Observerships*

Dental Observerships are available to any postgraduate dental student and should be arranged through the National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education. They are not recognised under the MFDS Regulations and will not count towards the requirements of Part B and C of the MFDS examination. Dental Observers are restricted to observing only and must not participate in patient care, even under direct supervision.



Opportunities for Specialist Training for EEA and Overseas Trainees are clearly described in *Training in the United Kingdom for Graduates for the European Economic Area (EEA) and from Overseas (Non-EEA) in the Dental Specialties*, published by the Dental Faculties in December 1999, (12). Specialist Training must conform to the protocols described in *A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training*, (7).

Trainees are recommended to seek clarification of the status of postgraduate training at an early stage. It must be understood that not all postgraduate courses are recognised for specialist training. It is also important to bear in mind that a trainee who is not enrolled with the relevant Specialist Advisory Committee and issued with a Training Number by the Postgraduate Dental Dean will not be eligible for the award of a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) and will not be eligible to take the specialty Membership.

There are notes provided for overseas trainees (10), and there is an opportunity to discuss training opportunities with a special overseas adviser at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, the Kelsey Fry Adviser, Dr Ian Waite who can be contacted by email: iwaite@rcseng.ac.uk

Dr Waite is also director of the National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education, (NACPDE). Telephone: (direct line) 020 7869 6804.



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- 2 The Recruitment of Doctors and Dentists in Training, NHS Executive, November 1998.
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- 5 MFDS / MFD Regulations, Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Surgeons of England; Dental Faculty, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh; Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow; Faculty of Dentistry, The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, 2001.
- 6 Report of the General Professional Training Working Party, The Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Surgeons England, June 1995.
- 7 A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training, Department of Health, February 1998.
- 8 A Manual of Specialist Training in Dentistry in the United Kingdom and Ireland, Joint Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry, 1999.
- 9 Specialisation in Dentistry – A Practical Guide, Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 1999.
- 10 Notes for Overseas Dental Graduates on Postgraduate Education and Training in the United Kingdom, issued by the National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education, The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PE
- 11 Dental Attachments & Dental Observerships for Overseas Dentists, Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 2001.
- 12 Training in the United Kingdom for Graduates from the European Economic Area (EEA) and from Overseas (Non-EEA) in the Dental Specialties, Joint Meeting of Dental Faculties, December 1999.



The GDC's Lifelong Learning – Re-certification for the Dental Profession

The preparatory re-certification scheme was introduced in October 2000. Subject to the appropriate legislative changes, the statutory scheme will be phased in over three years, beginning with dentists first registered after 1990 on 1st January 2002. Dentists first registered between 1st January 1980 and 31st December 1989 will join on 1st January 2003 and dentists first registered before 31st December 1979 on 1st January 2004. Newly registered dentists will join on the 1st January after the date of their registration.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) should have a clear educational basis and should update dentists' knowledge of contemporary standards of practice. Not all activities need to be directly related to treatment as patients benefit from a variety of non-clinical CPD activities undertaken by their dentists.

For re-certification, dentists will be required to complete, at least, 250 hours of CPD over five years. A minimum of 75 of these hours must consist of verifiable CPD and the remainder can be made up of general CPD. Dentists are advised to, where possible, spread their CPD evenly over the five years by undertaking 50 hours per year with an average of 15 hours of verifiable CPD each year.

CPD is classed as verifiable if some form of external documentary verification of attendance or participation can be provided and the activity can be shown to satisfy the following educational criteria:

- Concise educational aims and objectives
- Clear anticipated outcomes
- Quality control through feedback

Specific examples include courses organised by professional bodies, such as the Postgraduate Dean, the Faculties of Dental Surgery, the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners, the educational components of meetings and conferences of specialist associations, and interactive distance learning with verifiable outcomes.

Faculty
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The Faculty of Dental Surgery, The Royal College of Surgeons of England

Mission Statement

To set and advance the highest standards of oral health for patients and to promote professional excellence in all aspects of dentistry.

Objectives

- To set educational standards and provide educational support for all dental specialists, specialists in training and GPT trainees. Also for others holding a diploma of the Faculty as well as being the natural home to support life-long learning and continuing professional development.
- To enable specialists to demonstrate, on a regular basis, that they are keeping up to date and fit to practice in their chosen field.
- To continue to play a leading role in discussions about dentistry and the dental specialties and to properly represent and promote the dental profession at the highest level within the wider context of health care.
- To provide a forum to promote good practice and clinical effectiveness in dentistry.

How Does the Faculty Fulfil its Role?

- Setting curricula for examinations.
- Conducting examinations for both undergraduates and postgraduates.
- Awarding diplomas for GPT and the whole range of dental specialties.
- Inspecting and approving training posts in hospitals, the community service and dental public health for GPT.
- Contributing to the approval of programmes for specialist training as a constituent member of the Joint Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry (JCSTD), and individual Specialist Advisory Committees (SACs).
- Playing a wider role in promoting standards of practice by liaising with other bodies involved with health care at the highest level.
- Advising on manpower planning.
- Providing Faculty representatives for Advisory Appointments Committees for specialist trainees, associate specialists, staff grades and consultants.
- Providing programmes for postgraduate education, continuing professional education (CPE) and continuing professional development (CPD).
- Registering CPE/CPD for specialists.
- Promoting clinical audit/effectiveness and research.
- Preparing and disseminating clinical guidelines for good practice.



Constitution

The Faculty of Dental Surgery is a constituent part of The Royal College of Surgeons of England with three elected members on the Council of the College in accordance with the College Charter. The College was founded in 1800 with its roots extending back to the 12th century. The Dental Faculty was founded in 1947.

Membership

The Faculty is composed of some 2700 Fellows and members.

The Board of Faculty

The Faculty is governed by the Board of Faculty which is composed of 22 Board Members who are elected by the membership and who provide a broad base of experience from across the profession and the dentally based specialities. There are also invited members from dental public health, the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners (UK) and a representative of the trainees.

Local Representatives

NORTHERN

Regional Adviser

Mr C J Edge
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Middlesbrough General Hospital
Ayresome Green Lane, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS5 5AZ
Tel: 01642 854257
Fax: 01642 824727
E-mail: colin@wintonho.demon.co.uk

Specialty Adviser in Restorative Dentistry

Mr D G Smith
Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Dentistry
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
10-12 Framlington Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4AB
Tel: 0191 232 3657
Fax: 0191 221 1049
E-mail: d.g.smith@ncl.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Dental Public Health

Mr J Stewart
Tees Health Authority
Poole House, Stokesley Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesborough, TS7 0NJ
Tel: 01642 304150
Fax: 01642 304170
E-mail: John.Stewart@email.tees-ha.northy.nhs.uk

Specialty Adviser in Paediatric Dentistry

Mr R R Welbury
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
The Dental Hospital
Richardson Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE2 4AZ
Tel: 0191 2325131 x 24557 (bleep 2316)
Fax: 0191 227 5149
E-mail: R.R.Welbury@ncl.ac.uk

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



YORKSHIRE

Regional Adviser

Dr M Kellett
Division of Restorative Dentistry
Leeds Dental Institute
Clarendon Way, Leeds, LS2 9LU
Tel: 0113 233 6248
Fax: 0113 233 6282
E-mail: Margk@ulth.northy.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser
in Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery*

Mr R A Loukota
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Leeds Dental Institute
Clarendon Way, Leeds, LS2 9LU
Tel: 0113 2336111/2336219
Fax: 0113 2336264
E-mail: richardl@ulth.northy.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Professor S Williams
Oral Health Services Research
Leeds Dental Institute
Clarendon Way, Leeds, LS2 9LY
Tel: 0113 2336197/2440111
Fax: 0113 2336140
E-mail: den6saw@leeds.ac.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Paediatric Dentistry*

Mr S A Fayle
Division of Child Dental Health
Leeds Dental Institute
Clarendon Way, Leeds, LS2 9LU
Tel: 0113 2336194
Fax: 0113 2336140
E-mail: densaf@leeds.ac.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Restorative Dentistry*

Dr J Glyn-Jones
Division of Restorative Dentistry
Leeds Dental Institute
Clarendon Way, Leeds, LS2 9LU
Tel: 0113 2336133
Fax: 0113 2336129
E-mail: j.c.glyn-jones@leeds.ac.uk

TRENT

Regional Adviser

Mr D R Willmot
Department of Orthodontics
Charles Clifford Dental Hospital
Wellesley Road, Sheffield, S10 2SZ
Tel: 0114 271 7809
Fax: 0114 271 7855
E-mail: d.willmot@sheffield.ac.uk



*Specialty Adviser in
Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery*

Mr P G McAndrew
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Rotherham General Hospital
Moorgate Road, Oakwood, Rotherham, S60 2UD
Tel/Fax: 01709 304459

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Mr N Thomas
Department of Dental Public Health
Rotherham Health Authority
Bevan House, Oakwood Hall Drive, Moorgate Road, Rotherham S60 3AQ
Tel: 01709 302170
Fax: 01709 302170
E-mail: nigel.thomas@exs.rotherham-ha.trent.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Restorative Dentistry*

Mr R F Deans
Department of Restorative Dentistry
The Glenfield Hospital
Groby Road, Leicester, LE3 9QP
Tel: 0116 2563584
Fax: 0116 2502421
E-mail: finlay.deans@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Paediatric Dentistry*

Mrs L E Davidson
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
Charles Clifford Dental Hospital
Wellesley Road, Sheffield, S10 2SZ
Tel: 0114 2717890
Fax: 0114 2717855
E-mail: (Secretary) Julie.Parkin@csuh.nhs.uk

ANGLIA

Regional Adviser

Mr D H Tewson
Department of Orthodontics
West Norwich Hospital
Bowthorpe Road, Norwich, NR2 3TU
Tel: 01603 288085
Fax: 01603 288299
E-mail: tewson@norfolk-norwich.thenhs.com

*Specialty Adviser in
Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery*

Mr M T Simpson
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Bedford Hospital (main base)
Kempston Road, Bedford, MK42 9DH
Tel: 01234 792137
Fax: 01234 792690
Home: Tel/Fax: 01234 214998
E-mail: omfbed@yahoo.com

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Mr R C Ward
Department of Dental Public Health
Suffolk Health Authority
PO Box 55, Foxhall Road, Ipswich, IP3 8NN
Tel: 01473 323 428
Fax: 01473 323 420
E-mail: richard.ward@hq.suffolk-ha.anglox.nhs.uk

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



NORTH WEST THAMES

Regional Adviser Mr G Bounds
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Mount Vernon Hospital
Rickmansworth Road, Northwood, Middlesex, HA6 2RN
Tel: 01923 844436
Fax: 01923 844321
E-mail: gabounds@aol.com

Specialty Adviser in Orthodontics Dr A B Hewitt
Department of Orthodontics
Bedford General Hospital
Kempston Road, Bedford, MK42 9DJ
Tel: 01234 792096
Fax: 01234 795869
E-mail: Anthony.Hewitt@Bedhos.anglox.nhs.uk

Specialty Adviser in Dental Public Health Ms J Jacobs
Department of Dental Public Health
Kentish Town Health Centre
2 Bartholomew Road, London NW5 2AJ
Tel: 020 7530 4711
Fax: 020 7530 4764
E-mail: Jenny.Jacobs@cichs-tr.nthames.nhs.uk

NORTH EAST THAMES

Regional Adviser Mr S Ash
Department of Orthodontics
Whipps Cross Hospital
Whipps Cross Road, Leytonstone, London E11 1NR
Tel: 020 8535 6735
Fax: 020 8535 6735
E-mail: simon.ash@forhc-tr.nthames.nhs.uk

Specialty Adviser in Oral Medicine Professor C Scully CBE
Eastman Dental Institute
256 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8LD
Tel: 020 7915 1038
Fax: 020 7915 1039
E-mail: cscully@eastman.ucl.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Mr P J Weller
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Southend Hospital
Prittlewell Chase, Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex SS0 0RY
Tel: 01702 221014
Fax: 01702 221019
Home Tel/Fax: 01702 352442
E-mail: peterj@weller.freeserve.co.uk

Specialty Adviser in Restorative Dentistry Professor P S Wright
Department of Adult Oral Health
St Bartholomew's and the Royal London School of Medicine & Dentistry
Turner Street, London, E1 2AD
Tel: 020 7377 7057
Fax: 020 7377 7022
E-mail: p.s.wright@mds.qmw.ac.uk



Specialty Adviser in Dental Public Health Mr D M H Smith
Department of Dental Public Health
South Essex HA
Arcadia House, Warley Hill Business Park, The Drive, Warley,
Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3BE
Tel: 01277 755229
Fax: 01277 755225

SOUTH EAST THAMES

Regional Adviser Mr B J Smith
Department of Restorative Dentistry
GKT Dental Institute
Guy's Hospital, London, SE1 9RT
Tel: 0207 955 4533
Fax: 0207 955 4452
E-mail: susan.biden@kcl.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Professor M McGurk
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
GKT Dental Institute
Guy's Hospital, London, SE1 9RT
Tel: 020 7955 4342
Fax: 020 7955 4165

Specialty Adviser in Restorative Dentistry Mr B J Smith
Department of Restorative Dentistry
GKT Dental Institute
Guy's Hospital, London, SE1 9RT
Tel: 0207 955 4533
Fax: 0207 955 4452
E-mail: susan.biden@kcl.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Dental Public Health Professor D E Gibbons OBE
Department of Dental Public Health
GKT Dental Institute
Guy's Hospital, London, SE1 9RT
Tel: 0207 955 8870
Fax: 020 7955 8873
E-mail: david.gibbons@kcl.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Paediatric Dentistry Miss P Smith
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
GKT Dental Institute
Caldecot Road, London SE5 9RW
Tel: 020 7346 3375
Fax: 020 7346 3185

SOUTH WEST THAMES

Regional Adviser Mr A Stewart
The Maxillofacial Unit
Queen Mary's University Hospital
Roehampton Lane, London, SW15 5PN
Tel: 0208 355 2549
Fax: 0208 355 2979
E-mail: andrewstewart@talk21.com

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



*Specialty Adviser in
Orthodontics*

Mr R Edler
Department of Orthodontics
Queen Mary's Hospital
Roehampton Lane, London, SW15 5PN
Tel: 020 8355 2060
Fax: 020 8355 2979
E-mail: redler@swlct.sthames.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Professor S Gelbier
Division of Dental Public Health and Oral Health Services Research
GKT Dental Institute
Caldecot Road, Denmark Hill, London, SE5 9RW
Tel: 020 7346 3481
Fax: 020 7346 3409
E-mail: stanley.gelbier@kcl.ac.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Paediatric Dentistry*

Miss P Smith
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
GKT Dental Institute
Caldecot Road, London, SE5 9RW
Tel: 020 7346 3375
Fax: 020 7346 3185

WESSEX

Regional Adviser

Mr W J N Peters
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Poole Hospital NHS Trust
Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB
Tel: 01202 442663
Fax: 01202 442230
E-mail: wjn.peters@virgin.net

*Specialty Adviser in
Orthodontics*

Ms H Knight
Orthodontic Department
Royal United Hospital
Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
Tel: 01225 824 269
Fax: 01225 825467
E-mail: kniboo@waitrose.com

*Specialty Adviser in
In Dental Public Health*

Mrs S Saunders
Dental Department
Central Health Clinic
East Park Terrace, Southampton, SO14 0YL
Tel: 023 8090 2537
Fax: 023 8090 2504
E-mail: stella.saunders@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery

OXFORD

Regional Adviser

Mr D A Slattery
Department of Orthodontics
Wexham Park Hospital
Slough, Berkshire, SL2 4HL
Tel/Fax: 01753 634076



*Specialty Adviser in
Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery*

Mr C D C Tomlins
Department of Oral & Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading, RG1 5AN
Tel: 0118 987 7668
Fax: 0118 987 6765
E-mail: christopher.tomlins@rbbh-tr.anglox.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Miss S E Gregory
Department of Dental Public Health
Bedfordshire NHS Health Authority
Charter House, Alma Street, Luton, LU1 2PL
Tel: 01582 708963
Fax: 01582 708990
E-mail: sue.gregory@beds-ha.anglox.nhs.uk

SOUTH WESTERN

Regional Adviser

Mr W F Haines
Orthodontic Unit
Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust
Treliske, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3LJ
Tel: 01872 253988
Fax: 01872 253796
E-mail: Frank.Haines@RCHT.Swest.NHS.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery*

Mr G H Irvine
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Southmead Hospital
Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 5NB
Tel: 0117 9595177
Fax: 0117 9595028

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Mr J R Boyles
Department of Dental Public Health
Avon Health Authority
King Square House, King Square, Bristol, BS2 8EE
Tel: 0117 900 2691
Fax: 0117 900 2571
E-mail: john.boyles@userm.avonhealth.swest.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Paediatric Dentistry*

Mr P J M Crawford
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
Bristol Dental Hospital
Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol, BS1 2LY
Tel: 0117 9284388
Fax: 0117 9299898
E-mail: Peter.Crawford@Bristol.ac.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

Regional Adviser

Mr D Spary
Department of Orthodontics
Queen's Hospital
Burton Hospitals NHS Trust
Belvedere Road, Burton upon Trent, Staffs, DE13 0RB
Tel: 01283 566333
Fax: 01283 516983

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



*Specialty Adviser in
Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery*

Mr M J C Wake
Department of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery
Queen Surgery, Elizabeth Hospital
Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre, Birmingham, B15 2TH
Tel: 0121 627 2303
Fax: 0121 627 2302
E-mail: mjcwake@compuserve.com

*Specialty Adviser in
Restorative Dentistry*

Dr K Warren
Department of Restorative Dentistry
Birmingham Dental Hospital
St Chad's Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6NN
Tel: 0121 237 2729
Fax: 0121 237 2750

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Miss K M Elley
Department of Dental Public Health
Kingston House, 438 High Street, West Bromwich, B70 9LD
Tel: 0121 500 1617
Fax: 0121 500 1667
E-mail: karen.elley@sandwell-ha.wmids.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Paediatric Dentistry*

Dr L Shaw
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
Birmingham Dental Hospital
St Chad's Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6NN
and at
Birmingham Children's Hospital
Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham, B4 6NH
Tel: 0121 237 2874/2826
Fax: 0121 625 8815
E-mail: L.Shaw@bham.ac.uk

MERSEY

Regional Adviser

Dr N Pender
Department of Orthodontics
Room 411, Department of Clinical Dental Sciences
The University of Liverpool, Liverpool, L69 3BX
Tel: 0151 706 5210/5030
Fax: 0151 706 5845
E-mail: n.pender@liverpool.ac.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Oral & Maxillofacial
Surgery*

Mr J C Cooper
Regional Centre for Maxillofacial Surgery
University Hospital Aintree
Lower Lane, Liverpool, L9 7AL
Tel: 0151 525 5980 (hospital)
Tel: 0151 529 5289 (secretary)
Fax: 0151 529 3239
E-mail: mfufazak@globalnet.co.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Orthodontics*

Mr S J Rudge
Department of Orthodontics
Halton General Hospital
Hospital Way, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2DA
Tel: 01928 753225
Fax: 01928 753491
E-mail: srudge@hghorthodont.demon.co.uk

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



Specialty Adviser in Restorative Dentistry

Dr K S Last
Department of Periodontology
School of Dentistry, University of Liverpool
Pembroke Lane, Liverpool, L69 3BX
Tel: 0151 706 5215
Fax: 0151 706 5845
E-mail: k.s.last@liverpool.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Dental Public Health

Mr A M Jenner
Department of Dental Public Health
South Cheshire Health Authority, 1829 Building,
Countess of Chester Park, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1UL
Tel: 01244 650 353
Fax: 01244 650 341
Mobile: 07998 607519
E-mail: ajenner@doh.gsi.gov.uk

Specialty Adviser in Paediatric Dentistry

Mr D R Llewelyn
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
Alder Hey Children's Hospital
Eaton Road, Liverpool, L12 2AP
Tel: 0151 228 4811 x 2258
Fax: 0151 222 5563

NORTH WESTERN

Regional Adviser

Mr R T M Woodward,
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
North Manchester General Hospital
Delaunays Road, Crumpsall, Manchester, M8 6RL
Tel: 0161 720 2143/2243
Fax: 0161 720 2281
E-mail: Bob.Woodwards@hotmail.com

Specialty Adviser in Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Mr R E Lloyd
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Hope Hospital, Stott Lane, Salford, M6 8HD
Tel: 0161 787 4728
Fax: 0161 787 4329
E-mail: rlloyd@hope.srht.nwest.nhs.uk

Specialty Adviser in Orthodontics

Mr R Thompson
Orthodontic and Maxillofacial Unit
Withington Hospital
Nell Lane, West Didsbury, Manchester, M20 2LR
Tel: 0161 291 4088
Fax: 0161 291 4171
E-mail: robin.thompson@gw.nwest.smuht.nhs.uk

Specialty Adviser in Restorative Dentistry

Dr M A Wilson
Department of Restorative Dentistry
University Dental Hospital of Manchester
Higher Cambridge Street, Manchester, M15 6FH
Tel (direct): 0161 275 6619
Fax: 0161 275 6710
E-mail: WilsonM@fs1.den.man.ac.uk

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Mr K Woods
Department of Dental Public Health
NWLHA, Wesham Park Hospital
Derby Road, Wesham, Kirkham, Lancs PR4 3AL
Tel: 01253 306368
Tel (Secretary): 01253 306369
Fax: 01253 306374
E-mail: keith.woods@nwlancs-ha.nwest.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Paediatric Dentistry*

Mr F Hill
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
University of Manchester Dental School
Higher Cambridge Street, Manchester, M15 6FH
Tel: 0161 275 6610
Fax: 0161 275 6776
E-mail: fred@fsl.den.man.ac.uk

WALES

Regional Adviser

Mr D Patton
Maxillofacial Unit
Morrison Hospital, Swansea, SA6 6NL
Tel: 01792 703254
Fax: 01792 703068
E-mail: DWPatton@btinternet.com

*Specialty Adviser in
Orthodontics*

Mr P T Nicholson
Department of Orthodontics
Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust, Princess of Wales Hospital
Coity Road, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan, CF31 1RQ
Tel: 01656 752172
Fax: 01656 752706
E-mail: peter.nicholson@bromor-tr.wales.nhs.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Restorative Dentistry*

Dr D H Edmunds
Adult Dental Health Department
Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, Dental Hospital
Heath Park, Cardiff, CF14 4XY
Tel: 029 2074 2493
Fax: 029 2074 2493
Home Tel: 01446 772122
E-mail: edmundsdh@cf.ac.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Dental Public Health*

Professor E Treasure
Department of Dental Health & Development
The Dental School
Heath Park, Cardiff CF14 4XY
Tel: 029 2074 4090
Fax: 029 2074 6489
E-mail: treasureet@cardiff.ac.uk

*Specialty Adviser in
Paediatric Dentistry*

Dr B Hunter
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
University Dental Hospital
Heath Park, Cardiff, CF14 4XY
Tel: 029 2074 2465
Fax: 029 2074 2421
E-mail: HunterB@cf.ac.uk
E-mail: Bruce.Hunter@cardiffandvale.wales.nhs.uk

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



SCOTLAND

Regional Adviser Miss K Harley
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
Edinburgh Dental Institute
Children's Clinic, Level 3
Lauriston Building, Lauriston Place, Edinburgh EH3 9YW
Tel: 0131 536 4904
Fax: 0131 536 4901

NORTHERN IRELAND

Regional Adviser Professor J McGimpsey
School of Dentistry
Royal Victoria Hospital
Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA
Tel: 028 9026 3122
Fax: 028 9043 8861
E-mail: j.mcgimpsey@qub.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Orthodontics Dr D Burden
Orthodontic Department
School of Dentistry
Grosvenor Road, Belfast BT12 6BA
Tel: 028 9026 3122
Fax: 028 9043 8861
E-mail: d.burden@qub.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Paediatric Dentistry Dr M Kinirons
Department of Paediatric and Preventative Dentistry
Royal Victoria Hospital
Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA
Tel: 028 9089 4673/ 028 9089 4728
Fax: 028 9043 8861
E-mail: m.kinirons@qub.ac.uk

Specialty Adviser in Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Mr R W Kendrick
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Royal Victoria Hospital
Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA
Tel: 028 9089 4734
Fax: 028 9043 8861

Specialty Adviser in Dental Public Health Miss H M M Clarke
Department of Dental Public Health
Southern Health and Social Services Board
Department of Health Strategy and Primary Care
Tower Hill, Armagh, BT61 9DR
Tel: 028 3741 4570
Fax: 028 3741 4551
E-mail: heathecl@shssb.n-i.nhs.uk

Faculty
of
Dental
Surgery



MFDS REGIONAL TUTORS

East Anglia Region Mr J Bottomley
Department of Oral Surgery and Orthodontics
Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Gayton Road, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE30 4ET
Tel: 01553 613696
E-mail: John.Bottomley.Sec@klshost.anglox.nhs.uk

Mersey Region Mr R Llewelyn
Department of Paediatric Dentistry
Liverpool University Dental Hospital
Pembroke Place, Liverpool L3 5PS
Tel: 0151 706 2000 X5022

Northern Region Mr D J Jacobs
Department of Restorative Dentistry
The Dental Hospital
Richardson Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE2 4AZ
Tel: 0191 282 4247, Bleep: 2321

North Western Region Mr M Foster
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
North Manchester General Hospital
Central Drive, Manchester M8 6RB
Tel: 0161 624 0420 Ext 8535
E-mail: murray.foster@oldham-tr.nwest.nhs.uk

Oxford Region Mr C Tomlins
Department of Oral Surgery
Royal Berkshire Hospital
Reading, Berkshire RG1 5AN
Tel: 0118 987 5111 X7668
E-mail: Christopher.Tomlins@rbbh.tr.nhs.uk

South Western Region Ms J Rooney
Postgraduate Department
Chapter House, Bristol Dental Hospital
Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol BS1 2LY
Tel: 0117 928 4522
E-mail: j.c.rooney@bristol.ac.uk

Professor J Sandy
Division of Child Dental Health
Dental School, Bristol Dental Hospital
Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol BS1 2LY
Tel: 0117 928 4355
E-mail: jonathan.sandy@bristol.ac.uk

Mr M Woodhead
Department of Restorative Dentistry
University of Bristol Dental Hospital
Lower Maudlin Street, Bristol BS1 2LY
Tel: 0117 928 4389



Mr G M Jones
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, PL6 8DH
Tel: 01752 763 206
E-mail: geos.jones@phnt.swest.nhs.uk

Mr C Perkins
Department of Maxillofacial Surgery
Cheltenham General Hospital, Sandford Road, Cheltenham
Glos GL53 7AN
Tel: 01242 273 197

Mr C Schnetler
Department of Maxillofacial Surgery
Royal United Hospital, Combe Park, Bath BA1 3NG
Tel: 01225 428 331
E-mail: jeremy.schnetler@rub-bath.swest.nhs.uk

Mr S Adcock
Department of Maxillofacial Surgery
Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust
City Hospital, Infirmary Hill, Truro TR1 2HZ
Tel: 01872 253986

Thames Region

Dr A Howat
Orthodontic Department
Old Church Hospital
Waterloo Road, Romford, Essex RM7 0BE
Tel: 01708 727 871

Miss S Cunningham
Department of Orthodontics
Eastman Dental Institute
256 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8LD
Tel: 020 7915 1000 Ext 1317
E-mail: s.cunningham@eastman.ucl.ac.uk

Thames Region

Mr M Twitchen
10 Chestnut Close, The Dell, Angmering, West Sussex BN16 4NF
Tel: 01903 774649 (Home)

Wessex Region

Mr G Zaki
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Queen Alexandra Hospital
Cosham, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO6 3LY
Tel: 02392 286736
E-mail: graeme.zaki@qmail01.porthosp.swest.nhs.uk

Trent Region

Mr J Rowson
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
30 The Ropewalk, Nottingham, NG1 5DW
Tel: 0115 977 0000 Ext 48916

West Midlands Region

Mr S Dover
Clinical Training
The Dental School
University of Birmingham, St Chad's, Queensway, Birmingham B4 6NN
Tel: 0121 627 1627
E-mail: dover@craniofacial.org.uk

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Yorkshire Region

Mr M R Cope
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
Hull Royal Infirmary
Anlaby Road, Hull HU3 2JZ
Tel: 01482 674225
E-mail: Martin.cope@rhh-tr.northy.nhs.uk

Scotland

Mr J R Radford
Unit of Comprehensive Restorative Care
University of Dundee Dental School
Park Place, Dundee DD1 4HN
Tel (Home): 01382 543047
Tel (Work): 01382 635956
E-mail: john.r.radford@lineone.net

Wales

Dr W McLaughlin
Modular Education Department
Dental School, University of Wales Dental Hospital
Heath Park, Cardiff CF14 4XY
Tel: 02920 742420
E-mail: mclaughlin@cardiff.ac.uk

Northern Ireland

Mr R W Kendrick
Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
School of Dentistry, The Royal Group of Hospitals
Grosvenor Road, Belfast, BT12 6BA
Tel: 02890 894734
Fax: 02890 438861

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Surgery



Useful Contacts for General Professional Training

Faculty Education Office

Robert Bradlaw Adviser: Vacant
Education Administrator: Miss Fatima Bulbulia
MFDS Administrator: Miss Kelly Turner
MFDS Course Assistant: Mrs Kate Popo-Ola
Courses/Meetings Co-ordinator: Mumtaz Rehman/Ms Pauline Conroy

The Royal College of Surgeons of England
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3PE

Tel: 020 7869 6815
Fax: 020 7869 6816
E-mail: fds@rcseng.ac.uk
Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds

College Examinations Office

The Royal College of Surgeons of England
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3PE

Tel: 020 7869 6821
Fax: 020 7869 6290
E-mail: exams@rcseng.ac.uk
Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/exams

National Advice Centre for Postgraduate Dental Education

Postgraduate Advisor: Dr IM Waite
Administrator: Miss Suky Overda

Faculty of Dental Surgery
Royal College of Surgeons of England
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London
WC2A 3PE

Tel: 020 7869 6804
Fax: 020 7869 6816
E-mail: nacpde@rcseng.ac.uk
Website: www.nacpde.org.uk

Committee for Vocational Training for England and Wales

Website: www.eastman.ucl.ac.uk/cvt
Telephone: 070 7915 2320

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DEAN / DIRECTOR	UNIVERSITY / REGION	ORGANISATION & ADDRESS
Professor John FRAME Regional Director of Postgraduate Dental Education	Birmingham/West Midlands	University of Birmingham Postgraduate Office Dental School St Chad's Queensway Birmingham B4 6NN
Dr Chris FRANKLIN Regional Postgraduate Dental Dean	Sheffield/Trent	Trent (University of Sheffield) Regional Postgraduate Dental Office Medical School Beech Hill Road Sheffield S10 2RX
Mrs Janet HEATH Regional Director of Postgraduate Dental Education	Cambridge & Eastern	Postgraduate Medical & Dental Education East Anglian Deanery Block 3, Ida Darwin Site Fulbourn Cambridge CB1 5EE
Mr Richard JUNIPER Director of Postgraduate Dental Education	Oxford	Oxford University Oxford Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education The Triangle Roosevelt Drive Headington Oxford OX3 7XP
Mr Brian GRIEVESON Dean of Postgraduate Dental Education and Training	Liverpool/North West (Mersey)	The University of Liverpool Department of Postgraduate Dental Education and Training Gnd. Floor Hamilton House 24 Pall Mall Liverpool L3 6AL
Mr Alasdair MILLER Regional Postgraduate Dental Dean	Bristol/South West	University of Bristol Dental Postgraduate Department The Chapter House Bristol Dental Hospital Lower Maudlin Street Bristol BS1 2LY
Mr Eric NASH Director of Postgraduate Dental Education	Wales	University of Wales College of Medicine Dental Postgraduate Department Room 131 Dental School Heath Park Cardiff CF4 4XY
Mr Jim RALPH Dean of Postgraduate Dental Education	Leeds/Yorkshire	University of Leeds Department for NHS Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education Willow Terrace Road Leeds LS2 9JT
Mr Ray REED Regional Postgraduate Dental Dean	Southampton/Wessex	University of Southampton Wessex Deanery Highcroft Romsey Road Winchester S022 5DH
Dr Jim RENNIE Director of Postgraduate Dental Education	Scotland	SCPMDE 4th Floor Hobart House 80 Hanover Street Edinburgh EH2 1EL
Dr Ian WAITE Dean of Postgraduate Dentistry	London/Thames	TPMDE 33 Millman Street London WC1N 3EJ
Mr Ian SAUNDERS Postgraduate Dental Dean	Northern Ireland	NICPMDE 5 Annadale Avenue Belfast BT7 3JH
Mr David SMITH Dental Postgraduate Dean	Newcastle/North	University of Newcastle Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and Dentistry 10-12 Framlington Place Newcastle Upon Tyne NE2 4AB
Mr Geoff TAYLOR Dean of Postgraduate Dentistry	Manchester/North West	University of Manchester Department of Postgraduate Medicine and Dentistry Gateway House Piccadilly South Manchester M60 7LP



TEL., FAX & E-MAIL	ADMINISTRATOR TEL., FAX & E-MAIL	WEBSITE ADDRESS
Tel: 0121 237 830/2831 Fax: 0121 237 2833 Mobile: 08 50 50 37 47 E-mail: j.w.frame@bham.ac.uk	Mrs Pam Jefferis Tel: 0121 237 2830 Fax: 0121 237 2833 E-mail: p.jefferis@bham.ac.uk	www.postgrad-dentistry.bham.ac.uk/
Tel: Office – 0114 271 7983/7986 Tel: Direct – 0114 271 7955 Fax: Office –0114 271 7990 Fax: Direct –0114 268 7358 Mobile: 07836 780133 E-mail: c.franklin@sheffield.ac.uk	Mrs J Arkell Tel: 0114 271 7983 Fax: 0114 271 7990 E-mail: j.arkell@sheffield.ac.uk	www.derweb.co.uk/pgde-trent/
Tel: 01223 884850 Fax: 01223 884849 Mobile: 0860 217645 E-mail: janet.heath@lifespan-tr.anglox.nhs.uk	Mr Keith Pearce Tel: 01223 884852 Fax: 01223 884849 E-mail:keith.pearce@lifespan-tr.anglox.nhs.uk Ms Kate Wood Tel:01223 884850 E-mail: kate.wood@lifespan-tr.anglox.nhs.uk	www.camdent.org.uk/
Tel: 01865 740650 Fax: 01865 740699 E-mail: rjuniper@oxdent.ac.uk	Mr Christopher Cannon Dental Administrator Tel: 01865 740654 Fax: 01865 740699 E-mail: ccannon@oxford-pgmde.co.uk	www.oxdent.ac.uk/
Tel: 0151 285 2214 Fax: 0151 285 2378	Mrs E Graney Business Manager Tel: 0151 285 2252 Fax: 0151 285 2378 E-mail: elsie@mdcpde.co.uk	www.dental12.demon.co.uk/web2000/
Tel: 0117 927 3857 Tel: 0117 928 4525 Fax: 0117 928 4526 E-mail: alasdairmiller@bristol.ac.uk	Mrs Debbie Marriott Tel: 0117 928 4524 Fax: 0117 928 4526 E-mail: debbie.marriott@bristol.ac.uk	www.dent.bris.ac.uk/dpg/
Tel: 029 2074 4317 Fax: 029 2074 3960 E-mail: nashes@cardiff.ac.uk (Dental Postgrad) Pager: 01893 922516	Mrs Hannah Thomas Tel: 029 2074 2594 Fax: 029 2074 3960 E-mail:thomash8@cardiff.ac.uk	www.dentpostgradwales.ac.uk/
Tel: 0113 233 1505 Fax: 0113 233 1531 E-mail: h.bromwich@yorkshiredenery.com	Mrs Victoria Jones Tel: 0113 233 1525 Fax: 0113 233 1531 E-mail: v.jones@yorkshiredenery.com	www.leeds.ac.uk/pgdentistry/
Tel: 01962 863511 Fax: 01962 877663 Mobile: 0850 937180 E-mail: rtr@btinternet.com	Mrs Joan Horley Tel: 01962 863511 Ex 205 Fax: 01962 877663 E-mail: joan@wessex.org.uk	www.wessex.org.uk/dental/
Tel: 0131 220 8607 Fax: 0131 225 5891 E-mail: jim.rennie@scpmde.scot.nhs.uk Car phone: 0831 222 406	Mrs Shelagh McLeish Tel: 0131 220 8612 Fax: 0131 225 5891 E-mail: shelagh.mcleish@scpmde.scot.nhs.uk	www.show.scot.nhs.uk/scpmde/
Tel: 020 7692 3148 Fax: 020 7692 3115	Miss Margaret Hughes Tel: 020 7692 3148 Fax: 020 7692 3115 E-mail: mhughes@tpmde.ac.uk Ms Patricia Toward Tel: 020 7692 3147 E-mail: ptoward@tpmde.ac.uk Mrs Chris Clarke Tel: 020 7692 3175 E-mail: cclarke@tpmde.ac.uk	www.dental.tpmde.ac.uk/
Tel: 028 9049 4809 Fax: 028 9064 2279 E-mail: ian.saunders@dhsspsni.gov.uk	Miss M Erskine Tel: 028 9049 4809 Fax: 028 9064 2279 E-mail: marbeth.erskine@dhsspsni.gov.uk Mrs Lesley Whan Tel: 028 9049 4809 E-mail: lesley.whan@dhsspsni.gov.uk	www.nident.org.uk/
Tel: 0191 222 8345/8925 Fax: 0191 221 1049 E-mail: d.g.smith@ncl.ac.uk Mobile: 0374 613168	Janis Wilkinson Administrative Assistant Tel: 0191 222 8927 Fax: 0191 232 3657 E-mail: janis.wilkinson@ncl.ac.uk	www.ncl.ac.uk/~nrpimd/
Tel: 0161 237 2151 Fax: 0161 237 2613 Mobile: 0831 602281 E-mail: g.taylor@gwh.pgmd.man.ac.uk	Mrs Alison Bali Tel: 0161 237 2151 Fax: 0161 237 2613 E-mail: a.bali@gwh.pgmd.man.ac.uk Mrs Patricia Briggs Tel: 0161 237 2776 E-mail: p.briggs@gwh.pgmd.man.ac.uk	www.pgmd.man.ac.uk/

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MFDS Distance Learning Course

The Diploma of Member of the Faculty of Dental Surgery (MFDS) is a qualification which is designed for those undergoing general professional training who wish to qualify for entry to specialist training.

If you wish to obtain the MFDS qualification there will be new clinical challenges to meet as well as new practical skills to acquire through on-the-job experience. At the same time you will need a clear understanding of the extent of the MFDS syllabus. You will also need to know in what depth to study the constituent subjects. Most of all you will need to pace your study evenly throughout the twenty month training period.

To help those preparing for the MFDS examination the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England has produced a comprehensive 20-month distance learning course. The materials have been developed by a team of authors led by the Robert Bradlaw Adviser to the Faculty of Dental Surgery. All those involved are experienced teachers and many are examiners who have worked in conjunction with distance learning experts.

The MFDS Distance Learning Course begins each September and is designed to prepare trainees to sit Part A of the MFDS examination the next September and Parts B and C of the examination in April / May of the following year. However, the trainee may choose to take any part of the MFDS examinations at any of the two sittings per year.

Key Advantages of the MFDS Distance Learning Course

- “On the job” relevance - you follow a *structured programme* of learning alongside your practical training without interrupting your training.
- The course is *portable* - you can study it whenever and wherever you wish.
- You can do the work at times to suit you. Average study time is 12-15 hours per week, but there will be some individual variation. Study leave need not be taken for this course.
- You have a *workbook* which is like a personal tutor, available to guide your learning, explain what is relevant and what can be left until later. We help you to obtain all your *textbooks*, we provide *additional reading material* that you need and we provide an *advice phone line* to the College to give administrative and pastoral support. In addition you will be put in contact with a *Faculty Tutor* who can give you help, advice and answer any academically-related questions.
- The course is *flexible* - you can take it over the recommended 20-month period, or you may increase or decrease this period as you wish.
- You will be entitled to attend two *Study Days* which will be held at the Royal College of Surgeons of England at no additional cost.



Structure and Content

The MFDS distance learning course is divided into ten modules which match to sections of the MFDS syllabus. (Note: Module 3 covers both sections 3 and 4 of the syllabus)

- Modules 1-5 are examined in Part A of the MFDS examination.
- Modules 6-10 are examined along with Modules 1-5 in Parts B and C of the MFDS examination.

MODULE 1	MODULE 2	MODULE 3	MODULE 4	MODULE 5
Craniofacial development and growth	Oral biology, oral pathology and microbiology	Essential Medicine for the MFDS	Radiology, radiation hazards and imaging	Medical ethics and medico-legal aspects of dentistry
MODULE 6	MODULE 7	MODULE 8	MODULE 9	MODULE 10
General clinical dentistry including clinical sciences	Neurology, psychology and psychiatry in relation to dentistry	Therapeutics in relation to dentistry	Epidemiology, statistics and preventive dentistry	Audit and clinical information technology

The Materials

The MFDS distance learning course materials consist of:

- Workbooks which cover the material for each Module. These are the equivalent of your personal tutor, are easy to carry with you and provides advice on each topic. They will direct you to textbooks or other readings. They also contain questions to test your knowledge, spaces for you to write in, and a detailed feedback section.
- Readers which contain articles and extracts from texts to supplement your core textbooks. These may be either carefully chosen review articles or extracts from other textbooks, or material written or adapted by our authors to meet the needs of the course. The aim is to summarise and highlight the key points of a topic, thus saving you time and keeping you in touch with current viewpoints.
- Computer software related to specific aspects of the course.

Textbooks

The MFDS distance learning course assumes that you will have access to the core textbooks in the specified editions, as shown on the Book Order Form. The edition is important because each Module guides you to specific sections in the textbook.

NB. The course fee does not cover the cost of textbooks. However, they may be purchased from the College at a discount provided that you are enrolled on the MFDS distance learning course.

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Study Days

Study Days are an integral part of the course. They are designed to consolidate your learning and to enlarge upon elements of the course material. They will consist of a combination of lectures, small-group workshops and question and answer sessions.

Getting Started on the MFDS Distance Learning Course

What is the course fee ?

The fee for the course is £1000 if payment is made in full by cheque or credit/debit card. If payment is made using the instalment option or by the employing organisation the total fee is £1050 payable in two instalments of £525. (Fee schedules correct as at April 2001).

What do I receive in return for the course fee ?

The course fee covers the cost of Workbooks, associated Readers and related computer software. It also entitles you to attend two special Study Days held at the College. Additionally, you will be given academic support by your Regional Tutor and will be able to purchase the core textbooks at a discounted price.

Should I discuss the course with my Faculty Tutor ?

A Faculty Tutor in each Region has been appointed by the Faculty of Dental Surgery to oversee your training. We recommend that you discuss your plans with your Faculty Tutor. You will be informed about any clinical teaching which has been arranged to complement the MFDS distance learning course.

Whom do I contact at the Faculty of Dental Surgery ?

If you have any queries regarding the MFDS Distance Learning Course please contact the Education Administrator in the Faculty of Dental Surgery.

Direct telephone: 020 7869 6815/13

Direct fax: 020 7869 6816

E-mail: mfds@rcseng.ac.uk

If you have any queries regarding the syllabus and regulations governing the MFDS examination please contact the Examinations Department at the College.

Direct telephone: 020 7869 6821

Direct fax: 020 7869 6290

E-mail: exams@rcseng.ac.uk

NB. It is the responsibility of individual trainees to confirm their eligibility to enter the MFDS examination.

When may I enrol ?

You may enrol at any time. However, the course will begin each September and to gain the full benefit of the learning programme, you should enrol at this time. The MFDS application form can be obtained from the MFDS office or downloaded from the internet:

www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds



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General Professional Training in England and Wales

A PRACTICAL GUIDE



Faculty *of* Dental Surgery
The Royal College *of* Surgeons *of* England

35 - 43 Lincolns Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PE

Telephone: 020 7405 3474 Fax: 020 7869 6816

E-mail: fds@rcseng.ac.uk Website: www.rcseng.ac.uk/fds

Registered Charity No. 212808

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