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PEER REVIEW OF THE EXTERNAL COMPONENT OF THE MDS_c PROSTHODONTICS PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

This report has been prepared by the Academy of Australian and New Zealand Prosthodontists for the University of Sydney and the Australian Dental Council (ADC)

Review Panel

Dr G Clausen and Dr J Locke
Date: Friday 26th October 2007

Aim of Review

The aim of the review is to compare the internal and external components of the MDS_c in Prosthodontics at The University of Sydney to ensure that there is equivalence between the two modes of delivering the course.

Background.

An on-site evaluation of this program was undertaken by Drs. John Locke and Gerard Clausen on Friday, 26th October, 2007, as part of the Australian Dental Council course accreditation process.

Prior to the formal visit, documentation outlining the development of the course, liaison between the University of Sydney and the Australian and New Zealand Academy of Prosthodontists, course structure and content, and academic staff and students was provided for assessment. Information regarding several case presentations to be made by external graduate students as part of the clinical evaluation of treated cases was also forwarded, and student logbooks of treated cases were provided.

During the on-site evaluation interviews were held with Professor Iven Klineberg, members of the University academic staff including A/Prof Christopher Peck, Drs Christine Wallace and Suhas Deshpande, members of the teaching staff and clinical mentors, Clin Assoc Professor Terry Walton and Adj Assoc Professor Robin Hawthorn, and the internal and external candidates. Prior to the visit discussions were also held with the candidate from Western Australia, Dr. Glen Liddelow, and his clinical mentors, Clinical Professor Patrick Henry and Dr Bradley Shepherd. In addition, Dr Paul Hogan, involved as a clinical mentor, was also interviewed.

Councillors

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Prosthodontic Program

1. Sydney University has a 3 year MDSC program run at Westmead Dental Hospital.
2. The course duration is 3 years full-time.
3. All didactic work is completed in blocks at Westmead.
4. All clinical work is completed at Westmead.
5. The program has a component involving a research thesis.

In 2005, The University of Sydney offered an alternative format to their 3 year program at Westmead. The course offered was still a 3 year MDSC program run at Westmead Centre for Oral Health (WCOH) and would consist of the same component lists above, that is, numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5. The only difference would be that some of the clinical work could be completed in private practice under the supervision of clinical mentors. The clinical mentors would be geographically close to the private practice and their responsibilities would be the following:

- The selection of suitable clinical prosthodontic cases for the external students
- Clinical assessment of the patient and the student's work
- Assist in the diagnosis and treatment planning formulation
- Oversee the clinical treatment of the patients
- Review the treatment and patient at the completion of treatment
- There is a list of specific guidelines detailing the interaction between the clinical mentors and the external students and their patients

The students completing clinical work at Westmead Hospital will be referred to as "internal students" and the students completing their clinical work in a private practice will be referred to as "external students".

Didactic Work

The external students would attend Westmead to complete the same didactic teaching blocks as the internal students, that is:

First Year: 9 blocks over a 12 week period

Second Year: 6 blocks over a 7 week period

Third Year: 2 blocks over a 2 week period

The external students would attend Westmead each Tuesday in Years 2 and 3 to attend an Orofacial Pain and TMD clinic. The external students would attend Westmead to participate in a tutorial on a Monday evening each week with the internal students. The external and internal students would complete the same examination process each year.

Clinical Work

The internal students do all their clinical work at WCOH. The external students do most of their clinical work on their own patients in private practice. They do attend Westmead to work in the Orofacial Pain and TMD clinic every Tuesday in Years 2 and 3. They also attend special clinics at Westmead, such as the Max-fax prosthodontics clinics.

The clinical log books of both internal and external students are monitored to ensure they are getting clinical experience in all aspects of prosthodontics with regard to quantity and case-mix. Where deficiencies are noted, additional clinics are provided to rectify the problems. If external students cannot find suitable patients (such as complete denture patients), they are referred to WCOH to complete the appropriate treatment. Regular, face-to-face meetings are held between the external students and their mentors to discuss clinical cases and treatment planning for all patients, and to monitor the progress of treatment. There are forms to allow the mentors to detail their involvement with each case which should form part of the patient's clinical records.

Clinical mentors are rotated between external students every 18 months in general. This would mean that each external student would work with at least two mentors over a three year period.

External Students

Currently, there are four external students in the 3 year program.

One in third year
One in second year
Two in first year

Three external students live and work in Sydney close to their mentors. One external student in first year lives and works in Perth, Western Australia. This student travels from Perth to Sydney to attend all the didactic teaching blocks. This would mean in first year the student made nine trips to Sydney and stayed in Sydney for a period of 12 weeks.

All external students are carefully selected under the following criteria.

- 1) All students must have a minimum of 10 years experience following graduation
- 2) A student must have participated successfully in further studies such as the Implant Diploma, Part 1 of the FRACDS, a research masters degree or the like.
- 3) The student must be geographically close to suitable mentors to allow frequent visits and interaction.

Observations and Comparisons between Internal and External Students over 3 Years

- The external students generally do more clinical work than the internal students.
- Both internal and external students benefit from the camaraderie between students.
- The internal students benefit from the clinical experience shared by the external students.
- The external students benefit from the internal students in the area of didactic discipline.
- During the interview, all the students strongly emphasised the benefits of the interaction between the internal and external students.

The Student from Perth

It was only possible to select a student from Perth for the following reasons:

- a) The student was prepared to travel to Sydney for didactic work.
- b) There were two experienced mentors in Perth geographically close (in the same practice) who were prepared to participate in the program.
- c) There were recognised suitable clinics available in Perth in Max-fax and orofacial pain and TMD for the student to attend and gain suitable experience.
- d) To support the student, suitably qualified Prosthodontists in Perth have organised a journal review tutorial program.

The external program is not designed or suitable for remote students who cannot get easy access to suitable mentors and specialist clinics.

Audit Findings

The external component of the program is running as per its hand book and guidelines, except for one area. The mentors are required to regularly review the clinical progress of the treatment plans of all patients. The mentors have been checking treatment plans, impressions, dies and treatment casts, but they have not been reviewing the completed work in the patient's mouth, as per their own guidelines.

Recommendations

- 1 It is recommended that the mentors keep a log book for each student and each patient detailing their involvement in reviewing each case. This log book could be reviewed at the same time the external students' clinical log book is reviewed, to ensure that the clinical component is satisfactory and the course guidelines are being followed.
- 2 It is recommended that the external students nominate which of their cases will be supervised by their mentors and which of their cases will not be supervised, but will be included in their log book.

Summary

The external program is a well designed post-graduate program in Prosthodontics. The didactic component and the research component is the same as for the internal program. The only apparent difference is that most of the clinical work in the external program is completed and supervised away from Westmead in private practice. The external students generally complete more clinical work than the internal students. A critical aspect for the external candidates is their previous 10 years experience, and their close association with their clinical mentors.

The program is designed to give experienced dentists the opportunity to improve their skills and training, and gain a post-graduate qualification in Prosthodontics without having to stop work or give up their private practice. The external program is a full-time program and could not be described as a part-time program or a distance-learning program.

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