

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

Oral Health Sciences

Undergraduate provision

28 January 2021

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Executive summary

This report comprises the outcomes from the internal periodic review of undergraduate provision of Oral Health Sciences (OHS).

The review team found that Oral Health Sciences has effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice.

The report provides commendations on the subject area's provision, recommendations for enhancement to report back on and suggestions on how to support developments.

Key commendations

The review team commended the subject area in the areas of student support, including widening participation support, responding to student needs during the pandemic, improvements and developments in Blended Learning and Digital Teaching, peer review and teaching, preparedness for practice, reflective approach to adapt practice and enhanced communications with outreach partners.

Key recommendations

The top three recommendations that the review team identified for the subject area to prioritise were

Communications [2.1.7]

It is **recommended** that communication mechanisms and expectations are reviewed and information clarified to both students and staff to ensure a consistent approach. Information should be clearly signposted to students, for example a flowchart detailing examples of what may constitute a message that should be posted on MS Teams and what constitutes a message that should be sent by email. Expected response times should also be reinforced to ensure clarity for both staff and student

Communications [2.1.14]

The review team noted that Learn is the recognised platform to issue all work and to upload resources and this was discussed at the SSLC meeting in November 2020. Nevertheless, some of the students that met with the review team expressed confusion about the various platforms where work may be posted. The review team **recommends** that the Subject Area reiterate to all students the SSLC minute that all work will be found on Learn and no other work will be posted in different places. In addition, it is **recommended** that future feedback is sought from students and staff regarding how this is working going forward, such as at the next SSLC.

Communications [2.1.15]

The review team acknowledges the commendable effort of the subject area to use a variety of activities and tools to enhance learning and teaching, however it is **recommended** that clearer communication is required between the subject area when setting task deadlines to help identify where there might be conflicting deadlines and to prevent pinch points and overloading students.

Commendations, recommendations and suggestions

Key strengths and areas of positive practice for sharing more widely across the institution.

| No | Commendation | Section in report |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1 | The review team commends the subject area and the Deanery on the approach to integrate the programme more widely. [Strategic governance] | 1.1 |
| 2 | The review team commends the approach taken by the subject area to respond to student needs during the pandemic. [Student experience] | 2.1.4 |
| 3 | The review team commends the approaches undertaken by the subject area and encourages them to continue with their initiatives. [Learning from hybrid model] | 2.1.5 |
| 4 | The review team commends the approaches taken by the subject area to improve and develop Blended Learning and Digital Teaching. [Learning from hybrid model] | 2.1.9 |
| 5 | The review team commends the reflective approach taken by academic staff to adapt practice and use different platforms and tools. [Commitment to learning and teaching] | 2.1.12 |
| 6 | The subject area is commended for their approach to enhancing communications with the outreach partners, for example, through attendance at the OHS monthly meetings (on MS teams) and a more formalised and coordinated approach to sharing information. In addition the subject area is to be commended for the way in which recent placement attendance issues were dealt with. [Communications and Learning from hybrid model] | 2.1.18 |
| 7 | The opportunity to study abroad is commended and the review team encourages the subject area to continue with the exchange if possible. This is recognised as an example of good practice and a positive attribute to the programme for prospective students. [Student experience] | 2.1.19 |
| 8 | The subject area is commended for its commitment to student support. In addition, the review team commends the support mechanisms that exist within the programme team. [Student support] | 2.3.3 |
| 9 | Students valued the opportunity to work in clinical pairs and with other year groups and the review team commends the approaches taken. [Student experience] | 2.3.5 |
| 10 | The subject area is commended for the approach taken around peer review and teaching and reinforcing the value of the process e.g. giving effective feedback, understanding of what constitutes a certain grade. [Commitment to teaching and student experience] | 2.3.6 |

| | | |
|----|---|-------|
| 11 | The subject area is commended for their approach in engaging with and listening to the student body. [Student voice] | 2.4.3 |
| 12 | The review team commends the approach taken by the subject area to support Widening Participation students e.g. working with admissions on recruitment, and the MMI process. [Student support and Widening participation] | 2.5.3 |
| 13 | The review team commends the programme content for its preparedness for practice and relevance for post-graduation, and additionally communicating and engaging with students around additional and alternative career pathways. [Developing employability and graduate attributes] | 2.6.3 |
| 14 | The review team commends the outstanding work of the Programme Director for their collaborative leadership style in enhancing the learning and teaching culture. [Commitment to learning and teaching] | 2.7.2 |
| 15 | The subject area is to be commended for going beyond such minimum requirements made possible by the small size of the student cohort which makes double marking of all assessments possible. [Assessment and feedback] | 2.2.1 |

Recommendations for enhancement/Areas for further development

| Priority | Recommendation | Section in report | Responsibility of |
|----------|--|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | <p>Communications</p> <p>It is recommended that communication mechanisms and expectations are reviewed and information clarified to both students and staff to ensure a consistent approach. Information should be clearly signposted to students, for example a flowchart detailing examples of what may constitute a message that should be posted on MS Teams and what constitutes a message that should be sent by email. Expected response times should also be reinforced to ensure clarity for both staff and student</p> | 2.1.7 | subject area |
| 2 | <p>Communications</p> <p>The review team noted that Learn is the recognised platform to issue all work and to upload resources and this was discussed at the SSLC meeting in November 2020. Nevertheless, some of the students that met with the review team expressed confusion about the various platforms where work may be posted. The review team recommends that the Subject Area reiterate to all students the SSLC minute that all work will be found on Learn and no other work will be posted in different places. In addition, it is recommended that future feedback is sought from students and staff regarding how this is working going forward, such as at the next SSLC.</p> | 2.1.14 | subject area |
| 3 | <p>Communications</p> <p>The review team acknowledges the commendable effort of the subject area to use a variety of activities and tools to enhance learning and teaching, however it is recommended that clearer communication is required between the subject area when setting task deadlines to help identify where there might be conflicting deadlines and to prevent pinch points and overloading students.</p> | 2.1.15 | subject area |
| 4 | <p>Learning and Teaching</p> <p>To support student Self-Directed Learning and Reflective Practice, the review team recommends embedding and integrating academic writing/study skills as part of early engagement in lectures and associated tasks. (e.g. in the first and second year compulsory courses)</p> | 2.1.17 | subject area |
| 5 | <p>Dissertation/Essay writing support</p> <p>It is recommended that the subject area discuss the possibility of tailored courses</p> | 2.1.17 | Subject area and IAD |

| | | | |
|---|--|-------|-----------------|
| | relating to dissertations and essay writing in a clinical setting with the IAD | | |
| 6 | <p>Strategic governance structure The review team recommends that the Deanery consider succession planning and consider a deputy for Programme Director which could also provide development opportunities for other members of the subject area.</p> | 2.7.4 | Head of Deanery |

Suggestions for noting

If an issue is minor but the review team nevertheless wants to flag it as a potentially useful action, it will be couched as a suggestion rather than a formal recommendation. Suggestions are not tracked in onward reporting.

| No | Suggestion | Section in report |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1 | It is suggested that the subject area consider using the anonymous blackboard function on Collaborate where students can post questions and responses as a way to engage students (particularly those who find the online environment difficult for interaction). | 2.1.5 |
| 2 | The review team suggests that the subject area reflect and review the usefulness of the buddy system, engaging with the current 1st year students to identify where enhancements could be made especially if digital teaching is to continue in the coming academic years. | 2.1.6 |
| 3 | The review team suggests that students could be involved in discussions regarding course/resource content. | 2.1.17 |
| 4 | It is suggested that the subject areas team revisit the Students' Association Peer Assisted Learning and Support (PALS) scheme. | 2.3.6 |
| 5 | The review team suggests that staff are encouraged to use the media studios especially those within close proximity to the EDI and as students return to the campus, issues around room bookings and space are monitored. | 2.8.3 |

Section A – Introduction

Scope of review

Range of provision considered by the review (Appendix 1).

The Internal Periodic Review of Oral Health Sciences in 2020/21 consisted of:

- The University's remit for internal review (Appendix 2)
- The subject specific remit for the review (Appendix 3):
 - Blended Learning/Digital Teaching
 - Promoting Student Self-Directed Learning and Reflective Practice
- The Reflective Report and additional material provided in advance of the review (listed in Appendix 4)
- The meeting by the review team including consideration of further material
- The final report produced by the review team
- Action by the subject area and others to whom recommendations were remitted following the review

Review Team Members

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Convener | Dr Andrea Birdsall, School of Social & Political Sciences |
| External Member | Professor Phillip Cannell, School of Health and Social Care, University of Essex |
| Student Member | Angelina Malcher, Bioethics Law and Society, BMedSci |
| Review Team Administrator | Gillian Mackintosh, Academic Services |

The Subject area

The BSc (Hons) in Oral Health Sciences is a four year degree programme which leads to a qualification in Dental Hygiene and Dental Therapy; it is the only honours programme available in Scotland.

The programme sits within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) and is part of the Deanery of Clinical Sciences.

Physical location and summary of facilities

The subject area is based within the Edinburgh Dental Institute in Lauriston Place where teaching activities (theoretical and clinical) mostly take place. In year four of the programme, students attend three outreach clinics in centres across NHS Lothian and Fife.

Date of previous review

19 & 20 March 2015

Reflective Report

The report was written between October and December 2020 by Joanne Healy, Programme Director/Senior Lecturer for Dental Care Professionals, with input from the OHS programme team.

The subject-specific remit items and the data supporting the reflective report were discussed at the OHS student-staff liaison committee meetings, staff team meetings and the programme board. The outcomes of the General Dental Council (GDC) accreditation inspection (January 2020) were also considered.

A draft of the report was sent to all OHS students, programme staff and the Director of the Edinburgh Dental Institute.

Section B – Main report

1 Strategic overview

1.1 The review team were very impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm shown by the staff and students they met with during the review.

Oral Health Science combines the application of dental science with the opportunity to make a major contribution to the prevention and treatment of oral disease, and the maintenance of oral health for all members of the population. It offers a modern and innovative curriculum that provides excellent training for dental hygiene-therapists to meet the challenges of dentistry in the 21st century.

Continued accreditation of the programme by the General Dental Council (GDC) is subject to rigorous review to ensure required competencies are met. The team underwent GDC review and re-accreditation in January 2020 with a positive outcome.

The curriculum is broad-based and has a substantial clinical component, where students begin to undertake dental treatment for patients in their first year. The learning outcomes on which the Oral Health Sciences curriculum is based are contained within the GDC's document 'Preparing for Practice'.

Students are given the opportunity to explore dentistry in a number of locations, allowing them to develop skills in subject areas on which they may wish to focus their dissertation on in the final honours year. Following graduation, individuals are required to register with the GDC in order to practice as a dental hygiene-therapist.

Despite being the only undergraduate programme in the Deanery, the subject area appears to be well integrated within the Deanery and College e.g. the Programme Director, Programme Administrator and a student representative are all members of the College Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee and thus contribute to the ongoing development of learning and teaching within the College.

It was highlighted that this involvement has led to collaborations with other areas in the Deanery and across the College, for example, the provision of additional administrative support from the Edinburgh Medical School (EMS) and the Deanery is available if needed. The review team **commends** the subject area and the Deanery on the approach to integrate the programme more widely.

2 Enhancing the student experience

2.1 The approach to enhancing Learning and Teaching

2.1.1 The subject area has implemented a number of changes over the last five years to strengthen the programme and enhance the student experience. Examples of these included the creation of course leads for each of the four courses, establishing Peer assisted learning and the introduction of the first Erasmus student exchange with the University of Oslo.

2.1.2 Blended Learning and Digital Teaching

The Covid-19 pandemic has been particularly challenging for clinical dentistry with the cessation of aerosol generated procedures and the closure of all patient clinics.

The clinics were closed from the 18th March 2020 to 20th January 2021. Clinics are running at a reduced capacity (50%) and students are working in clinical pairs. The subject area have had to adjust from teaching a programme that is primarily focused on face to face/on campus sessions to a hybrid teaching model.

2.1.3 Despite the many challenges as a result of the pandemic, the subject area highlighted one positive outcome from the move to hybrid teaching has been the opportunity to reflect on current working practices.

The subject area is committed to improve and develop the blended approach going forward and this is reinforced through the inclusion of Blended Learning and Digital Teaching as one of the subject specific remit items.

2.1.4 The subject area have worked incredibly hard to ensure academic and professional standards have continued to be met and to support the student experience in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

This has included setting up a Buddy system on MS Teams for 1st year students facilitated by the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students; creating a MS Teams channel for exam day queries and providing a generic email address for students to report absences which can be checked by all teaching staff from any location. The subject area has also demonstrated an awareness and recognition of possible challenges facing students on their return to campus and face-to-face teaching.

The review team **commends** the approach taken by the subject area to respond to student needs during the pandemic.

2.1.5 Nevertheless, challenges around student interaction during live sessions, primarily with 1st year students were highlighted by the subject area. A number of approaches have been employed to encourage engagement such as the use of discussion boards, group activities and encouraging students to upload a photo if they don't want to turn on the camera function. In relation to this, the subject area is very conscious of inclusion/privacy issues that may exist for some students, as well as issues with wifi/ bandwidth which can result in cameras not being turned on. The subject area is also aware that the digital platform can create an environment where students who are more reserved can find it difficult to interact with others. The review team **commends** the approaches undertaken by the subject area and encourages them to continue with their initiatives. In addition, it is **suggested** that the subject area consider using the anonymous blackboard function on Collaborate where students can post questions and responses as a way to engage students (particularly those who find the online environment difficult for interaction).

2.1.6 Although the review team understands the rationale behind the creation of the buddy system, it would appear that some of the students were not entirely sure of its purpose resulting in low participation. The review team **suggests** that the subject area reflect and review the usefulness of the system, engaging with the current 1st year students to identify where enhancements could be made especially if digital teaching is to continue in the coming academic years.

2.1.7 The review team recognises the tremendous effort of the subject area to ensure that opportunities exist for students to maintain communication with staff during the pandemic. However discussions during the review highlighted confusion from students on which mechanism should be used for which purpose as well as frustration from the subject area on the misuse of the different mechanisms.

It is **recommended** that communication mechanisms and expectations are reviewed and information clarified to both students and staff to ensure a consistent approach. Information should be clearly signposted to students, for example a flowchart detailing examples of what may constitute a message that should be posted on MS Teams and what constitutes a message that should be sent by email. Expected response times should also be reinforced to ensure clarity for both staff and students.

2.1.8 The subject area reported seeing an improvement in student engagement and attendance with the move to hybrid teaching and this was confirmed by students who were positive about the blended learning/digital teaching approach, reporting benefits around time management and work life balance as well as more time to review course materials and prepare for practical sessions.

2.1.9 Furthermore, students were extremely positive about the Clinical Skills pre-recorded lectures. This approach was particularly welcomed by 2nd & 3rd year students who felt that being able to view those lectures in their own time ahead of practical sessions helped to consolidate their learning.

The review team **commends** the approaches taken by the subject area to improve and develop Blended Learning and Digital Teaching.

2.1.10 Promoting Student Self-Directed Learning and Reflective Practice

The move to hybrid teaching has seen an increase in the promotion of self-directed learning, encouraging students to utilise University wide resources.

In addition, the recent GDC inspection highlighted that 'The school must consider formal models for use in reflective diaries that encourage true student reflection.'

The subject area recognise that more could be done to support students in the areas of Self-Directed Learning and Reflective Practice and therefore included this topic as one of the subject specific remit items.

2.1.11 The subject area is conscious of the need to be reflective in their own practice, including adapting a digital session to suit different cohorts as a result of student feedback. The reflective report noted that one of the lecturing team worked on transferring the simulated clinical cases for use on Collaborate, and the reflective piece was published on the University Hybrid Teaching Exchange.

2.1.12 A number of platforms were used to engage students and encourage reflective practice including Discussion boards, Pebblepad, Learn, Collaborate and Cogbooks. The review team **commends** the reflective approach taken by academic staff to adapt practice and use different platforms and tools.

2.1.13 On the whole, students were mainly positive about the different platforms and tools to support them in their learning. However with the move to digital teaching and the various platforms now being used, students often found it confusing to know where different tasks were posted. They also highlighted some issues with not receiving notifications when tasks were assigned causing anxiety for some students. Students reported that feedback had previously been raised at Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC) meetings to suggest if task deadlines could be posted on their calendars and this would to alleviate the issue of missed notifications.

2.1.14 T The review team noted that Learn is the recognised platform to issue all work and to upload resources and this was discussed at the SSLC meeting in November 2020. Nevertheless, some of the students that met with the review team expressed confusion about the various platforms where work may be posted. The review team **recommends** that the Subject Area reiterate to all students the SSLC minute that all work will be found on Learn and no other work will be posted in different places. In addition, it is **recommended** that future feedback is sought from students and staff regarding how this is working going forward, such as at the next SSLC.

2.1.15 The review team acknowledges the commendable effort of the subject area to use a variety of activities and tools to enhance learning and teaching, however it is **recommended** that clearer communication is required between the subject area when setting task deadlines to help identify where there might be conflicting deadlines and to prevent pinch points and overloading students.

2.1.16 As noted above, the move to hybrid teaching has seen an increase in the promotion of self-directed learning, encouraging students to utilise university-wide resources.

Due to the nature of the programme, the students are more familiar with on campus/ in-person teaching, with limited emphasis on pre-lecture reading or self-directed tasks.

Feedback noted through SSLC meetings and mid-course feedback has indicated that students would benefit from additional support on academic writing and referencing. For example, students commented on confusion on where to find information about the Vancouver referencing style.

The subject area reported that despite the promotion of resources including those available at the Institute of Academic Development (IAD), and mechanisms to support essay writing such as the journal club, students often overlooked these and defaulted to contacting the subject area staff for support. In addition, students were often too dependent on staff to signpost them to information. It is hoped that through engaging with self-directed task, students will start to see the connection to becoming independent learners and developing resilience. This should also help to support the development of employability skills and graduate attributes.

2.1.17 To support student Self-Directed Learning and Reflective Practice, the review team **recommends** embedding and integrating academic writing/study skills as part of early engagement in lectures and associated tasks (e.g. in the first and second year compulsory courses).

It is **recommended** that the subject area discuss the possibility of tailored courses relating to dissertations and essay writing in a clinical setting with the IAD. The review team **suggests** that students could be involved in discussions regarding course/resource content.

2.1.18 Outreach placements

Clinical outreach placements are timetabled for 2 days per week (6 clinical sessions) for the final year students. Outreach placements are a vital part of the curriculum, where students gain valuable clinical experiences working in an environment out-with the Dental Institute.

There are three Outreach centres across Lothian and Fife. Only one centre has been running this academic year; the Lothian centre had issues with building facilities and the other centre at Fife had issues with social distancing and surgery capacity.

Since the last IPR the subject area have strengthened their relationship with the outreach partners and a number of improvements have been made. The subject area is **commended** for their approach to enhancing communications with the outreach partners, for example, through attendance at the OHS monthly meetings (on MS teams) and a more formalised and coordinated approach to sharing information. In addition the subject area is to be **commended** for the way in which recent placement attendance issues were dealt with.

2.1.19 Study Abroad

An Erasmus student exchange with the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Oslo was established to take place during February and March 2020.

The subject area is the first OHS programme to offer an exchange as other institutions run 3 year programmes, so the extra year enables the exchange to take place.

Three students were accepted to participate on the exchange however two of them left early as they felt the exchange wasn't for them. The remaining student had a positive experience but had to return home in early March due to the pandemic. The subject area is keen to continue their relationship with the University of Oslo and hope to be able to offer the exchange again in 2022.

The opportunity to study abroad is **commended** and the review team encourages the subject area to continue with the exchange if possible. This is recognised as an example of good practice and a positive attribute to the programme for prospective students.

2.2 Assessment and Feedback

2.2.1 Since the last review the subject area have reviewed all formative and summative assessments to improve alignment with the GDC learning outcomes and in response to updated clinical guidance.

The subject area routinely double marks all assessments submitted by students. The review team noted that this goes beyond Deanery moderation guidance that stipulates that only assessments that are worth more than 40 credits are required to be double marked. The subject area is to be **commended** for going beyond such minimum requirements made possible by the small size of the student cohort which makes double marking of all assessments possible.

2.3 Supporting students in their learning – all aspects of support relevant to students' learning

2.3.1 Academic and student support structures and mechanisms

2.3.2 Students are in daily contact with the members of the subject area as a result of the small cohort numbers and the clinical aspect of the programme.

2.3.3 The subject area is conscious of the need to support students at all stages of the student journey and student support structures appear to be working well for both students and staff. The subject area is **commended** for its commitment to student support.

In addition, the review team **commends** the support mechanisms that exist within the programme team. There is a real sense that the team work collaboratively together and support each other. There was evidence of effective communication between the team with many of them reporting that the move to home working had resulted in improved communication.

2.3.4 Peer assisted learning

Peer assisted learning is in place for years 3 and 4 and was implemented for case based learning and reflective portfolio sessions. There was also evidence of peer assisted learning between years 1 and 2 which was positively received by both year groups. As a result of the pandemic, the subject area introduced clinical pairs as another mechanism to promote peer assisted learning.

2.3.5 The students that met with the review team were very positive about their experiences of peer assisted learning especially during the pandemic when they have limited time with patients. They valued the opportunity to work in clinical pairs and with other year groups and the review team **commends** the approaches taken.

2.3.6 The subject area is also **commended** for the approach taken around peer review and teaching and reinforcing the value of the process e.g. giving effective feedback, understanding of what constitutes a certain grade. The review team recognised that although the current peer assisted learning system appears to be working well, students may find additional training and support helpful. Therefore it is **suggested** that the subject areas team revisit the Students' Association Peer Assisted Learning and Support (PALS) scheme.

2.4. Listening to and responding to the Student Voice

2.4.1 It was evident from discussions during the review that staff and students have a very positive relationship with each other.

Students have opportunities to provide both positive and negative feedback on any aspect of the programme through the Student class representative and deputy, SSLCs and various programme and course survey feedback mechanisms.

2.4.2 Students reported that SSLC meetings worked well despite often having more staff than students present.

The subject area also have student representation at the College undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee (CULT) and the EDI Programme Directors Group. There is also student representation within the profession in the British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT) and the British Society of Periodontology (BSP).

2.4.3 The reflective report noted that the subject area undertook research to understand and support the student experience during the initial lockdown in spring 2020. The programme team's Senior Researcher undertook a student survey which focused on student experiences of the shift to remote teaching and assessments in response to COVID-19. The paper 'Oral Health Sciences students views of the shift to remote teaching and assessment in response to COVID-19' is now published in the British Dental Journal (November 2020). The paper provides a useful summary of the students' views on the early response to COVID-19.

The subject area is **commended** for their approach in engaging with and listening to the student body.

2.5 Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation (WP)

2.5.1 The small number of students allows the subject area to deliver a variety of teaching and learning activities which are in line with the University Accessible and Inclusive Learning policy. The programme promotes and supports the University's Equality and Diversity Strategy and Equality and Diversity is embedded into the curriculum as a professional requirement.

2.5.2 Following a drop in student numbers in 2018/19, the subject area reviewed the admission process including personal statements, entry requirements and the weighting of the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) stations. As a result of the review, more emphasis is now placed on the content of the personal statements and increased weighting of the career exploration MMI station.

2.5.3 The subject area also recognise the need for ongoing support for WP students. It was clear from discussions during the review that the programme is leading the way for WP activity in the Deanery and College. The review team **commends** the approach taken by the subject area to support Widening Participation students e.g. working with admissions on recruitment, and the MMI process.

2.6 Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes

2.6.1 The programme content prepares students to practice safely as Dental Hygienist-Therapists. The majority of the graduates begin their careers in general dental practice and some have progressed to academia or management within the industry. Graduates can also apply for graduate entry dentistry and a few graduates have gone on to study BDS.

2.6.2 The Deanery Director of Quality reported at the most recent College QAE committee that the first Oral Health Sciences graduate had progressed to PhD study. If successful the student would be only the second dental hygienist in the UK to achieve a PhD which is testament to the strength of this programme.

2.6.3 The review team **commends** the programme content for its preparedness for practice and relevance for post-graduation, and additionally communicating and engaging with students around additional and alternative career pathways.

2.7 Supporting and developing staff

2.7.1 As noted in section 2.3.1, the subject area work well together and it appears to be a positive place to work. Despite being a small team of academic and professional services staff they are clearly committed to enhancing the student experience.

2.7.2 It is evident that the Programme Director has created an environment where ongoing reflection and professional development is valued. The teaching staff have either completed or are working towards the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP). One of the lecturers is currently part of the Aurora programme and another lecturer is due to complete their PhD in the next year. The team are regularly consulted and engaged with course development. The review team **commends** the outstanding work of the Programme Director for their collaborative leadership style in enhancing the learning and teaching culture.

2.7.3 However during the recent GDC inspection it was highlighted that there was no clear strategy for succession planning. The review team were also conscious of the need for support for the programme director and to minimise any risk for the continuation of programme development.

2.7.4 The review team **recommends** that the Deanery consider succession planning and consider a deputy for Programme Director which could also provide development opportunities for other members of the subject area.

2.8 Learning environment (physical and virtual)

2.8.1 Teaching spaces within the Edinburgh Dental Institute (EDI) are shared with other providers which can often lead to challenges with timetabling and room booking. Although teaching spaces within the central University campus can be booked, this can be logistically inconvenient especially if a clinical session runs over or teaching models/equipment have to be transported to another building. Pressure on clinical spaces can also impact on planning and timetabling which can be very complex and time consuming.

2.8.2 Lectures have to be pre-recorded as there are no lecture recording facilities in the teaching rooms in EDI. The challenges of lecture recording in a busy office are difficult to manage and working from home has been productive in this respect.

2.8.3 However, when teaching returns to on-campus these challenges will resume for the subject area who are keen to continue with the blended learning approach going forward. Therefore the review team **suggests** that staff are encouraged to use the media studios especially those within close proximity to the EDI and as students return to the campus, issues around room bookings and space are monitored.

3 Assurance and enhancement of provision

3.1 Setting and maintaining academic standards

The subject area operates within the University's Quality Framework and the review team is confident that academic standards are high. The approach employed within the subject area to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards is appropriate. Standards are continually reviewed through External Examiner reports, student feedback and annual monitoring. The subject area is required to submit annual monitoring paperwork to the General Dental Council.

Any new provision or changes to provision are subject to scrutiny and approval by the Deanery of Clinical Sciences Board of Studies. The Deanery Director of Quality also meets with the team each year to undertake local quality review.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Range of provision considered by the review

Programme: Oral Health Sciences (BSc Hons)

Courses

| |
|---|
| Clinical Practice 1(a) |
| Clinical Practice 1(b) |
| Health & Disease 1(a) |
| Health & Disease 1(b) |
| Personal and Professional Development 1 |
| Preparation for Practice 1 |
| Clinical Practice 2(a) |
| Clinical Practice 2(b) |
| Clinical Practice 3(a) |
| Clinical Practice 3(b) |
| Health & Disease 2a |
| Health & Disease 2b |
| Health & Disease 3a |
| Health & Disease 3b |
| Personal & Professional Development 2 |
| Personal & Professional Development 3 |
| Preparation for Practice 2 |
| Preparation for Practice 3 |
| Clinical Practice 4 |
| Personal and Professional Development 4 |

Appendix 2 – University remit

The University remit provides consistent coverage of key elements across all of the University's internal reviews (undergraduate and postgraduate).

It covers all credit bearing provision within the scope of the review, including:

- Provision delivered in collaboration with others
- Transnational education
- Work-based provision and placements
- Online and distance learning
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD)
- Provision which provides only small volumes of credit
- Joint/Dual Degrees
- Massive Open Online Courses MOOCs (even if non-credit bearing)

1. Strategic overview

The strategic approach to:

- The management and resourcing of learning and teaching experience,
- The forward direction and the structures in place to support this.
- Developing business cases for new programmes and courses,
- Managing and reviewing its portfolio,
- Closing courses and programmes.

2. Enhancing the Student Experience

The approach to and effectiveness of:

- Supporting students in their learning
- Listening to and responding to the Student Voice
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment and Feedback
- Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation
- Learning environment (physical and virtual)
- Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes
- Supporting and developing staff

3. Assurance and Enhancement of provision

The approach to and effectiveness of maintaining and enhancing academic standards and quality of provision in alignment with the University Quality Framework:

- Admissions and Recruitment
- Assessment, Progression and Achievement
- Programme and Course approval
- Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting
- Operation of Boards of Studies, Exam Boards, Special Circumstances
- External Examining, themes and actions taken
- Alignment with SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level, relevant benchmark statements, UK Quality Code
- Accreditation and Collaborative activity and relationship with Professional/Accrediting bodies (if applicable)

Appendix 3 Subject specific remit items

1. Blended Learning/Digital Teaching

When the current programme director was appointed in 2018 there was little focus on blended learning/digital teaching, since then the team have been implementing a blend of teaching activities across all the courses. Oral Health Science (OHS) students and staff have a busy timetable which includes clinical skills sessions, patient treatment clinics and lecture delivery. Timetabling and room booking always poses a challenge, this is due to sharing the teaching spaces within the Edinburgh Dental Institute (EDI) with other providers. We do have the option to book teaching spaces within the central University campus but this can be logistically inconvenient, especially if a clinical session runs over or we have teaching models/equipment to transport to another building. There are no lecture recording facilities in the teaching rooms in EDI so we are required to pre-record lectures where possible. The introduction of Top Hat Classroom has been successful with the students as highlighted in the mid-term feedback and student-staff liaison committee meetings (SSLC)

We began to introduce blended learning as staff and students felt the clinical skills sessions were taken up by delivering the lectures (in the same session) which limited the practical aspects. We piloted the pre-recorded lectures for some of the restorative clinical skills subjects, these included demonstration videos (some filmed in the clinical teaching room) and this method proved popular with the students and staff.

The challenges of lecture recording in a busy office are difficult to manage so working from home has been productive in this respect. We feel the blended approach will enhance student engagement and we have already noticed improvement in attendance levels, some students (and staff) have a long commute and/or caring responsibilities.

The staff have put in a tremendous amount of effort into the new Learn template. This now has a focus on student self-directed learning, group tasks, discussion boards, key readings and Collaborate, we have worked on adaptive release to follow the sequence of the curriculum.

The programme team's Senior Researcher undertook a student survey which focused on student experiences of the shift to remote teaching and assessments in response to COVID-19. The paper '**Oral Health Sciences students' views of the shift to remote teaching and assessment in response to COVID-19**' ([Document 1](#)) is now published in the British Dental Journal (November 2020). The paper provides a useful summary of the students' views on the early response to COVID-19.

The response to lock-down (March 2020) was a difficult challenge as our teaching was heavily focused on face to face/on campus sessions with limited digital material. The team adapted well and through good communication/daily team meetings we successfully completed the remainder of teaching digitally and restructured assessments to suit the current situation.

One of the lecturing team worked on transferring the simulated clinical cases for use on Collaborate, her reflective piece was published on the University learning exchange. ([Document 2](#))

Another member of the lecturing team developed the use of Questionmark Perception for the assessments which were previously in a written format. Students (and staff) were given a mock assessment to familiarise themselves with the online setup of both Questionmark Perception and Collaborate.

The team are enthusiastic to improve and develop the blended approach going forward.

2. Promoting Student Self-Directed Learning and Reflective Practice

We are very small programme with a maximum capacity of 40 students. We have an excellent student support system and a well embedded sense of community within the Edinburgh Dental Institute.

The SSLC has improved over recent years and the team have implemented many of the suggestions made by the students. We now have student representation on the EDI Programme Director's group and at the College Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee (CULT). We also have student representation within the profession in the following areas:

- British Society of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (BSDHT)
- British Society of Periodontology (BSP)

Due to the recent focus on hybrid teaching there has been increased promotion of self-directed learning and encouraging the students to utilise the University resources, including those available at the Institute of Academic Development (IAD). The students are used to the in person/on campus teaching for lectures and workshops, with limited emphasis on pre-lecture reading or self-directed tasks. With the new focus on digital teaching, the adaptive release of lectures (on Learn) and introducing more student-led tasks, this is encouraging and promoting self-directed learning activities.

Previous and recent feedback from the SSLC meetings and mid-term feedback is the request for increased lectures on academic writing and referencing. Our Senior Researcher facilitates journal clubs with all years on a monthly basis, but on occasions students can fail to notice the link with journal clubs and the usefulness for essay writing and dissertations. The teaching staff do promote the IAD resources and dissertation events but this can sometimes be overlooked by the students, we believe an external insight would be beneficial to the team in this respect.

We feel as a small programme, the students rely heavily on the academic staff for information which is available on the University website, Learn and in the programme handbook. We encourage students to contact the programme coordinator in the first instance for any administrative queries and also signpost them to EdHelp. The MS Teams channels (set up in March 2020) are proving to be a quick and effective way of communicating with the students, although there is overuse of contacting teaching staff on a private message rather than a formal email.

Digital teaching lends itself to the small cohort numbers in OHS, but staff still feel there is limited student engagement especially during the live Collaborate sessions. Staff are often faced with blank screens and students communicating through the text chat function only. This can be disheartening for staff when they have spent time devising interactive sessions.

The recent GDC inspection report highlighted that Requirement 18 was partly met:

'The school must consider formal models for use in reflective diaries that encourage true student reflection'

The team recognise that the student reflective portfolios and reflective logs require a review. We have embedded the use of the University's [reflective toolkit](#) during the reflective portfolio sessions.

We feel by including this area in the review it will assist staff with promoting reflective practice, and also develop the students personal and professional development with a focus on the post-graduation [GDC enhanced CPD scheme](#).

Appendix 4 Additional information considered by review team

Prior to the review visit:

- Reflective Report & Appendices
- School Quality Assurance Reports: 2019-2020,2018-2019,2017-2018
- External Examiners Summary reports: 2019-2020,2018-2019,2017-2018
- Programme Handbook – includes Deanery organisation chart & Subject area information
- Programme specification information
- Statistical information
- Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee Reports
- Student Staff Liaison Committee meeting minutes
- General Dental Council Education Quality Assurance Inspection Report January 2020
- University of Edinburgh Standard Remit 2020/21
- Subject specific remit item
- Comments received from external bodies : NHS Education For Scotland
- Edinburgh University Students' Association School Report

Appendix 5 Number of students

| 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 10 |