

Awarding CCST & The Research Component

Award of CCST in Orthodontics & The Research Component of Training

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1. Background

1.1 In order for a trainee to apply to the General Dental Council for the award of a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training and entry to the Council's list of Specialists in Orthodontics, there must be evidence of:

- a) Satisfactory completion of the three year training programme.
- b) Satisfactory completion of the RITA process
- c) Successful completion of the M Orth examination.

1.2 In the GDC approved curriculum, there is a statement concerning the research element of the training programme as follows - *"It will be necessary for all trainees to demonstrate the successful completion of a research component during their training."*

1.3 The interpretation of this by the Joint Committee for Specialist Training in Dentistry and the Specialist Advisory Committee in Orthodontics is that, as part of the objectives of the training programme, a trainee should be capable of interpretation of scientific literature, undertaking research activities as well as preparing oral and written presentation of clinical and research findings.

To that end "All trainees will be expected to undertake a University higher degree, which includes a research component unless they already hold such a degree. If a higher degree is not undertaken trainees must be involved in the production of at least 2 papers based on their own research submitted to professionally refereed journals for publication."

1.4 Although the Intercollegiate MOrth examination contains a research section (for which exemption is allowed if a higher degree that contained a research component has been undertaken), the Edinburgh MOrth does not examine research competence.

1.5 Recently, some trainees have been signed up to enter the MOrth examination (and therefore by inference to have satisfactorily completed all aspects of the three year training) and yet have not undertaken a higher degree nor submitted papers for publication. Furthermore, these individuals having then passed the MOrth have been signed up by the Postgraduate Dean, presumably on the advice of the local Training Programme Director, for the award of a CCST.

1.6 Clearly this inconsistency needs to be remedied, especially as from January 2007 Postgraduate Deans will be the only signatory to the recommendation to the GDC for the award of a CCST

2. Solution

2.1 Following discussions at the SAC, it was felt that the research component of training should form part of a work place assessment.

2.2 Research progress should form part of a more robust annual assessment process (currently the RITA) and that the trainee's academic supervisor (and possibly another academic adviser) should be called upon to report as to a trainee's progress with either a masters (or equivalent) degree or research leading to submission of two papers.

2.3 Research milestones (see below) should be in place and which can be referred to at the annual assessment.

2.4 Academic supervisors should alert the Training Programme Director and the Postgraduate Dean as soon as possible of situations where a trainee's research progress is unsatisfactory.

2.5 The Training Programme Director must have evidence that there has been satisfactory progression in all aspects of training (including research) at the annual assessments before signing up a trainee to sit the MOrth examination.

3. Milestones

3.1 At the present time there wide variation between universities as to the time of starting and completing the research component of a higher degree.

3.2 It is incumbent upon Academic Supervisors to ensure that a trainee can complete the research component of a higher degree within the three year training period, including the submission of papers.

3.3 The milestones need to be timetabled to enable applications to be completed in sufficient time to enter the June diets of the MOrth examinations.

3.4 The milestones as to research progress monitored at the annual assessments must have a slight degree of flexibility but in essence should be as follows:

Timing of RITA	Minimum research progress expected if undertaking higher degree	Minimum research progress expected if undertaking submission of papers
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Within 12 months of starting	Protocol agreed, ethical and R&D approval obtained, critical appraisal of literature completed, sample size, material and methods agreed	Protocol(s) agreed, ethical and R&D approval(s) obtained, critical appraisals of literature completed, Sample size, material and methods agreed
Within 24 months of starting	Data collected and analysed appropriately	Data collected and analysed appropriately
Within 30 months of starting	Appropriate discussion and conclusions made. Project likely to be completed to satisfaction of academic supervisor within 5 months	Appropriate discussion and conclusions made. Papers likely to be in a format ready for submission to a peer reviewed journal to the satisfaction of the academic supervisor within 5 months

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