

**RE-INSPECTION OF THE EDINBURGH DENTAL
INSTITUTE DIPLOMA IN CLINICAL DENTAL
TECHNOLOGY AWARDED BY THE ROYAL
COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF EDINBURGH**

24 JANUARY 2013

REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS

MR P BUTLER

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DR R WILLIAMS

MS J STONE (CHAIR)

Overview

For this re-inspection, the panel were pleased to note that the requirements and recommendations set out in the GDC's previous report have been addressed. Overall organisation of the examination was vastly improved and the examiners involved in assessing the students carried out their roles very effectively. Contingency plans had been put in place to deal with potentially severe weather conditions and, again, this was an improvement from the previous inspection. More formal contingency plans might need to be considered in future. We would also like to see the Regulations for this examination reviewed so that it can run in the most useful format for everyone involved. This should include a revision or, at the very least, a clarification of the rules around compensation between components of the examination in order to avoid the potential for confusion or error.

Purpose & GDC process

1. As part of its duty to protect patients and promote high standards, the General Dental Council (GDC) monitors the education of dental students and student dental care professionals (DCPs) at institutions whose qualifications are approved by the GDC. The aim is to ensure that these institutions provide high-quality learning opportunities and experiences and that students who obtain a dental qualification are safe to practise.
2. The purpose of this re-inspection was to assess whether the diploma in clinical dental technology conforms to the GDC's requirements for the training of clinical dental technicians (CDTs) and whether, on qualification, students with the diploma would be suitable for registration with the GDC.

Introduction

3. This report sets out the findings of a one-day re-inspection of the diploma examination using the assessment principles and guidelines set out in *Developing the Dental team – Curricula Frameworks for Registrable Qualifications for Professionals Complementary to Dentistry* (DDT) as a benchmark. The report highlights many areas of good practice, but also draws attention to areas where issues of improvement and development need to be addressed. The report is based on the findings of the re-inspection and on a consideration of supporting documents prepared prior to, and made available during, the inspection.
4. The examination comprises 3 individual components: A written examination, Case Presentations and a Structured Oral examination. The written paper element of the examination took place on 8 January 2013. The GDC attended the 'practical' elements of the examination only (Case Presentations and Structured Oral).
5. We were welcomed by Graeme Lilywhite (Programme Director). During the re-inspection, we were able to meet with the examiners involved with assessing the students' performance. We would like to thank all concerned for their help, courtesy

and co-operation during the re-inspection. Staff from both the Edinburgh Dental Institute and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh were welcoming and helpful.

Previous inspection

6. The report on the diploma examination from 2010 is available on the GDC website. It describes how extremely poor weather conditions, affecting large parts of the UK, meant that an examiner had to be replaced at very short notice. Whilst the inspectors agreed with the pragmatic approach taken to resolve the situation, they felt that better contingency plans could be in place. Additionally, poor overall organisation and a lack of attention to detail provided much room for improvement for this examination. The report concluded that a re-inspection of the final examination should take place at the next available sitting and should focus on assessing whether the requirements set out in the 2010 had been addressed.

Final examination

7. The examination is now conducted at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, who award the diploma, and this is a change from previous diets when the examination was conducted at the Edinburgh Postgraduate Dental Institute where the students undertake their training. We were happy to see that the examination has now been completely separated away from the programme and this makes clear that the diploma examination is a Royal College examination.
8. Neither of the examiners used for this sitting have any connection to the students and are in no way involved with the teaching or training of the students. This means maintaining the anonymity of candidates was much more straightforward for this sitting of the examination. We felt this was a vast improvement on our last inspection where it was not really possible to deal with candidates in an anonymous manner.
9. It was clearer to the inspectors that contingency plans had been considered in advance of the examination. This had involved arranging stand-in examiners located locally in case of travel difficulties and arranging for students to travel to the examination early. However, we did not see a formal contingency plan. Snow had again been causing difficulties across the UK in the run up to this sitting so the panel were pleased that arrangements had been made to mitigate any problems that might occur. The School and Royal College may wish to consider establishing formal contingency plans to deal with adverse weather conditions and other unforeseen events.
10. We felt that the examiners did an excellent job. Time keeping was exemplary and far better than the previous sitting we attended. We felt that the range and depth of questioning was appropriate for the level required of the candidates. The examiners were careful to ensure they asked open questions but probed for more detail where they felt this was necessary. We also noted that particular attention was paid to ensuring that the maximum amount of time was given to allowing candidates to speak and present their knowledge. We also felt that the examiners also managed the transition of questioning between each other particularly well.
11. We were able to speak with the External Examiners who told us they were happy with the process of examining for this qualification and that they had been provided with everything they required in order to carry out their role effectively. This had

included a meeting prior to the examination to discuss the approach and any other necessary preparations. They told us that the marking criteria they were required to use were very clear and we would support their view. There are 4 grades available to the examiners and this forces them to make a firm decision on the performance of each candidate since there is no 'middle grade' to opt for.

12. The External Examiners told us that it would be helpful if they could see students' written Case Presentations further in advance in order to be able to plan questions in a timely fashion. This relates to a point made in our previous report that exam regulations do not appear to entirely suit what is happening in practice. We would suggest that exam regulations are updated to ensure the examination runs in the way which is desired by all those involved.
13. We had an opportunity to look at the students' logbooks during our inspection. We felt that, given these are one of the primary methods of assessing and monitoring practical skill, they would benefit from the inclusion of more detailed notes. We would also like to see better use made of space available for capturing comments and feedback. We also felt there was some variation in quality between the logbooks and clinical assessment records we looked at. What was clear, however, was the high number of cases seen by each student.
14. In general, we were happy to see that the requirements and recommendations set out in the GDC's previous inspection report have been considered and addressed. The main exception seems to be the examination regulations (see paragraph 12) which have not been updated since 2009.

Final Examination Board Meeting

15. On the whole, this process was clear and fair. However, there seemed to be rather a lot of confusion regarding compensation rules and how these should be applied and this left us feeling somewhat concerned. Compensation is permitted for candidates who achieve a 5 in the structured oral component and 13 or more in the case presentation component of the examination. Confusion arose as to whether compensation was allowed between the practical and written elements of the examination. We felt that consideration might be given to amending or revising the compensation rules to make them clearer.
16. All members of the panel agreed that it was disappointing that the failure rate for the examination was high. Consideration might be given to methods of teaching and feedback arrangements which might improve this in future.

Conclusion

17. The inspectors recommend that the Edinburgh Dental Institute Diploma in Clinical Dental Technology is sufficient for the purpose of registration with the General Dental Council.

Requirements

To the Edinburgh Dental Institute and Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

- Consideration needs to be given to creating formal contingency plans to deal with poor weather conditions and other unforeseen events (9)
- Consideration needs to be given to updating the examination regulations which, in their current format, do not seem to fit with how the examination is running or how those involved would like it to run (12, 14)
- The compensation rules need to be clarified (15)

To the Edinburgh Dental Institute only

- Logbooks and clinical records need improvement to capture more detail including comments and feedback from tutors (13)
- Consideration should be given to methods of teaching and arrangements for feedback (16)

(Numbers in brackets refer to individual paragraphs within the main body of the report)