

**INSPECTION OF THE FOUNDATION  
DEGREE IN DENTAL TECHNOLOGY**

**DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY**

**22, 23, 24 MAY and 15, 29 JUNE 2006**

## **REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS**

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## **FOREWORD**

### **Summary overview**

1. This programme is delivered to a consistent high standard across the three college sites inspected. There is effective, explicit, communications, assessment and quality assurance infrastructure in place between the colleges and De Montfort University corporately. Work placements including mentoring are well managed by faculty programme-wide and each college enjoys a positive relationship with local dental laboratories providing placements. Staff teams at each college are enthusiastic and are committed to delivering and developing the programme. In addition, staff are clearly committed to their own training and development both as dental technicians and as educators. One area of concern relates to staffing at Liverpool Community College, where just two staff deliver the programme (paragraph 28). The colleges are satisfied with funding arrangements for the programme. Inspectors were pleased to note the two year commitment of South East London Strategic Health Authority to fund 16 full-time places on the programme at Lambeth College (paragraph 21).
2. Student feedback across the colleges inspected was positive stressing, in particular, the supportive learning environment at each college. One concern raised related to the quantity of assessments across the programme modules (paragraph 56). Resultant assessment bunching can become onerous at particular times during the academic year, especially given coterminous practical work being undertaken by students. Related to this, faculty may wish to review the number of resubmissions of work students are permitted.
3. The merger of colleges in Nottingham (paragraphs 24, 25) will need to be monitored. Both De Montfort University and the General Dental Council will wish to ensure that the impact of the college rebuilding work on the student experience at Castle College is minimised.

### **Purpose**

4. As part of its duty to protect patients and promote high standards, the General Dental Council (GDC) monitors the education of dental students and 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.

### **GDC process**

5. The Foundation Degree in Dental Technology at De Montfort University (DMU) was provisionally approved at the 24 October 2005 GDC Education Committee meeting. This GDC inspection commenced with an inspection in May 2006 to observe students on the programme and concluded with an examination board inspection in June 2006. The purpose of the inspection is to consider whether the programme should receive full approval.
6. In respect of the programme, GDC full approval signifies that it conforms to the GDC's requirements for the training of dental technicians and that, on qualification,

students are competent to register with the GDC as dental technicians. Approval may be withdrawn if the programmes and/or the assessment(s) are not such as to permit a graduate of the programme to obtain the standard of professional practice determined by the Council as set out in *Developing the Dental Team – Curricula Frameworks for Registrable Qualifications for Professionals Complementary to Dentistry*<sup>1</sup> (hereafter referred to as '*Developing the Dental Team*').

7. This report sets out the findings of a three-day programme inspection to this DMU programme on 22, 23 and 24 May 2006 and a two-day examination board visit on 15 and 29 June 2006. The inspection team used the assessment principles and guidelines set out in *Developing the Dental Team* as a benchmark. The report highlights areas of good practice, also drawing attention to areas where issues of improvement and development need to be addressed. The report is based on the findings of the inspections and on consideration of supporting documents prepared by the colleges and co-ordinated by the programme leader at DMU.
8. The report will be considered by the Education Committee of the GDC. The Committee will decide whether the programme can be awarded full approval as a registrable qualification. In finalising the report, DMU will be given the opportunity to correct any factual errors and then submit its observations. The report, together with the DMU's observations, will be published on the GDC website.

## Introduction

9. The Foundation Degree Dental Technology is a validated programme of DMU delivered at four colleges in the current (2005-06) academic year:

Lambeth College, London  
Castle College, Nottingham (formally People's College)  
Liverpool Community College, Liverpool  
Matthew Boulton College, Birmingham.

10. It is a 240 academic credit two year full-time and a three year part-time programme which commenced at the first three of the colleges listed above in September 2004. Foundation Degree programmes covers academic levels one and two of a traditional three year undergraduate degree programme<sup>2</sup>. When the inspection was arranged, the GDC decided to visit the first three colleges above. The main reason for focusing on these three colleges was that students at these colleges were in the second (part-time) or final (full-time) year of their programme at the time of the inspection. The programme commenced at Matthew Boulton College, Birmingham, in September 2005 and that college was not therefore inspected as part of this report; however it was visited as part of DMU's validation process (paragraph 12). This report therefore addresses provision of the programme at Lambeth College, Castle College and Liverpool Community College.

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<sup>1</sup> General Dental Council, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Foundation Degrees are broadly equivalent to the first two years of an Honours degree. The new QCA National Qualifications Framework puts Foundation Degrees at level 5, an 'intermediate Higher Education qualification'. Honours degrees are level 6. (Source: Department for Education and Skills *Foundation Degree* website).

11. The inspectors commenced the inspection on May 22 at Lambeth College, London, thereafter at Castle College, Nottingham on May 23 and finally at Liverpool Community College on May 24. The examination board inspection involved attendance at two examination boards convened at DMU's main Leicester campus on 15 and 29 June 2006. At each of the college sites, the inspectors were met by the respective college course leaders, Mr Chris Grigson (Lambeth College), Mr Tony Griffin (Castle College) and Mr Chris Fielding (Liverpool Community College). At the examination board inspections at Leicester, the inspectors were met by Dr Parvez Haris, the DMU Faculty of Health and Life Sciences programme leader for this qualification. During the inspections, we met with academic and administrative staff from each of the colleges and from DMU corporately. We also met with employers and with students undertaking the programme. We would like to thank all concerned for their help, courtesy and co-operation during the visit.
12. The Foundation Degree in Dental Technology was validated on 29 March 2004 by a DMU Validation Panel chaired by Mrs Kathryn Arnold, DMU's Head of Library Services. The Panel convened at the main Leicester campus of the University. At the request of the GDC, a lay Council Member, a dentist Council Member, a dentist educator and a dental technology educator participated as observers at the validation. These GDC participants were, respectively, Professor David Herbert, Mr John Chope, Professor Alan Harrison and Mr Jeff Lewis. The validation process included location visits to each of the college sites. The validation event and related location visits assessed all aspects of programme delivery. In approving the four colleges listed at paragraph 9 to deliver this DMU programme<sup>3</sup>, a number of conditions were advised which the programme team were required to address. When the conditions were addressed, the GDC provisionally approved the programme as registrable at its Education Committee meeting of 24 October 2005. It should be noted that, in accordance with DMU's *Guide to the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Partnerships and Provision* (February 2006), this programme will be comprehensively revalidated by DMU in 2007 at all colleges approved to deliver the programme.
13. Across the four colleges 121 students were on-programme at the time of the inspection, 87 were part-time and 34 full-time. Two colleges currently offer the programme on a part-time only basis: Castle College, Nottingham and Liverpool Community College. Lambeth College, London and Matthew Boulton College, Birmingham, offer the programme on both a part and a full-time basis. Across the four colleges, the cohort breaks down as follows:

Lambeth College, London:	28 (FT)	41 (PT)
Castle College, Nottingham:	27 (PT)	
Liverpool Community College:	10 (PT)	
Matthew Boulton College, Birmingham:	6 (FT)	9 (PT)

## Context - DMU

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<sup>3</sup> The School of Dental Technology, Belfast, was also validated to offer this programme but had not commenced provision by the time of this inspection.

14. This DMU programme resides within the School of Allied Health Sciences, one of four schools in DMU's Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. The programme is part of DMU's collaborative partnership provision and, as such, is also overseen by DMU's Department of Educational Partnerships (EP). EP works with faculties and schools to initiate and establish collaborative provision. Corporate relationships with partner colleges, the DMU study experience for college students and all financial aspects of such provision are managed by EP. Programme academic and quality assurance matters, including student feedback, are considered by the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Collaborative Provision Committee. This Committee also liaises closely with EP. The Committee meets at least twice each academic session.
15. At DMU the programme is led by Dr Parvez Haris who convenes the Foundation Degree Dental Technology Steering Group. The Steering Group has access to the support and input at appropriate times from the Head of the School of Allied Health Sciences, faculty administrative staff and staff from the DMU Department of Academic Quality. Each college course leader sits on the Steering Group. The Group meets at least three times each academic session. The Group oversees all aspects of the running of the programme across the four colleges. Minutes of Group meetings available to the inspectors confirmed the comprehensive nature of the Group's engagement across the programme. The DMU Subject Boards ensure that all aspects of the management of the programme are consistent with DMU regulations, policies and procedures. The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences Subject Boards, which meet three times per academic session, are attended by Dr Haris with one of the college course leaders.
16. The Foundation Degree is currently funded at HEFCE<sup>4</sup> Band B. This amounts to £6,134 per full-time student equivalent (FTE). In addition full-time students pay a programme fee of £1,500 per year. Part-time students pay £150 per module. In respect of each student, DMU charges 20% from the HEFCE and students' fee income. This overhead covers costs of programme-wide DMU quality assurance, access for programme students to DMU central service facilities and DMU Educational Partnerships support for the programme. Each college receives the 80% balance for each FTE student undertaking the programme with them. The inspectors noted that from the academic year 2006-07, the programme fee for new full-time students will increase to £3,000 per year. (The fee will remain at £1,500 for existing students). The fee for part-time students will remain £150 per module. In addition inspectors noted that the Department of Health pays a bursary of £2,000 per year to private dental laboratories which offer an employee the opportunity to undertake the programme part-time.
17. DMU attracts some additional funding for the programme in respect of *Widening Participation* monies. The inspectors were advised that this funding was allocated centrally to support corporate *widening participation* initiatives.

### **Context – The three colleges inspected**

18. It should be noted that, across the three colleges, a Foundation Degree Consortium (hereafter referred to as 'the Consortium') meets after each DMU Programme Steering Group meeting to maintain and develop module content and assessments.

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<sup>4</sup> HEFCE – Higher Education Funding Council England

This involves each of the course leaders, each module leader and relevant teaching staff. This Consortium network remains in place outwith formal meetings to deliver and develop the programme throughout the year. In addition to the three colleges inspected, this Consortium also includes Matthew Boulton College, Birmingham (paragraph 9).

19. Programme management is central to the work of the consortium. Module leaders (for the twelve modules comprising the Foundation Degree) are appointed from across the four colleges delivering the programme. All colleges run to a common programme delivery timetable. Module leaders develop and review module assessments, for example multiple choice questions (MCQs), in consultation with Consortium colleagues. All programme assignments are similarly developed and reviewed.

#### **Lambeth College, London –**

20. Mr Chris Grigson, Deputy Head of the School of Applied Sciences at the college, is the course leader for the Foundation Degree, in addition to overseeing a portfolio of other science courses in the School. Mr Grigson has regular contact with Dr Haris at DMU. Mr Grigson and his dental technology staff colleagues participate fully in the DMU Programme Steering Group, Consortium meetings and wider Consortium activities.
21. Financially the college is satisfied with the proportion of the HEFCE income that they receive from DMU. In turn, dental technology staff considered that they had sufficient resources from the college to deliver the programme. It was noted that the South East London Strategic Health Authority was funding 16 full-time places for this programme at the college commencing September 2006 for a two year period.

#### **Castle College, Nottingham –**

22. Mr Tony Griffin is course leader for the Foundation Degree at Castle College and Head of the Department of Science and Mathematics. Mr Griffin is also Manager of the School for Dental Care Professionals. He reports to the College Vice-Principal and the College Principal. Mr Griffin is in regular contact with Dr Haris at DMU and participates, together with other Castle College staff, in DMU Programme Steering Group and all Consortium meetings and wider Consortium work. In addition Ms Maria Davidson provides administrative support for the programme, which includes liaison with DMU.
23. The College Principal noted that the college had originally sought slightly more than the 80% of HEFCE FTE student fee which they currently receive from DMU. The college seeks to ensure that the 20% of the HEFCE FTE student fee received by DMU is clearly allocated for the benefit of programme students and senior staff are satisfied in this regard to date. Dental technology staff expressed no concerns about resourcing of this programme at Castle College.

#### **Recent developments in Further Education provision in Nottingham**

24. Inspectors were briefed on recent developments in respect of the merger of further education colleges in Nottingham. On 1 June 2006 the previous college in

Nottingham hosting the DMU programme, People's College, merged with Broxtowe College to become Castle College. The merger was supported by Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) following a recent review of resources allocated to further education in the city of Nottingham. The dental technology programme will remain at its existing physical site on Maid Marian Way in central Nottingham. However, the site is to be rebuilt. Planning permission and funding for the rebuilding have been agreed and final approval by the LSC in respect of phased rebuilding work is expected in September 2006. The first new-build proposed on the existing site is for science facilities. Therefore dental technology students would move from their current facilities to the new science building. The anticipated date of the move to the new science building is September 2009. It is expected that all central college support services will be provided on a temporary site for a period of a year from September 2009 to September 2010.

25. We were assured that designated staff of DMU Department of Educational Partnerships (EP) are in very regular contact with college senior management and will support and advise on developments as appropriate. Together with DMU Quality Division colleagues, EP staff will expect to be consulted upon and to inspect interim arrangements for Castle College students (for example the temporary provision of central college facilities).

#### **Liverpool Community College, Liverpool –**

26. Mr Chris Fielding is the course leader for the Foundation Degree at Liverpool Community College. The programme is delivered within the Faculty of Maths and Science. He reports to the Science Curriculum Manager and to the Head of the Faculty. As for the other colleges, Mr Fielding is fully engaged with the DMU Programme Steering Group and with all Consortium meetings and wider Consortium work.
27. Senior college staff expressed satisfaction with funding for the programme received from DMU and had no concerns about the resourcing of the programme at Liverpool Community College.
28. Inspectors noted the course teaching team of just two individuals at Liverpool. Liverpool Community College has a large contract with Protocol National, which acts as agent for self-employed lecturers and other professionals who are keen to teach on academic programmes, such as the Foundation Degree. In addition, the college has a large full-time contingent, within the Faculty of Science and within the Health Department of the Faculty of Hospitality, Sport and Health, who can be timetabled to supplement staffing on the Foundation Degree, particularly in the more generic areas.

#### **Student recruitment and selection**

29. Entry requirements for the Foundation Degree in Dental Technology are:

Four GCSEs at grade C or above in relevant subject areas and an Edexcel BTEC National Award in Dental Technology with at least two units with merit grades or equivalent;

Or: A science 'A' Level and successful completion of a 'challenge test'<sup>5</sup>;

Or: Where other previous experience is relevant and may be accredited, such individuals may undertake a 'challenge test';

Or: Mature students with alternative qualifications and relevant experience will also be considered.

30. Applications are made via UCAS to DMU for full-time places or direct to the colleges. College admissions staff and the dental technology admissions tutors at each of the three colleges visited consider all applications. All applicants invited for interview undertake a manual dexterity test. Where candidates are not offered a place to undertake the Foundation Degree because they do not meet the entry requirements, they may be offered a place on the part-time, one year Edexcel BTEC National Award in Dental Technology or be guided to other appropriate study. All three colleges visited offer the National Award which provides 16 year old school leavers with a route to the Foundation Degree programme.

## **EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **Lambeth College, London –**

31. The Clapham Common site is one of four Lambeth College sites in South London. The site accommodates 8,000 students in total. The inspectors noted a variety of PC hubs which included a PC-access facility (housing around fifty PCs) for all college students on the first floor of the main site building, two other rooms housing around thirty PCs each and a multimedia room. The site as a whole is in a good state of decorative repair and is spacious. Teaching of the Foundation Degree programme is largely delivered in the dental laboratory facilities (paragraph 42). There are also two general teaching rooms which are well equipped with IT.
32. The library was very well equipped in terms of dental technology textbooks, including multiple copies of many textbooks. The library is open forty six hours a week and includes both open study and quieter study areas.
33. The dental technology course team currently comprises seven teaching staff, five of whom are full-time and two of whom are part-time. In addition, one member of full-time staff is currently on sabbatical leave for a year from March 2006. There are three full-time dental technician support staff. Six of the teaching staff have formal teaching qualifications ranging from Certificates of Higher Education to Bachelors degrees in Education. Staff evidenced a broad range of personal educational and professional development. The college provides two staff rooms for dental technology staff comprising a total of eight workspaces, each with a PC. In addition there is a designated staff workroom.

### **Castle College, Nottingham -**

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<sup>5</sup> 'Challenge tests' comprise a dental technology written assignment and the completion of basic practical dental technology tasks.



34. This report comments on the present physical site, notwithstanding the imminent rebuilding work taking place on the site shortly (paragraphs 24, 25).
35. The programme is delivered at a central Nottingham Castle College site (formally People's College). This site hosts around 2,400 students in total. Three spacious laboratories are utilised for delivery of academic components of the programme, each with excellent IT facilities. Further laboratories are available for use by the course team, in addition to a twenty five seat lecture room and an eighteen seat PC room. The dental technology teaching facilities are well maintained in the context of a wider site which is welcoming and which is also in a good state of repair.
36. The library combines PCs and study units in addition to a quiet PC room. It was evident that there are good links between the dental technology course team and library staff. A good selection of dental technology books is available, including many texts where multiple copies are available. The library is open for over fifty hours per week in term-time and over forty hours per week during vacations.
37. The course team comprises three full-time teaching staff, supported in the delivery of the programme by college technical staff. All of the teaching staff have formal teaching qualifications in addition to clear evidence of ongoing CPD. Each staff member has his or her own workspace which includes a PC.

#### **Liverpool Community College, Liverpool –**

38. The programme is delivered at the Vauxhall Road College site in central Liverpool. The site is a modern, bright, very well maintained, building. The programme is wholly taught in the laboratory facilities detailed at paragraph 44.
39. The library houses twenty seven PCs and nine study tables. It is open for over forty hours per week. Teaching staff supervising students may use the library outside of normal hours. The selection of dental technology books is good, including many multiple copies. The inspectors noted that library staff worked closely with dental technology teaching staff.
40. Students have lending rights at other higher education libraries in Liverpool through the *Liverpool Learning Partnership*. This includes access to dental texts at Liverpool University Dental School library.
41. The course team comprises two teaching staff, one full-time and one part-time. Both have formal teaching qualifications and clearly evidenced ongoing CPD. Teaching staff at Liverpool have a dedicated room which contains a networked PC and laptop.

#### **DENTAL TECHNOLOGY SKILLS LABORATORY FACILITIES**

##### **Lambeth College, London –**

42. The dental technology laboratory facilities are equipped to an excellent standard, having been very recently refurbished. There are three laboratories designated for programme students, two with a capacity of twenty four and one with a capacity of eighteen. These laboratories are fully equipped with new plant to deliver all practical aspects of the programme and include comprehensive facilities for IT-assisted

teaching. There are chemistry and physics laboratories to which the dental technology programme has access. There is also a designated dental technology storeroom.

#### **Castle College, Nottingham –**

43. Dental laboratory facilities are of a very good standard and clearly well maintained. These comprise a fully equipped dental laboratory, refurbished in 2001, and separate casting and polishing room. The laboratory has a capacity of sixteen. These facilities are spacious and clean and fully supported with IT teaching facilities.

#### **Liverpool Community College, Liverpool –**

44. The dental laboratory facilities comprise a laboratory with a capacity of fifteen and a separate polishing and casting room. Adjacent to the polishing and casting room is a room for storage of student samples which also doubles as an office containing a PC and a laptop. These facilities were installed in 2003 and offer faculty and students a modern, well equipped, purpose-built teaching environment including excellent IT support.

#### **Across the three colleges: dental laboratory placements and mentoring for the work based learning (WBL) programme modules, *Integrated Studies A* and *Integrated Studies B*.**

45. Foundation Degree students on the part-time programme are working trainee dental technicians throughout their studies. Full-time students attend placements in dental laboratories. The WBL components of the programme are the modules *Integrated Studies A* and *Integrated Studies B*, each comprising thirty credits of the degree total of two hundred and forty credits. *Integrated Studies A* runs throughout year one of the full-time programme with *Integrated Studies B* running throughout year two. In the part-time programme the two modules run from year one into the first half of year two and then from the second half of year two to the end of year three.
46. Each laboratory placement must provide a risk assessment, evidence of public liability insurance and health and safety policy at the outset of the placement contract with any of the colleges.
47. All students have a work-based mentor. A college tutor liaises with each mentor. Mentors receive induction and ongoing assistance in effectively supporting and assessing the student. In addition each placement laboratory is visited at least once annually by the academic real work-based assessor. Mentors are required to formally record the student's development towards competent practice. In accordance with the *Integration* element of the GDC dental technology curriculum, at the end of the two modules, students must be: 'competent at managing the manufacture of a range of custom-made dental devices within one of the following treatment modalities: Fixed prosthodontics, removable prosthodontics or orthodontics.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Developing the Dental Team*, paragraph 166, page 52.

48. *Integrated Studies B* therefore comprises the final assessment for the programme, constituting the end point of the students' academic and practical studies in a series of documented practical work outcomes.
49. Each student is required to maintain a log of their work as the key evidence, in addition to their practical work outcomes, in their assessment for *Integrated Studies A* and *Integrated Studies B*. Mentors check each student's log each week, grading work undertaken in accordance with programme grading criteria and setting objectives for the week ahead. In addition, programme staff check grades for practical work undertaken in laboratory placements against practical work undertaken at college. When students complete a given dental device during *Integrated Studies B*, if this is 'competent' it is signed-off as such by the mentor and then marked by a college tutor.
50. In summary, at each college these work placements are quality assured on the following basis: Standardised mentor training, regular checking and assessing of the student logs by the academic real work-based assessor, checking of grades for practical work undertaken on placement against that undertaken at college and through ongoing contact with mentors leading to an annual placement visit by faculty. The inspectors considered example logs, practical work outcomes and explored the WBL modules in discussion with teaching staff, students and employers (including mentors). The inspectors were satisfied that these placements complied with the expectations of outreach teaching as set out in *Developing the Dental Team* at paragraph 39 and that the programme learning outcomes complied with the *Integration* element of the GDC curriculum set out at paragraph 166 of *Developing the Dental Team*.

### **DCP curricula – subjects and topics**

51. The following subjects and topics are detailed in the dental technology section of *Developing the Dental Team*:
- Biomedical sciences and oral biology
  - Behavioural sciences, communication skills and health informatics
  - Human disease
  - Medical emergencies
  - Law, ethics and professionalism
  - Health and safety and infection control
  - Dental biomaterials science
  - Integration
  - Preventative dentistry
  - Dental public health
  - Introduction to dental technology
  - Dental radiology and imaging
  - Applied dental technology
52. The modules for the first 120 credits of the Foundation Degree are: *Oral Biomedical Sciences, Dental Technology Techniques, Dental Biomaterials Science, Professional Practice, Removable Prosthodontics, Fixed Prosthodontics* and the first of two WBL *Integrated Studies* modules. The modules for the second 120 credits of the

programme are: *Removable Prosthodontics*, *Fixed Prosthodontics* (2 modules), *Removable Orthodontics* and the second of the two WBL *Integrated Studies* modules.

53. Inspectors received comprehensive module templates and were able to view assignment examples, including practical work outcomes. These were discussed with teaching staff, students and employers. In addition the course team provided a mapping document which mapped the programme against the GDC dental technology curriculum. The inspectors were satisfied that the DMU Foundation Degree in Dental Technology covered the GDC curriculum.

### **The dental team**

54. Through placement in a dental laboratory, students experience working life as a dental technician in relation to the wider dental team. A specific focus on the legal and ethical obligations of GDC registration is addressed in the *Professional Practice* module. This includes awareness of other dental team roles and regards professional working as part of a dental team. This awareness is put into practice through the *Integrated Studies A* and *B* modules (paragraphs 45-50).

### **Student support and progress**

55. An evident strand across the three colleges was that students find teaching staff very approachable and feel well supported by them. Student feedback indicated that each college provides a very positive, supportive, learning environment. Students feel able to raise any concerns about the programme with staff and also feel that they are listened to in doing so. Pastoral care is offered by designated teaching staff at Castle College and by the staff team as a whole at the Lambeth and Liverpool Colleges. In addition, each college has designated college-wide counselling staff offering professional support where students need this.
56. Students across the colleges also meet regularly as a group with Dr Parvez Haris of DMU. They can raise any concerns or needs they have in respect of the delivery of the programme at their specific college.
57. The Edexcel BTEC National Award route for school leavers into the Foundation Degree is a route that many students have taken. They clearly feel that this has provided a good entry point into their degree studies.

### **Assessment**

58. The basis of assessment is clearly denoted for each of the programme modules. This varies between coursework essays, structured short practical tests, practical cases/case studies, laboratory reports and logbook submissions. The final assessment of each students programme is in the second of the two WBL modules, *Integrated Studies B*. Here students bring together all of their practical and academic knowledge to evidence that they are competent in the production of a number of custom-made dental devices. All assessed work is double marked at each college and then moderated by a colleague at another college.

59. Some students observed that there is bunching of assessment at particular times of the year which needs to be addressed. Others sought better coordination of practical work in line with the relevant, related, assignments. Staff acknowledged that the programme was assessment-heavy. The course team across the colleges delivering the programme intend to review this now that the programme has been delivered fully at Lambeth College.
60. Generic DMU student regulations currently permit up to 60 credits worth of re-assessment at any level. This equates to a maximum of four re-assessments per level (because of the 15-credit modules on the programme). This is especially onerous on staff and students given the fact that assessment requirements are already high across the programme.
61. The inspectors noted that the pass mark threshold for all programme modules was 40% and that compensating credits do not apply. The 40% threshold is a DMU requirement, and the non-use of compensation is a GDC validation requirement (paragraph 12) which DMU had implemented in respect of this degree programme. It was clear that this threshold was being applied across the colleges inspected.
62. The DMU document *Assessment at DMU: policy, practice and protocols September 2005* sets out comprehensive guidelines on the assessment of students with learning difficulties or disabilities.
63. Where a student's performance in examinations or other assessments is adversely affected by exceptional circumstances, specific procedures apply which are detailed in the DMU document *Handbook and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards 2005/06*. Appeals regarding the decision of a Board of Examiners may be made on the ground that there were demonstrable errors in the conduct of the assessment procedure to have made a real difference to the outcome. Appeals may also be made on the ground that there have been errors in the marking or in the consequent decisions of the Board. The appeals process is set out in the DMU publications *General Regulations and Procedures Affecting Students* and *Appeals Against Assessment Board Decisions*.
64. The Board of Examiners for the programme comprises the Subject Authority Board (SAB) and the Progression and Award Board (PAB) of DMU's Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. These two boards meet separately. The role of the SAB is to consider, specifically, all module marks for the programme. The PAB considers the assessment profile for each student on the programme relating to both progression between levels and those relating to the award of the Foundation Degree. The PAB considers assessments profiles of students from SABs across the Faculty.
65. The programme leader, Dr Parvez Haris, along with a representative from the consortium of colleges, formally attends the SAB along with the external examiner for the Foundation Degree. The SAB is chaired by the Head of the School of Allied Health Science. The PAB is chaired by the Dean of the Faculty and the Senior external examiner for the Faculty attends. The SAB for the programme was held on 15 June 2006 and the PAB was held on 29 June 2006. A re-sit SAB and PAB are also convened in September each year. Students may re-sit any failed module up to a maximum of 60 credits in total. All re-sit marks are capped at 40%.

66. The external examiner gave his apologies for the SAB. He attended Castle College on 27 to 28 June 2006 and sampled a full range of coursework for students from across the colleges offering this programme. He also considered the final module marks for all programme students. The external examiner's report commended the course team delivering the programme across the colleges and the role of Dr Parvez Haris as DMU course leader. He noted that the standard of assessment across the programme was good. In particular he highlighted the quality of assessor feedback to students. The logbooks used in the *Integrated Studies* Modules A and B were described as 'excellent'. The practical outcomes of the *Integrated Studies* modules (the programme's final assessment of competence) were of a fully competent standard for professional registration.
67. The inspectors and a GDC staff member attended the SAB and the PAB. They considered the documentation before each Board and observed each Board meeting consider, respectively, the programme module marks and then each student's assessment profile.
68. Having considered assessment generally during the programme visit in May 2006 and then the Examination Board process in June 2006, the inspectors confirmed that the assessment approach outlined above was compliant with paragraphs 200–207 of *Developing the Dental Team*.

### **Quality assurance and curriculum enhancement**

69. Quality assurance in respect of this programme is comprehensively detailed in DMU's document: *Guide to the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Partnerships and Provision February 2006*. This includes validation, monitoring and audit processes, and revalidation processes for delivery of this programme across the colleges.
70. Cross-programme management, as detailed at paragraph 15, includes a college-wide programme journal which details and disseminates good practice. In addition quality assurance of work placements is detailed at paragraph 50. The inspectors noted the proactive nature of programme management across the colleges in relation to all aspects of delivery. DMU has strong links with each college and the college course teams are in very regular, well coordinated, contact.

### **Recommendations**

The key areas for action identified by the visitors are summarised below. Additional comments are contained within the body of the report itself. Figures in brackets refer to paragraphs in the main body of the report.

#### **1. To the GDC**

- The Council will want to ensure that rebuilding work at Castle College is monitored (24,25).

#### **2. To the Colleges delivering the programme**

- The Consortium has achieved a great deal in a short timeframe. It now needs to ensure that it provides sufficient ongoing support to maintain the high quality of teaching, facilities and staff commitment as witnessed by this GDC inspection.
- Lambeth College will wish to ensure a continued Strategic Health Authority commitment to funding of programme places beyond 2007–08 (21).
- Staffing capacity to deliver the programme at Liverpool Community College is in need of review (28).
- Assessment load and resulting bunching of assessments needs to be reviewed by the programme consortium (59).

### **3. To the University**

- The cross-college and DMU infrastructure to deliver this programme needs to be maintained and developed (14,15,18,19,25,30,50,55,56,58,61,69,70).

### **4. To the Department of Health (England)**

- The £2,000 bursaries payable to dental laboratory owners who offer employees the opportunity to undertake this programme are a substantial factor in securing and developing the breadth of required workplace placements. These bursaries are enabling registrable qualifications for this new statutory UK profession to develop and they need to be maintained (16).

## **Annex One**

### **GDC Inspectors programme**

#### **List of meetings held and people we met in formal meetings.**

(We met other staff and students during the inspection tours. Dr Parvez Haris, the programme leader from DMU, was present at each of the colleges during the GDC visits).

#### **Monday May 22 2006: Lambeth College, London**

##### **Meeting with senior staff of the College**

Richard Chambers, Principal  
Ruth Nixon, Vice Principal – Curriculum  
Peter Doble, Vice Principal – Finance  
Peter Giles, Head of the School of Applied Sciences

##### **Meeting with the course team**

Chris Grigson, Deputy Head of the School of Applied Sciences  
Karen Horton, Course Manager – Dental Technology  
Gillian Dent, Lecturer  
Dave Hewitt, Lecturer and Work-based learning coordinator

##### **Meeting with students on the Lambeth Foundation Degree programme**

Anna Slupik, Year 1, PT  
Chad Cluff, Year 1, PT  
Peter Hubbard, Year 2, PT  
Neil Patrick, Year 2, PT  
Zuzana Kovacovicova, Year 2, FT  
Katarzyna Jawor, Year 2, FT  
Leo Luciano De Jesus, Year 2, FT

#### **Tuesday May 23 2006: Castle College, Nottingham**

##### **Meeting with the senior staff of the College**

Nick Lewis, Principal  
Andrew Hartley, Director of Finance

##### **Meeting with the course team**

Tony Griffin, Course Leader  
Simon Torres, Lecturer  
Katarina Bukvova, Lecturer  
Tracey Norton, Lecturer  
David Alderson, Dentist advisor  
Sue Payne, Science support technician

##### **Meeting with students on the Castle College Foundation Degree programme**

Jonathan Slaney, Year 1, PT  
Mandy Smith, Year 1, PT  
Fraser East, Year 1, PT



Raymond Otto, Year 1, PT

**Meeting with local employers**

Richard Daniels, Chief Executive, Dental Laboratories Association, Beeston  
Manjeet Biant, Nottingham

**Meeting with DMU corporate representatives**

Professor Gillian Grant, Dean of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences  
Parvez Haris, DMU Foundation Degree Dental Technology Programme Leader  
Natasha King, Quality Assurance Manager, Department of Academic Quality

**Wednesday May 24 2006: Liverpool Community College, Liverpool**

**Meeting with students on the Liverpool Community College Foundation Degree programme**

Robert Lloyd, Year 2, PT  
Simon Goodings, Year 2, PT  
Simon Bennet-Williams, Year 2, PT  
Philip Brady, Year 2, PT

**Meeting with senior staff of the College**

Jenny Steer, Head of HE Faculty and Head of the Health Faculty  
Mike Doyle, Head of the Science Faculty

**Meeting with the course team**

Chris Fielding, Course Team Leader  
David Campbell, Learning supervisor

## **Annex Two**

### **Details of Documents provided by the University and the participating Colleges**

#### **Information Received ahead of the Inspection**

Lambeth College Course Guide  
Lambeth College Programme Handbook Year 1 and Year 2  
Lambeth College Base Room Evidence document  
Lambeth College Updated and Additional Evidence document  
Lambeth College Programme Multiple Choice Question Test – Example  
Lambeth College Student Satisfaction Survey - Example  
Castle College Partner Information  
Castle College Programme Handbook Year 1 and Year 2  
Castle College Higher Education Prospectus 2006  
Castle College Learning Resources Centres User Guide  
Castle College Disability Access Guide Learning Resources Centres User Guide  
Castle College Disability Access Guide  
Liverpool Community College Course Guide  
Liverpool Community College Programme Handbook Year 1  
Liverpool Community College Updated and Additional Evidence document  
Liverpool Community College Student Handbook and Charter 2005 – 06  
Liverpool Community College Learning Resource Centres  
Liverpool Community College: Getting the most from the Learning Resources Centres  
Liverpool Community College Dentistry books list  
Liverpool Community College list of CD-ROMs and DVDs  
Liverpool Community College: Printed examples from academic intranet  
Liverpool Community College Library Induction sheet  
Liverpool Community College Library Catalogue – printed examples of keyword searches for dental technology subjects  
Liverpool Learning Partnership: Libraries together leaflet  
Matthew Boulton College Programme Handbook Year 1  
Course Document  
Foundation Degree Dental Technology Programme Log (Parts 1, 2 and 3)  
Programme template and Module templates  
Programme map against GDC Dental Technology Domains: A checklist  
Staff Biographies  
Retention and Progression statistics  
Programme Committee structure  
Programme Steering Group meeting minutes  
Programme Consortium Group minutes  
Module evaluation forms  
Student focus group meetings  
Programme journals  
DMU Assessment Policy leaflet  
DMU Assessment at DMU: Policy, practice and protocols  
DMU Handbook and Regulations for Undergraduate Awards 2005/06  
DMU Introduction to Quality Assurance and Improvement – DAQ Guide 1  
DMU Guide to External Examining at DMU – DAQ Guide 2 (Draft)  
DMU Guide to Periodic Review – DAQ Guide 3

DMU Guide to Monitoring Academic Provision – DAQ Guide 4  
DMU Guide to the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Partnerships and Provision  
DMU Guide to Module Evaluation – DAQ Guide 5  
DMU Guide to Using Student Feedback – DAQ Guide 6  
DMU Guide to WebFocus MIS Reports – DAQ Guide 7  
DMU Guide to Validations – DAQ Guide 8  
DMU Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2004 – 2007  
DMU Essential Guide for Continuing Students leaflet

**Information Received during the Visit**

DMU Appeals Against Assessment Board Decisions leaflet  
DMU Foundation Degree in Dental Technology – External Examiner Report: Professor Ian Benington  
DMU PAB Report – Module Statistics – 1<sup>st</sup> Results  
DMU SAB Report – Module Results List Ordered by Student

November 10, 2006

Mr Pravat Bhattacharyya  
Assistant Scrutiny Manager  
General Dental Council  
37 Wimpole Street  
London  
W1G 8DQ

Dear Mr Bhattacharyya

**Inspection of the Foundation Degree in Dental Technology, De Montfort University (DMU)**

Thank you for sending us the inspectors' report following the General Dental Council inspection of the above programme held on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May and 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006, and for the opportunity to respond to the recommendations contained therein.

I am pleased to confirm that the attached observations represent a combined response from the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences at De Montfort University and the Colleges delivering the programme.

If I can provide any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Gillian Grant  
Dean of Faculty of Health and Life Sciences

**De Montfort University**  
Faculty of Health and Life Sciences  
Faculty Head of Quality

**Response to the recommendations arising from the General Dental Council  
Inspection of the Dental Technology Foundation Degree.**

The following response to the recommendations has been produced by De Montfort University and the consortium colleges offering the Foundation Degree in Dental Technology:

**2. To the Colleges delivering the programme**

- ***The Consortium has achieved a great deal in a short timeframe. It now needs to ensure that it provides sufficient ongoing support to maintain the high quality of teaching, facilities and staff commitment as witnessed by this GDC inspection.***

The consortium plans to further build on the experience it has gained over the last year to ensure that a high quality of teaching, facilities and staff commitment is maintained. The direct links with employers and the competence component provides instant feedback regarding the provision.

- ***Lambeth College will wish to ensure a continued Strategic Health Authority commitment to funding of programme places beyond 2007–08 (21).***

Lambeth College has had a long and fruitful relationship with the Dental Schools in the London area and aim to continue this even though these institutions are no longer training dental technologists. The College has also worked closely with the South East London WDC, in particular, to support full time students entering the foundation degree programme. The GDC may rest assured that the FD Course Team will continue to work with the SHA to ensure continuation of this support into the future, but is mindful of their budgetary restrictions.

- ***Staffing capacity to deliver the programme at Liverpool Community College is in need of review (28).***

Liverpool Community College has a large contract with Protocol National, which acts as agent for self-employed lecturers and other professionals who are keen to teach on academic programmes, such as the FD. In addition, the College has a large number of full time academic staff within the Faculty of Science and within the Health Department of the Faculty of Hospitality, Sport and Health, who can supplement staffing on the FD, particularly in the more generic areas. As with other vocational medical and dental areas and as indicated in the curricula guidelines all consortium members are mindful of the benefits that demonstrators and sessional staff bring to the students learning experience.

- **Assessment load and resulting bunching of assessments needs to be reviewed by the programme consortium (59).**

The consortium has re-visited the yearly assessment streams and can confirm that the time lines operating now prevent the bunching of assessments. The requirement for competence according to GDC requirements might in some areas be construed as constituting a heavy assessment load. However, the students have not indicated this with any degree of concern across the programme. The consortium membership have discussed the issue at a recent steering group meeting and are discussing refinement with the Department of Academic Quality at De Montfort University to explore the best approach towards making any changes without having to go through a re-validation process. Consultations with the GDC will also be necessary before the changes are introduced.

### 3. To the University

- **The cross-college and DMU infrastructure to deliver this programme needs to be maintained and developed (14,15,18,19,25,30,50,55,56,58,61,69,70).**

The university is mindful of the unique and essential characteristic required of this dental care professional (DCP) programme in that individuals who graduate must be registrable with the General Dental Council (GDC). The university has supported the foundation degree – dental technology Steering group and provided direct links to university support services. The foundation degree dental technology consortium (FD-DTC) has continued in an inter-professional education mode linking to good practice wherever it arises. The sharing of teaching and learning material and the joint development of assessment materials continues to be supported by the University. Skills for Health has been supportive of the programme as it met the need to recognise the higher technician skills in Dental Technology and the links to the professional body (Dental Technicians Association [DTA]) and employers (Dental Laboratories Association [DLA]) and this too continues to strengthen the infrastructure of the consortium.

### 4. To the Department of Health (England)

- **The £2,000 bursary payable to dental laboratory owners who offer employees the opportunity to undertake this programme is a substantial factor in securing and developing the breadth of required workplace placements. These bursaries are enabling registrable qualifications for this new statutory UK professions to develop and they need to be maintained (13)**

Along with the Conference of Dental Technology Educational Institutes (CoDTEI) the colleges have made representation to the Department of Health in order to maintain the bursary as currently paid to private employers of trainee dental technicians.

Skills for Health supported and encouraged the provision of a foundation degree qualification to recognise the higher technical skills of dental technicians. The employers (DLA) and professional body (DTA) were also encouraged by the foundation degree route where competence could form part of the qualification and therefore meet the GDC

curricula demands for registration. A Foundation Degree is not a standard HE qualification, it is expected to contain approximately 25% work based assessment, and the GDC require assessment and confirmation of competence for one discipline of dental technology prior to application for registration by the individual.

The provision of a qualification in which competence is required for registration is very difficult to provide and the FD is the ideal vehicle for this. But it relies heavily upon the goodwill of employers and DCP's, in many cases supported by the bursary.

We await the department of Health deliberations on the future of the bursary for dental technicians in private training.

**As an observation on the content of the report, De Montfort University would also wish to make the following point in relation to paragraph 12 of the report:**

***12. ....this programme will be comprehensively revalidated by DMU in 2007 at all colleges approved to deliver the programme.***

Please note that page 23 of the *Guide to the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative Partnerships and Provision* indicates that, 'following initial approval, review of the collaborative partnership at both organisational and operational/programme level will take place after three years of operation'. This should **not** be interpreted to mean that the programme will be 'comprehensively revalidated'. The programme was scrutinised in detail at the QAA Collaborative Provision Audit in May 2006 and, in the same month, by the GDC when they undertook their accreditation visits. In view of this recent scrutiny, the Department of Academic Quality will undertake a review of the programme in 2006/7, based on evidence already produced for these and supplemented by available standard quality monitoring material as well as the final report from the GDC. The main focus of the review will be on the operation and management of the programme across the centres and, if satisfactory, will mean the programme will be confirmed in validation. A full revalidation is not deemed necessary unless the content of a programme has changed significantly since validation.