

Faculty of Dentistry Teaching and Learning Plan - Background

The Faculty of Dentistry Teaching and Learning Plan has been compiled by the Faculty Executive Group following considerable consultation with members of the Faculty Curriculum Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee and relevant Sub-Deans (Curriculum). The Plan is distributed electronically to all members of Faculty.

Context

The Faculty provides the only graduate-entry program in Australia and the only NSW leading to automatic registration to practise as a dentist, and is a major provider of continuing professional education and specialist course-work Masters degrees also leading to automatic registration as a dentist.

The Faculty is located for its teaching in four sites: the United Dental Hospital in Central Sydney Area Health Service, The Westmead Centre of Oral Health in Western Sydney Area Health Service, the central (Camperdown) University campus and the Australian Technology Park (Eveleigh).

The Faculty currently graduates students from its school-leaver entry, five-year BDS program, and offers a variety of specialist Masters degrees by course work. There are currently (in 2003) students in 4th and 5th year of the BDS program, which will phase out entirely at the end of 2004. Its place is being taken sequentially (having started in 2001) by the new four-year graduate-entry program, the BDent. There are currently three years (1, 2 and 3) of the BDent program in place so that there will be a double graduation (BDS and BDent) in 2004. The BDent program shares much of its content and delivery of the first two years with the Graduate Medical Program of the University of Sydney and offers an integrated Foundations of Total Patient Care strand from the outset. The last two years of the BDent program concentrate the student in dental clinical settings, either in the Teaching Hospitals or in urban or rural locations.

Strengths in Teaching and Learning

- a strong system of selection to ensure that incoming students are motivated to study dentistry and bring intellectual and problem-solving skills together with attributes like empathy and communication considered to contribute to sound professional practice
- the innovative and goal-directed nature of the BDent program with its extensive strategies for evaluation
- collegial links with the Faculty of Medicine allowing access to relevant components of the Graduate Medical Program with its associated strong base of educational information technology
- a skilled workforce (academic, administrative, hospital and private practitioners)
- hospital and laboratory facilities in two very different and socio-geographically distinct Area Health Services providing an extensive range of clinical and cultural exposure to students
- a new and developing emphasis on rural practice
- a single department Faculty structure to support the development of an academically and clinically integrated curriculum
- strong continuing and professional education programs with staff development opportunities in information technology and multi-media.

Weaknesses in Teaching and Learning

- the geographic divide as represented by four separate campuses for a small Faculty

- a relatively small academic and administrative workforce, most of which is made up of fractional appointments
- a history of deficit budgeting within the Faculty and the need to build a sound financial asset base
- the challenge represented by the need for cultural and organisational change in a fairly traditional and typically conservative professional Faculty
- a research base in educational method that needs further development and innovation.

Opportunities in Teaching and Learning

- possibilities within the College of Health Sciences for further sharing of educational resources, and expanding rural placements for the delivery of post-graduate educational qualifications
- recruitment of high quality local and international fee-paying graduate entry students
- marketing of the Faculty's growing educational expertise, including possibilities for web-supported continuing education for distance delivery.

Threats in Teaching and Learning

- further contractions in recurrent budgets for both the tertiary and the health sector
- a possible retreat within the Faculty to discipline-based thinking no longer appropriate to integrated PBL teaching and learning
- tensions for staff, especially those on fractional appointments, to find a balance between teaching and learning, research, administration, clinical and other community service commitments
- an environment where financial rewards from the private sector far exceed academic salaries
- the continuing difficulty in recruiting committed full-time staff in both general and specialist dental disciplines.

The Faculty's principal educational aim is to:

Offer an integrated, problem-based comprehensive care program to its students, which provides high quality dental skills training as a base for higher specialist qualifications and life-long continuing education.

The following goals have been determined in line with the Major Goals of the University of Sydney Strategic Plan.

Goal One

To provide high quality undergraduate and postgraduate teaching

Strategies	Action Plan	Performance Indicators	Targets - timeline	Staff member responsible
Ensure the teaching programs are of the highest quality	Establish Focus Groups to develop BDent Year 4 curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of PBLs developed • number of options for the Year 4 rotation program 	Formalise BDent Year 4 curriculum and rotation program by 30 November 2003	Sub-Dean (Curriculum) Year 4
	Establish a BDent Year 4 Assessment Taskforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of stages of policy developed • number of assessment and/or examination papers developed • number of clinical competencies developed 	Develop assessment policy and procedure for BDent Year 4 by 30 November 2003	Chair (Assessment Committee)
	Continue review of postgraduate coursework programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of disciplines reviewed • number of Academic Board course proformas completed 	Review all postgraduate courses and facilities by April 2004	Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)
	Establish formal benchmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of participating institutions identified • criteria for benchmarking established • funding for project obtained (Teaching Improvement Fund) 	Establish protocol by December 2003 Develop criteria by June 2004 Commence formal benchmarking by Feb/March 2005	Associate Dean (Students)
Staff development and training in education and educational resources	Encourage full-time staff to complete the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of staff enrolled in the GradCert and Master of Medical Education (commencing in 2004) 	Establish a baseline number of full-time staff that have completed Grad Cert in 2003	Associate Dean (Curriculum) and Sub-Dean (Academic)

Collegial representation and support	Collaborate with the Faculty of Medicine to develop evaluation, assessment and examination policy and procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of stages of assessment policy developed • number of College staff providing input to assessment policy • number of staff representing Faculty on cross-Faculty Committees 	<p>Assessment policy and procedure developed for BDent 4 by 30 November 2003</p> <p>Increase the number of Faculty staff on cross-Faculty committees by 5% each year</p>	Associate Dean (Curriculum) and Chair (Evaluations Committee)
Develop dental education as a research interest	Establish a dental research group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • number of research projects • number of presentations at conferences • number of dental education research Faculty workshops 	<p>Initiate a 2003 workshop for Faculty.</p> <p>Establish a baseline of 2 education research publications per year in 2004</p>	Associate Dean (Curriculum)

Goal Two

To provide access to study and provide support for students from a diversity of backgrounds

Strategies	Action Plan	Performance Indicators	Targets - timeline	Staff member responsible
Provide students with access to diversity in their studies	Develop appropriate electives (including expansion of the Rural Placement Program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of participating sites • number of students in programs • external funding received to support programs 	Expand the Faculties access to elective venues each year	Sub-Dean (Curriculum) Year 4
Ensure the admissions process is equitable and attracts students of high quality and motivation	Continue to evaluate the admissions process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis of data received from the applicant information forms • comparison of student demographics 	Complete evaluation of admissions process by 31 March each year, report to Admissions Committee and implement any changes required by 30 September that year	Associate Dean (Students)
Provide students with informal and formal learning opportunities	Integrate students in formal and informal settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of informal group sessions 	Maintain rotation of students through PBL groups throughout the year.	Associate Dean (Students)
	Provide financial support for students to engage in research projects during summer vacation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of students participating in summer research projects with staff and fellow students 	Establish a baseline number of students participating in summer research projects in 2003 and aim to maintain that percentage each year	Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)
Foster self-directed learning	Provide students with access to examination and assessment materials and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of students accessing material • number of students participating in peer marking • number of actions taken by Faculty in response to feedback 	Ensure all relevant material is available to students 8 weeks prior to assessment or examination	Chair (Assessment Committee)

Goal Three

Integrate teaching and research achievement

Strategies	Action Plan	Performance Indicators	Targets - timeline	Staff member responsible
Integrate teaching and research	Encourage staff to include their research progress and findings in their teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of workshops held each year to introduce staff to opportunities and techniques for incorporating their research into their teaching • number of staff attending the workshops 	Initial workshop to be held in semester 2, 2003 and then 1 workshop per semester.	Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)
	Staff development and training in evidence based practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of staff attending training sessions for evidence based practice 	Establish a baseline number of staff attending training in 2003 and aim to maintain this percentage each year	Theme Head, PPD/DC
	Encourage postgraduate students to participate in the undergraduate course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of postgraduate students teaching PBL sessions • number of postgraduate students delivering structured learning sessions to undergraduate students 	2 postgraduate students to contribute to undergraduate teaching each semester	Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)
Initiate students into research culture	Provide opportunity and support for both undergraduate and postgraduate students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount of support funding available for students engaged in research projects • number of students engaged in research projects • number of collaborations between staff and students on research projects • number of students presenting at conferences and University-led research forums 		Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)

Goal Four

Enhance the Faculty's position as a provider of high-quality and innovative dental education both nationally and internationally

Strategies	Action Plan	Performance Indicators	Targets - timeline	Staff member responsible
Identify international opportunities for collaboration of research and teaching, and exchange of ideas	Follow up interest with Korean Universities, expand on established links with Lebanon, North America and Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of international visits and presentations at conferences/seminars • number of staff exchanges • number of collaborative links forged internationally for accreditation of the BDent program • number of student exchanges • number of sabbatical visitors 	<p>2 staff to present at international conferences each year to promote the Faculty</p> <p>1 staff member to travel to engage in research and curriculum enhancement</p> <p>Establish a formal student exchange program for BDent students by March 2005</p>	Dean
	Promote the Faculty nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of staff presenting at conferences • number of papers published in national journals and educational publications 	Establish a baseline number of staff presenting and publishing nationally in 2003 and aim to maintain that percentage each year	Executive Group

Goal Five

To make a significant contribution to the well-being and enhancement of the dental profession

Strategies	Action Plan	Performance Indicators	Targets - timeline	Staff member responsible
Liaise with the Dental profession and regulating bodies and to contribute to their enhancement	Collaborate with the Dental profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of honorary staff from the profession participating and contributing to teaching 	Increase in the number of honorary staff engaged with the Faculty	Sub-Dean (Academic)
	Establish research links with the profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of collaborative projects • amount of funding received from the profession for collaborative projects 	Establish a baseline number of collaborative projects and funding received in 2003 and aim to maintain those figures	Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)
	Sharing of ideas and innovations in education and research, leading to professional development for practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of honorary staff participating in the PPD/DC Theme, including evidence based practice • number of staff development workshops 	Establish a series of workshops for honorary staff on recent developments in evidence based practice in 2004	Theme Head, PPD/DC
	Faculty contributions to the dental profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of staff on boards of regulating and representative bodies • number of publications by Faculty staff in professional journals and publications 	Maintain Faculty representation on the Dental Board of NSW and the Australian Dental Council in 2004	Dean and Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate Studies)

Goal Six**Improve the Faculty's position as an efficient, effective and responsible institution**

Strategies	Action Plan	Performance Indicators	Targets - timeline	Staff member responsible
Instil quality assurance as a Faculty value	Develop quality assurance procedure and review mechanisms for all facets of the Faculty and to respond in a timely manner to all external and internal quality assurance and accreditation requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• number of strategic plans reviewed• number of progress reports completed	Review plans by 30 January each year and complete progress reports by 28 February each year	Dean and Associate Deans