



QUESTION CLINIC

BDJ Student's new column lets you ask the questions. Here, **Dr Adam Patel** answers the questions put to him by *BDJ Student's* student editor, **Anish Patel**

Question: *For those interested in possibly completing an MSc in Implantology, such as yourself, what advice would you offer to help them to prepare?*

Answer: First, to anyone considering studying an MSc, kudos to you. It is without doubt a sign of commitment to lifelong learning and shows a desire to achieve the pinnacle of evidence-based standards in your chosen discipline. A word of caution (to the few) who may consider an MSc in Implantology under the impression that it's "where the money is", I can promise you your income will eventually rank below professional satisfaction, happiness and career fulfilment.

'I make no bones, your MSc years will be some of the most testing of your life, but ultimately worthwhile and fulfilling.'

If you are genuinely intent on committing to a career in implantology (or any other discipline, as the advice still rings true) then proceed with a Master's degree. Once you have set your heart on your career path,

strategically plan your next five years to maximise efficiency and enable you to garner all the benefits of your MSc. Remember, it is expensive, time consuming and can often heap very challenging amounts of pressure onto your daily life.

Still interested? Okay, this means your interest is genuine. Remember, nothing worth having in life ever came easily. For you to truly achieve the gold standard within a discipline, to nurture the ability to comprehend and dissect evidence, to put into perspective the gravitas of one piece of evidence over another and to avoid falling victim to marketing ploys and smart sales, literature bias or selective data, an MSc will arm you with the necessary skill-set.

Spend time considering and researching the following factors prior to selecting the best course for you:

- ▶ Find a course that suits you and your requirements. We are all different, and certain course structures will suit some individuals more than others.
- ▶ Research all of the MScs available in implantology, as there are several MSc courses available around the country. Contact the universities, speak to course leads and get in touch with former alumni.
- ▶ Ensure your practice setting is amenable to you practicing what you learn during your course. I would strongly advise you to invest in the necessary equipment, so you are practically able to do this.

It is indeed a long and arduous journey requiring the highest level of commitment and motivation. I make no bones, your MSc years will be some of the most testing of your life, but ultimately worthwhile and fulfilling. If you want to set yourself apart from the rest, in a continuously evolving and progressing discipline such as implantology, then achieving the highest academic qualification available is the only way forward.

For those readers who would like further details regarding an MSc in Implantology please get in touch with Dr Adam Patel who is happy to advise you on specific needs.

Question: *What postgraduate courses do you think would be of most use to young dentists interested in restorative/cosmetic dentistry after graduation?*

Answer: There is a plethora of courses out there. Again, choose the course that will meet your own personal requirements. I would avoid short (weekend) courses, especially in the early years where you are seeking a solid restorative foundation. I would advise a bare minimum of a one-year restorative course with a well-established clinician and course structure. Following exposure to a deeper understanding of restorative dentistry, you will begin to develop a passion for an area of cosmetic dentistry and you can further enhance these skills with more-specific courses.

Firstly, nurture a sound restorative knowledge base and set of skills. Begin by practicing 'bread and butter' dentistry whilst sharpening your skills. Commit to a postgraduate course in restorative and once you are comfortable, and have gained experience of all restorative treatment modalities and given yourself sufficient time to critique your own work, then further your scope into cosmetics.

Your rate of progression will depend on your clinical environment, patient base and exposure to various restorative cases. Remember, there is no need for haste - everyone must learn to walk before they can run - don't be influenced by what others are doing. You are your own person, you know yourself better than anyone and therefore you will know when you are ready. Always ensure

your motive remains pure and with it you will reap untold success.

I personally spent a year with Professor Paul Tipton on his restorative course observing and learning all that I could about restorative dentistry. I would always endeavour to go above and beyond the scope of what was required during the course to maximise what I would take away from it.

'A final piece of advice is that it is imperative to have a stable knowledge base of all the disciplines within dentistry as they are employed in tandem, prior to moving onto cosmetics.'

The course helped to fine-tune my skills in areas of restorative excellence that I enjoyed and wanted to gain a deeper understanding of. I would advise everyone to follow a similar path.

A final piece of advice is that it is imperative to have a stable knowledge base of all the disciplines within dentistry as they are employed in tandem, prior to moving onto cosmetics. And if a course tutor tells you anything different, then that's probably not the course to develop you into a thoroughbred clinician. **Dr Adam Patel** ■

Dr Adam Patel has kindly offered to advise and support students interested in post-graduate training. He is contactable through www.dental-excellenceuk.com or by email at dr.adam@live.co.uk.

Do you have a question for Dr Adam Patel? Email it to bdjstudent@bda.org and we shall try to answer them in the next issue.