

E: NHSgeneraldentalservicesmailbox@gov.scot

Karen Watt
Chief Executive
Scottish Funding Council
Apex 2
97 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

16 April 2021

Dear Ms Watt,

DENTAL UNDERGRADUATE NUMBERS

This letter is to advise Scottish Funding Council of the Chief Dental Officer and Dentistry Division's proposal on the recommended intake targets for the undergraduate dental student intake numbers.

As we are all aware, COVID-19 restrictions and the necessary precautions implemented to control this virus, has severely impacted the ability for Scotland's Dental Schools to provide the necessary specialised training to current dental students in a safe and effective manner. Unfortunately, dentistry has been more affected than other courses during this pandemic, as many dental treatments use equipment that produce aerosols, which is understood to be a way in which COVID-19 spreads. The reduction in access to clinical facilities has impacted the ability of current students to gain the necessary skills and competencies for successful course completion and registration. Dental courses are subject to stringent requirements from the professional regulator, the General Dental Council (GDC), to allow those who have completed the degree programmes to join the GDC and practise legally in the UK.

As a direct result of these restrictions, current students will need to extend the length of their course in order to gain access to clinical facilities that were restricted to them over the past year in order to graduate with the necessary skills to become a proficient dentist and join the GDC.

This extension for current students directly impacts new applicants for AY 2021-22 and AY 2022-23. Dental training facilities across Scotland do not have the physical capacity to accommodate extra years of students. Therefore, a decision has been made to set an intake target for AY 2022-23 of 136 which should be filled by recruiting 50% of the intake target in AY 2021-22 and 50% of the intake target in AY 2022-23.

The intake target across both AY 2021-22 and AY 2022-23 is for 136 students eligible to pay 'home' fees, rest of UK students and students from the Republic of Ireland.

It is expected that students recruited in AY 2021-22 should be offered support or access to education which will complement the existing course content and enable them to prepare for their studies commencing AY2022-23. We are content that such support may be in the form of online learning, as previously suggested by the dental Deans themselves.

The Universities of Dundee and Glasgow will continue to be allowed to recruit international students, into dentistry and we would expect the international intake targets set by SFC to be similar to those set in previous years. However, cognisance should be taken by Scottish Dental schools regarding the numbers of international students already on the courses. International students will be expected to contribute towards ACT (D) via their student fees as previously agreed.

As a result of the United Kingdom leaving the EU and the transitional period ending in January 2021, EU students without 'Home Fee' status, starting their courses in AY 2022-23 are ineligible for funding and will be treated as international students.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Ferris
Chief Dental Officer