



Project Title

**Harmonisation & Standardization of European
Dental Schools' Programs of Continuing
Professional Development for Graduate Dentists**

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Executive Summary

The Bologna Declaration promoted an EU in which every dental patient in every EU country will have access to the same quality of dental care. To achieve this goal, not only should undergraduate dental training be comparable throughout the EU, but also graduate dentists should continue to develop personally and professionally to comparable levels, throughout their working lives. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is essential to the maintenance of a dentist's knowledge, understanding and skills, underpinning safe clinical practice. At present, there is no harmonisation of the 'essential' CPD requirements or agreement on the appropriate regulation of CPD delivery for graduate dentists in the EU. CPD is provided by a variety of enterprises, including dental schools and not all are subject to acceptable quality management. The objectives of this two-year project are to identify and agree the 'essential' CPD requirements for all EU graduate dentists and to provide guidelines to facilitate the management and delivery of high quality CPD by European dental schools. As the principal providers of undergraduate dental education and training, there is a need to enhance their role in the strategic management of CPD across the continuum of dental education and thus support the concept of a dentist's 'fitness to practice'.

This project was initiated through the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) which has contributed extensively to the harmonisation of dental undergraduate education through its EU funded DentEd programs. Five schools, regionally spread across Europe together with ADEE, form the Project Team. The outputs of the project will be:

1. An inventory of existing dental CPD activity across the EU, available in October 2011.
2. Guidelines for dental schools and other CPD providers, available December 2011.
3. Guidelines for delivery of CPD modules and an exemplar teaching module on a core topic.
4. A Dental CPD reference manual. The last two outputs will be available during 2012.

The initial target groups, during the life time of the project, are managers and teachers of CPD, based at dental schools and other stakeholders, within the five project partner countries. Managers and educators will be engaged in the consensus discussions at the two annual meetings of ADEE in 2011 and 2012. The ultimate target groups will be the EU learners of Dental CPD (graduate dentists), CPD managers and dental regulatory bodies.

In the first project year, the Project Team has completed an internet and literature search surveying existing dental CPD delivery. They have distributed and analysed a survey through the extensive network of ADEE and other established avenues, creating a consensus on core elements of CPD content. Guidelines on CPD are being developed, presented and discussed across a wider ADEE and worldwide audience. Finally, an exemplar internet based interactive module on a core dental topic is being developed. An internal quality management system has been implemented for monitoring the quality of results and progress of the project. To date, there has been extensive progress in the dissemination and exploitation of the project's results, across the EU and globally.

In the second year, dissemination and exploitation will continue through the presentation of results at international educational conferences, including the ADEE meeting in 2012. The list of 'core' CPD topics and the Guidelines on CPD management and delivery will be published on the project's website due to be launched in October 2011 and in an international educational journal. The exemplar interactive module will be made available on the website with guidelines on how to use this in support of educators developing their own interactive CPD modules.

This innovative project is designed to have far-reaching impact. Harmonization of dental CPD across Europe and modernisation of dental schools' and other relevant stakeholder's strategic role in the quality management of CPD, should promote cooperation between

dental schools and professional organizations in the delivery CPD and promote freedom of movement of graduate dentists through a Europe-wide recognition of their CPD which should, in turn, enhance patient safety. In addition, the project aims to engage with and raise awareness of the EU's dental regulatory bodies and thus facilitate a process of co-operation in the accreditation and recognition of graduate dentists' acquisition of continuing education.

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1. Project Objectives

In recent times, the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), one of the co-beneficiaries of this project, has successfully developed and implemented the DentEd programs. These produced three key strategic documents for undergraduate education covering the areas of: Profiles & Competences of the Graduate Dentist; Curriculum Development & Mobility; and Quality Assurance. These have been widely accepted by the vast majority of European dental schools. Harmonisation of continuing professional development (CPD) after graduation represents a natural progression for the work of ADEE and its membership and seeks to harmonize the continuing education of qualified dentists thus strengthening a seamless transition from undergraduate training into a period of lifelong learning. This should be the aspiration of all graduate dental professionals. This supports European Unification and the freedom of movement of dental healthcare professionals throughout Europe, as well as promoting the safety of patients.

In the context of freedom of movement, EU-citizens need assurance that dental practitioners, providing their care, have a degree/license to practice that meets EU-standards and that they maintain their knowledge and skills via ongoing education, underpinning their clinical expertise. CPD acquisition is the principal mechanism which supports this process.

CPD available to graduate dentists across the EU is hugely variable and provided by a range of bodies including dental schools but also other stakeholders including the public sector and industry, not all of which are subject to quality management. Some EU countries have schemes that mandate dentists to engage in a minimum number of hours of CPD in a given period. Other countries prescribe essential CPD topics like cross-infection control, medical emergencies and other topics relating to patient safety. Across Europe, CPD provision is largely unregulated. However, there is a widespread movement towards systems of re-certification or re-licensure for healthcare providers. These are likely to be based on appraisal processes and CPD achievements which will be mandatory for dentists to remain on a dental register. Thus CPD will, increasingly, be seen as an essential aspect of a dental professional's working life.

Therefore, to promote the mobility of dental practitioners and to support the equity of education provision and safe management of patients, there is a need for standardisation and harmonisation of CPD delivery across the EU. This project is reviewing and agreeing essential knowledge and skills that all EU dentists should be expected to maintain, and will identify evidence of best practice in CPD delivery and quality management of that provision. The EU dental schools have a strategic role to play and this project will support the modernization of their role in postgraduate education. Europe-wide recognition of dental CPD is crucial in the support, both of free movement and the introduction of recertification.

Specific objectives of the project include:

- investigating the different systems and requirements for dental CPD in Europe
- identifying existing CPD programs and providers
- developing clear EU recognized guidelines on organization and quality management of CPD programs
- agreement across Europe on the essential CPD topics to be adopted and approved by regulatory/statutory bodies in each EU country
- the provision of guidelines for dental schools and other relevant stakeholders to support the delivery of competence-based CPD, employing modern technological advances in pedagogy and the development of an exemplar teaching module on a core CPD topic.

These objectives should in turn help to improve:

- harmonisation and standardization of dental CPD across Europe
- modernization of the strategic role of institutions for higher education in the quality management of CPD
- enhance the freedom of movement across Europe of graduate dentists
- enhance patient safety across Europe.

The initial target group, for the project team, will be the CPD program managers of the dental schools in the five partner countries. They will benefit directly during the lifetime of the project from the guidelines and the freely available exemplar module with guidelines which will utilise modern technology and pedagogy in delivering CPD. Beyond this initial target group and still within the duration of the project, program managers of other countries will be included through participation in the working groups, on harmonisation of dental CPD, during the ADEE meetings in 2011 and 2012.

The ultimate target groups include the learners, being the graduate dentists and the dental educators as CPD teachers. They should profit from robust and structured CPD programs across Europe which in turn will hopefully increase the possibility of increased freedom of movement of dental practitioners. Last but not least, the European patient will profit from better and equitable clinical care and the provision of improved patient safety across the EU.

2. Project Approach

This project is being undertaken by a Project Team/Task Group consisting of the formal beneficiaries, who are joined, at a series of working groups, by other experts in the field of CPD including, professional association representatives, university representatives and other educational stakeholders, all linked through the extensive networks of the ADEE. During the lifetime of the project, the project team will be meeting for four formal and personal meetings (Cardiff (2011), Antalya (2011), Athens (2012) and Lyon (2012)) and in between through teleconferences and videoconferences. Frequent use of email supports the co-operation between the members of the team.

The Project Team members, from the six beneficiary partners (the five partner countries and ADEE), divide their contribution partner-wise across seven work-packages (WPs). Each of these WPs has specific deliverables to be achieved. Each partner has at least one role as the lead of one of the WPs. Cardiff, as the beneficiary institute, is leading two of the WPs. In each of the remaining five WPs, one or two of the other co-beneficiaries (partners) acts as main supporting partner. In every WP, all the partners are engaged in the discussions and decisions. In this way co-operation between all partners is optimized and secured.

One of these WPs (WP2) is dedicated to the evaluation of the project's quality plan. For this, an Evaluator was appointed and a quality monitoring plan has been written with indicators to assess the quality and progress of the Project. During every meeting, the Evaluator is ensuring appropriate progress and quality by measuring and monitoring the activity and results of partners against the planned objectives and actions and against the agreed project schedule.

For the investigation, into dental CPD systems (WP3), the requirements and identification of essential CPD topics, a questionnaire/survey was sent to a wide variety of individuals in all dental schools and other educational stakeholders in Europe and beyond. An extensive internet and literature search supported this and the results have and will continue to be presented widely. To date, progress has been reported locally within each partner's country, at the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) at a dedicated work shop, in San Diego, USA, at a European/South American Postgraduate Education Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and at the 2011 ADEE meeting. Presentations, at a variety of other educational conferences, are planned as part of the dissemination and exploitation initiatives for the duration of the project and beyond. At the 2012 ADEE meeting, the exemplar CPD module will be presented with the guidelines on how to implement modern technology and pedagogy in CPD programs.

In the program of the ADEE annual meeting in 2011 (Antalya), time was scheduled for a wider debate about the DentCPD project. The Inventory on dental CPD in Europe was presented in the main program of the meeting. Essential, core CPD topics were presented to the group at large, assembled as part of a Special Interest Group (SIG) on 'Harmonisation of Dental CPD', and a consensus agreement was reached. Prior to this the Team had extended the survey to groups of general dental practitioners (the learners) across four separate EU countries, to establish whether they as learners agreed with our findings from the initial survey which included dental educators and a number of providers of CPD. The latter might be perceived to be biased in the views on CPD delivery. However, there was close agreement on the core topics from the survey of this cohort of dentists (learners). The inventory will, as planned, be available by the end of October 2011. Furthermore, draft guidelines on the organization and quality management of CPD delivery were presented and discussed, at ADEE 2011. During the meeting in Antalya 251 people from 99 different dental schools out of 27 European countries and 14 non-European countries participated in the meeting. In addition, 25 individuals participated in the SIG, involving specifically debate about the core "compulsory" and core "recommended" dental CPD topics; the role of

accreditation in the quality assurance of CPD activity; and, the draft guidelines for the delivery of dental CPD. For the SIG, during the meeting in 2012 in Lyon, a comparable participation is expected. By engaging many interested educators and managers in these discussions, dissemination of the project's outcomes is continuously being promoted and the impact strengthened.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

In the first year of this two year project, work has concentrated mainly on work-packages (WP) 1, 2, 3 and 4. Preliminary discussions on the other three WPs have supported the lead partners of each of these four WPs to develop their thoughts, ideas and plans, as well as the execution of their tasks in the coming year.

In WP1 of the project 'Management' (lead - Cardiff), the Project Team/Task Group was established, a workplan has been written and a Financial Handbook produced. The Workplan serves as the 'agenda' for the project. It contains all actions and schedules. The Financial Handbook contains the figures on the available budgets for each partner, rules on how to spend those budgets and to what extent money can be transferred between different categories of personnel, materials and travel etc. It gives details of how to register hours spent by each individual member of the team, rules on reporting on finances by each partner and rules on how to put the figures together for the beneficiary partner. The Financial Handbook is being used as an aide memoire in parallel with the EACEA's 2010 Project Handbook.

Under the auspices of WP1, a two day Project Team meeting was organized in Cardiff, during which the Team worked on the different WPs and on the strategy and approaches to be utilised for the rest of the project. The next Project Team meeting, in the reporting period, was held in Antalya during the ADEE annual meeting in September 2011. Presentations on the results and progress of WP3 and the continuing work of WP4 were prepared and executed for the wider ADEE audience. A Special Interest Group (SIG), on the harmonisation of dental CPD, was prepared for and held, during the ADEE program. These presentations and associated discussions and debate have ensured that dissemination of the results, to a much wider audience, has commenced. In addition to the 'live' Project Team meetings, bilateral meetings have been held; two teleconferences and one videoconference were held and frequent email contact has been maintained.

In WP2, on quality management (lead - Amsterdam), an Evaluator was appointed who produced a 'Quality Assurance Strategy' document. This contains indicators and criteria with which the Evaluator has been monitoring the project's quality and progress thus far. A confidential Draft Interim Report was produced for internal use, earlier this year as part of WP2 and in support of the production of the formal progress report process. These processes have facilitated the production of this 'Public' Progress report and the 'Confidential' Progress report.

In WP3, which concentrated on a European overview of dental CPD (Lead - Cardiff), a questionnaire/survey was developed to determine what the different systems of delivery and management of CPD were in the different EU countries and other countries outside of Europe (for comparison). Also the questions included information relevant to the requirements for CPD in relation to the registration of dentists. This questionnaire/survey was sent to all dental schools in Europe and other educational stakeholders through different personnel contacts and to 38 contacts outside of Europe through the ADEE network and to numerous individuals known by ADEE. In total, 664 contacts were included in the distribution, but a number of these contacts were represented in more than one of the different groups and thus this summation does not equate to the total number of unique individuals who were contacted via email. Responses were received from 30 out of 31 EU Member and Associated Member States and from 11 countries outside Europe. In total 172 individual responses were received, 143 of these originating from within the EU.

As part of WP3, a survey of CPD was also undertaken during the report period, through literature and internet search. Subjects including CPD delivery and uptake, pedagogy, financing, subjects, disciplines, mandatory aspects, registration, etc. were studied and discussed. The results of both the questionnaire/survey and the literature/internet search

were presented at the 2011 ADEE meeting in September and will be presented at several other educational meetings. During the ADEE meeting agreement on essential core topics in dental CPD was reached. Four topics have been proposed to be listed as "compulsory" and three topics listed as "recommended". A consensus on the frequency for each of the four "compulsory" core dental CPD topics was also reached. Infection control (disinfection and decontamination), the management of the medically compromised patient and radiation protection, should be covered every five years. Whilst it was agreed that the graduate dentist should remain up to date on a breadth of medical emergency and collapse situations every five years, it was agreed they should also undertake a course on immediate life support (ILS) including airway control on an annual basis. This is the first step in providing harmonisation and supporting mandatory CPD across the EU states.

In WP4, involving the development of guidelines for dental CPD delivery (Lead - Helsinki), the results of the surveys of WP3 were studied and a design for European guidelines on the delivery and management of dental CPD is being prepared. This will serve as a further development of harmonisation in Europe focussing on delivery, quality management and core topics. These guidelines were presented during the ADEE 2011 meeting to stimulate discussion and evaluation and to open up the discussion to a wider audience.

For WP5, the first discussions on an interactive website and an Exemplar CPD course have taken place. This will be circulated to the team following further modifications and refinements, after the meeting of the Project Team at ADEE 2011. The project website, as part of WP6, continues to be constructed and populated. Information relating to many of the reports and issues described above, along with examples of dissemination and exploitation will be available in the early part of year 2 of the project (WP7), through the DentCPD website, the ADEE website and the Cardiff University, Dental Postgraduate Section of the School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education website.

4. Partnerships

The partners (beneficiary and co-beneficiaries) in this project include:

- University of Cardiff, School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education and School of Social Sciences- beneficiary institute - leading in WPs 1 and 3 (Management & Development)
- University of Athens, Dental School - leading in WP5 (Development)
- University of Helsinki, Dental School - leading in WP4 (Development)
- Academic Centre for Dentistry Amsterdam (ACTA) - leading in WP2 (Quality Plan)
- Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) - leading in WP6 (Dissemination)
- University of Riga Dental School - leading in WP7 (Exploitation)

These institutions form the Project Team and are responsible for the execution and progress of the work-plan, preparation of papers, articles, presentations and discussion. Equally important to the project, are all other individual personnel, representatives of approximately 200 ADEE member dental schools, representatives of the 34 ADEE member professional dental associations many of whom recently attended the ADEE annual meeting in Antalya (2011) and will attend and thus contribute further at the ADEE meeting in Lyon in 2012. They will continue to participate in the discussions and refinements of the proposals put forward by the Project Team with respect to the harmonisation of Dental CPD across the EU. This ADEE partnership network makes it possible to substantially raise the profile of the discussions, proposals and agreements on European Dental CPD across a broad European perspective, within the timeframe for the 2-year project. Six independent institutions, if acting alone as part of the Project Team, would never have achieved such an impact. Their perspectives and proposals would never reach beyond an agreement on Dental CPD between their own institutions and the hope that the rest of Europe would follow their example.

The ADEE meetings thus provide a platform for immediate access for and to representatives of dental schools, professional dental organisations and other relevant dental educational stakeholders from all EU countries and beyond, building on their expertise through their experience, ideas and thoughts. This broad audience, involved in the ADEE meetings, has effectively acted as the first target users of the outcomes of the project. It means that dissemination of the results has commenced early in the project and will continue to do so on a regular basis throughout the duration of the project and beyond.

The higher education institutions (HEIs), that host the project partners, are all research intensive and hold extensive European portfolios. Each partner collaborates significantly within their own university environment. The partners have experience across the breadth of dental education and learning methodologies. The partners and their individual contributors exhibit a wealth of experience and complement one another across the arenas of undergraduate and postgraduate dental education and training. This strengthens the aspirations for a continuum of education throughout a dentist's career progression which in turn underpins an ethos of lifelong learning. The individual staff, within the partner institutions, provide immense and diverse skills, expertise and competences which are already addressing the defined outcomes of this project.

Experience and expertise of the wider consortium partners and their HEIs includes: leadership in undergraduate and postgraduate institutions; portfolios of previous EU funding; promotion of the ethos of a continuum of dental education; harmonizing educational opportunities; competency based training and publications; standard setting and quality assurance issues; IT in dental education and web based activities; curriculum development; e-learning.

ADEE, through the recent DentEd programmes, provides unique expertise to disseminate (ADEE global networking) and support exploitation of this new and innovative project. All consortium HEI personnel have made key contributions on quality planning; competence based training; and the undergraduate and postgraduate education and training interface. This structured interaction between partners, through ADEE, is highlighted by previous EU initiatives including the Tempus and DentEd programs.

The project has a robust infrastructure of partner organizations and the expected outcomes of the project are clearly defined and accomplishable. The distribution of partners, contributing to the WPs will ensure the continuity of the project and are described below in more detail.

- Through the establishment of a Project Team, the lead beneficiary, Cardiff is directing WP1 (Management) supported by Riga who leads on WP7 (Exploitation), which is concerned with the promotion and utilization of the project outcomes.
- ACTA leads on WP2 (Quality Planning) having already identified the indicators with which to assess the progress of the project and the quality of the deliverables.
- Continuity will be assured by ACTA, Riga and Cardiff working closely across the areas of Management (WP1), Quality Planning (WP2) and Exploitation (WP7).
- Dissemination (WP6) through publicity activities is being led by ADEE and supported by Athens. The former will naturally act in a supportive role for the Development WPs, 4 (Guidelines), 5 (Teaching Module) and WP7 (Exploitation).
- To provide continuity, for each of the three Development WPs (3, 4, 5), the lead beneficiary, Cardiff, is also acting in supportive roles for other Development WPs, WP4 being led by Helsinki and WP5 led by Athens

The division of tasks plays to the partners' expertise and provides clear communication channels, thus demonstrating a natural progression of the developments throughout the duration of the project.

5. Plans for the Future

As the end of the first year of this project approached, discussions took place at the formal Project Team meeting in early September 2011 at the ADEE conference, in Antalya. In addition, wider dissemination of the outcomes took place at this, the 37th annual ADEE meeting. The results, to date, were presented to a wider audience and discussed in detail at a dedicated Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting. Having taken into account the discussions, debate and feedback at the SIG, the Draft Guidelines for delivery of Dental CPD and the Core CPD Topics will be refined, adapted and published on project websites, submitted for publication in an educational journal and presented at international educational conferences, throughout the duration of the project and beyond.

During the second year, the next formal Project Team meeting will be held on January 26th - 27th 2012, in Athens. A final formal Project Team meeting is due to take place in Lyon, at the end of August 2012 at the 38th annual meeting of the ADEE. In between these formal meetings, teleconferences and videoconferences will be held to accommodate decision making and facilitate progress and quality management. It is likely that, one or more bilateral meetings will be required to support the development of the different deliverables across the seven work-packages.

One of the main objectives of the Project is to harmonize and modernize the delivery of Dental CPD by engaging new technological advances in delivering CPD courses. In order to achieve this goal, an interactive website will continue to be developed with which it will be possible for CPD teachers in the EU to construct their own electronic CPD courses. Interactive guidelines, as part of the website, will support the teacher to reach a high quality outcome. An Exemplar CPD course, accessible through the same website, will invite teachers to interact and serve as a model course in the harmonisation process.

During the second year of the project, dissemination and exploitation will receive a great deal of attention. For this, the project website will continue to be developed and presentations will be given at a variety of opportunities at international educational meetings. The proceedings will be published in educational and other scientific journals, in the coming year and beyond. Ways will be searched and possibilities surveyed to exploit the results even more. Working through the extended network of ADEE and making use of the ADEE meetings will most likely remain the most important and effective means of dissemination and exploitation for now and for future years to come. This will be facilitated by the continuation of the SIG, which was originally set up within ADEE to accommodate and support this project and will continue to exist after completion of the project at future meetings of the ADEE beyond 2012.

6. Contribution to EU policies

This is the first project of its kind in dentistry, building on the 2009 EU theme of 'Creativity and Innovation'. There have been several CPD studies analysing doctors' performance and health care outcomes, but there have been few previous attempts to investigate CPD provision for dentists in different countries. Focused on continuing education and the strategic role of Dental Schools, this project builds on the success of ADEE's DentEd program which produced three key strategic documents for undergraduate education, referred to earlier.

In supporting the role of dental schools, this project assists in the modernisation of higher education, one of the 'learning clusters' highlighted in the 'Education and Training 2010 Work Programme', promoting the three common objectives of programme which include: quality, access and openness.

The efforts of this project to harmonize dental CPD across the EU, places high on the agenda the European Quality Framework (EQF), The National Quality Framework and thus the Framework for Qualifications of the Higher Education Area. In so doing the project aims to make qualifications and CPD activity from different countries easier to compare, supporting wider recognition and in turn promoting the mobility of graduate dentists between different institutions and across different working environments. In promoting the convergence, transparency and portability of CPD for graduate dentists working in the EU, this project will better enable mobility of practitioners anywhere within the EU and beyond.

In identifying clear EU recognized guidelines for CPD delivery and content for graduate dentists, this project tackles the issue of appropriate monitoring of dentists' lifelong learning to agreed quality benchmarks, addressing the philosophy of the EQF. In varying degrees, this work addresses all eight 'peer learning clusters', of the 'Education and Training 210 Work programme' increasing transparency and portability of a graduate dentists' CPD. These include:

- modernisation of higher education through support for Dental Schools in HEIs;
- providing guidelines for teachers and trainers;
- promoting better use of resources;
- improving technology in relation to the delivery of modular teaching programmes;
- overall establishing greater access to agreed and certified CPD opportunities;
- covering key or core competences of dental CPD;
- utilising sophisticated ICT;
- ensuring that the guidelines match to recognised learning outcomes.

7. Dissemination & Exploitation

There have been a number of opportunities to disseminate the achievements of the project, to date. These have been exploited throughout the EU as well as on the North and South American continents.

The project is fortunate to have as one of its co-beneficiaries, the ADEE given its global network of contacts who have already contributed significantly to the progress of this project.

The project has attained a high profile at the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) 2011, in San Diego this year and we anticipate further dissemination at the 2012 IADR in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

During the meeting of representatives of ADEE executive with representatives of the European Parliament, in Brussels this year, this project was mentioned in discussions and has gone some way to promoting the importance of continuing professional development (CPD) for healthcare professionals across the EU.

At the meeting of Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE) in September 2011, the co-ordinator spoke at length, with the Dean of the Dental School, Copenhagen, Denmark, about the verbal presentation to ADEE on the Survey of Dental CPD in the EU. The Dean will refer to the work of the DentCPD project in a presentation/workshop at the FDI World Dental Federation being held in Mexico in September 2011.