



Those who can – do. Those who can't – teach.



The Dental Schools Council, formerly the Council of Heads and Deans of Dental Schools, was established nearly 80 years ago as the Education Consultative Committee of the Dental Schools of Great Britain. The 2008 report on *Clinical Academic Staffing Levels in UK Dental Schools (As at 31 July 2007)* from the Dental Schools Council revealed that despite significant investment in dental education and training, the number of clinical academics continues to decline. There was a 15% reduction in the number of clinical academics working in the UK's 16 dental schools.

It was also reported that between 9 and 11% of job vacancies were unfilled. Seven specialties are in decline, notably paediatric dentistry and restorative dentistry. Ten of the 16 dental schools experienced problems in recruiting to certain specialties; seven dental schools reported that recruiting for restorative dentistry was particularly difficult.

The data on endodontics from the survey are open to interpretation. Endodontics has always been considered the Cinderella of dentistry. Despite the recognition and the establishment of a specialist list in endodontics by the UK's dental governing body, the General Dental Council, there is a lack of enthusiasm to further develop endodontics as a mono-specialty with a clearly defined career pathway in clinical academia and the National Health Service. A perceived threat to the domination of conservative/restorative dentistry, a not uncommon and myopic

view is that endodontics must not be allowed to break free, gain more recognition or achieve autonomy.

In October 2007, 1195 students including 162 graduate entrants began dental courses in the UK. It is essential to attract a sufficient number of dental graduates to a career as a clinical academic. A website (www.clinicalacademicjobs.org) was launched recently to address the problems of recruitment. Job seekers can search, free of charge, for currently available clinical academic positions in the UK's dental schools. In addition, there are links to relevant organisations offering funding and training for those intending to pursue a career in clinical academia. The website is jointly managed by the Dental Schools Council and the Medical Schools Council, and is supported by medical and dental schools throughout the UK.

Clinical academics not only treat patients, but are also responsible for educating students and carrying out research. Not only do they have to be able to do, but also to teach. Nowhere is this more true than in endodontics. The Art of Endodontics has to be underwritten by the Science of Endodontics. However, there are few who can do and also teach!

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