

Two *outstanding* DCP students

Susannah Palumbo and Felicity Slater were awarded the BDA Education Outstanding Oral Health Education Student and Outstanding Dental Radiography Student 2016 respectively at the recent BDA Honours and Awards ceremony in Manchester. *BDJ Team* caught up with the award winners to find out more about their experiences and their career aspirations.

Susannah Palumbo

BDA Education Outstanding Oral Health Education Student 2016

When did you first qualify as a dental nurse?

I qualified as a dental nurse in 1992.

What is the name of your current practice and how long have you worked there for?

I work at J Smallridge Dentalcare in Ipswich. The practice has been open just over a year. I was delighted to join Jackie Smallridge when she opened her own practice and it is because of her and her encouragement and support that I studied the oral health education [OHE] course.

How did it feel to be awarded the BDA Education Outstanding Oral Health Education Student of 2016?

I was totally overwhelmed when I received the letter to inform me I had won the award. It was a complete surprise and a very big honour.

How was the Awards Ceremony?

The award ceremony was set in the beautiful historic Town Hall building in Manchester. It was a great experience; I enjoyed a lovely meal and talking to some of the other guests. I was a little nervous and seeing all the other winners go up to collect their awards made me feel very proud that I had achieved my award and was included on this special evening. The other awards were presented to a whole range of roles within the dental team and it was very interesting to hear and read about the other award winners.

How did you feel about taking the final examination online, rather than going to an exam centre?

Taking the final exam online was completely new to me, having only sat exams within a formal setting. I found I was still nervous but not having to attend an unfamiliar setting eased some of the exam day stress.

What did you think of the BDA online course in Oral Health Education?

The BDA OHE online course was very enjoyable; I found the weekly modules interesting and informative. The course had a good mix of online and written course material. I did have to email the support team and they were very prompt at getting back to me with the information I required. I have a busy family life and I found that the course was able to fit around my lifestyle.

Since passing the exam how have you used your OHE qualification?

Since passing the OHE and gaining the qualification my confidence has grown; I feel I have more to offer within the practice whether it is within my nursing role or in my new role as an oral health educator. Giving patients time and information to help them improve and maintain good oral health is very rewarding.

Do you plan to take any further courses to develop your career in the future?

I have recently completed an online Fluoride Varnish Application course and found that this additional qualification works well with my OHE and has helped develop my career.



Felicity Slater

BDA Education Outstanding Dental Radiography Student 2016

When did you first qualify as a dental nurse?

I qualified in May 2009, passing with merit.

What is the name of your current practice and how long have you worked there for?

I work at Ferndale Dental Clinic in Devizes, and have been there for two and half years.

How did it feel to be awarded the BDA Education Outstanding Radiography Student of 2016?

I was very surprised but felt extremely honoured and proud also.

How was the Awards Ceremony?

I thoroughly enjoyed the ceremony and it was lovely to meet and chat with others in the dental industry. The venue was amazing and it was lovely to watch others accept their awards and hear about their contributions to dentistry.

How did you feel about taking the final examination online, rather than going to an exam centre?

I felt very comfortable taking the exam online. I didn't feel as nervous as I would in a more formal environment, and it was easier to arrange childcare around the exam.



What did you think of the BDA online course in Dental Radiography?

I found the course was presented very well online and it was very easy for me to fit the course in around work and looking after my children. I found the content was explained very well and using the online programme was very straightforward.

Since passing the exam how have you used your Radiography qualification?

I regularly use my qualification to take OPT x-rays and also additional radiographs as required.

Do you plan to take any further courses to develop your career in the future?

At the moment I don't have any plans to undertake any further courses however I am always looking to further my knowledge in the dental industry and may consider more courses in the future.

To find out more about the BDA's online qualifications in Dental radiography and in Oral health education, visit <https://www.bda.org/dcps>. The BDA also offers a short course in Decontamination; training courses on clinical and non-clinical topics; a course on Child protection and the dental team; and Cancer Research UK's oral cancer recognition toolkit.

Don't forget, *BDJ Team* provides ten free hours of verifiable CPD a year too! <https://cpd.bda.org/login/index.php>

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