

Master's in Clinical Periodontics allows dentists to build on their skills while continuing to practise

Dr David van As explains the value of studying for a Master's in Clinical Periodontics while continuing to practise: 'I enrolled on the College of Medicine and Dentistry's (CoMD's) Master's in Clinical Periodontics in 2016, studying part-time and continuing to work clinically because, after treating patients for 30 years, I decided it was time to enhance my skills and become a formal student again to improve my clinical practice.

'It's definitely more challenging to study and work at the same time, but the structure of CoMD's course makes it perfectly doable for any busy clinician. To achieve this, I dedicated between one and two days a week to studying, which included theoretical study, but we were also able to treat patients in the College clinic under supervision of experienced specialists.

'It was definitely this clinical side of the course that really appealed to me. It's unique because it allows dentists to treat their own patients under supervision, or to take them to the College for a second opinion. Assistance from tutors is very reassuring because unlike in medicine, mentoring is yet to fully establish itself as a feature of a dental professional's career journey, despite the fact we face many similar challenges to doctors. One of CoMD's key USPs is that it brings together this array of highly-experienced specialists, who offer all students much-needed mentoring.

'I believe postgraduate courses are the only way forward and CoMD offers an enhanced learning experience. I've previously taken courses where I've had difficulty translating theoretical knowledge into practical skills. At CoMD that transition was a lot smoother as the Master's in Clinical Periodontics equips dentists with the core skills they need in this specialist area, via a multi-disciplinary approach. Students are exposed to advanced and unique training, including treating periodontal patients and simulated patients in state-of-the-art facilities at CoMD's dental hospital in central Birmingham. This hands-on training includes periodontal

surgery, soft tissue and bone augmentation and implant placement. This suits my approach to learning and has imbued me with a good deal of clinical confidence.

'The College attracts some first-rate experts to lead its courses and I am honoured to have joined their ranks, as I'm now also teaching and lecturing at CoMD – I joined the team during lockdown and it's fantastic to be able to share with students, that which I have gained from the College.

'I believe in the College. I believe in its philosophy, and I'm happy and proud to teach there; it takes every element that students might be concerned about and properly addresses them, and that requires vision. CoMD's Dean has that vision and understands how to balance innovation with experience. By that I mean the faculty of CoMD comprises several highly experienced clinicians, plus a number of slightly younger, innovative clinicians and that balance is key to its success.

'In summary, CoMD is unique. There is a passion there, which I haven't seen in some of the more historical education centres at which I have also studied. Plus, I think CoMD's collaboration with Ulster University is fantastic, and a refreshing example of combining robust experience with innovation, which translates into the accurate application of modern concepts, to the benefit of the students. Academia and research can at times be selfish, however, with this collaboration, we don't have to keep reinventing the wheel. The collaboration between CoMD and Ulster University, affords us the privilege of learning from each other and sharing our strengths, as I am constantly humbled by the words of Mother Teresa Bojaxhiu, who said "I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things".

'Perhaps the greatest compliment I have received as a tutor came from one of our Ulster-based students at the College recently, who asked me whether I enjoyed teaching – my affirmation prompted her to add: "because it shows".



Dr David van As

To find out more about CoMD's Master's in Clinical Periodontics please visit: <https://comd.org.uk/course/msc-in-clinical-periodontics>.

About the College of Medicine and Dentistry

Established in 2013 and evolved in 2018, the College of Medicine and Dentistry is the first independent postgraduate education provider offering a wide range of qualifications from MSc to PhD and Professional Diploma level for dentists and healthcare professionals. Our collaboration with Ulster University enables us to offer a wide range of career progression opportunities.

CoMD works with the largest dental and healthcare provider groups in the UK allowing it to offer its students employment opportunities during and on completion of their studies. It also ensures students get the most out of their time at the college whilst gaining valuable knowledge, transferable skills, and intercultural competencies so they leave as well-rounded professionals with a competitive edge.

The College of Medicine and Dentistry recently expanded its central Birmingham campus to 12,555 sq ft, including a 100-seat capacity lecture theatre with advanced video conferencing and UHD laser projectors. Its students are also taught in a simulation teaching facility featuring the only Kavo 3D Artica Scan Teaching Assistant currently in the UK and the latest generation Zumax endodontic microscopes for precision teaching. Alongside this, students are given access to work on patients at CoMD's in-house 17-chair Dental Institute which features the latest technologies including advanced 3D imaging equipment.