

# Senior academics' perceptions of undergraduate prosthodontics curriculum and teaching: a qualitative study

## Précis

Divergence in undergraduate teaching methods in prosthodontics could impact on graduate dentists' competence and affect patient safety, especially with mobility of dentists internationally. This study highlights the need to minimise this divergence.

## Abstract

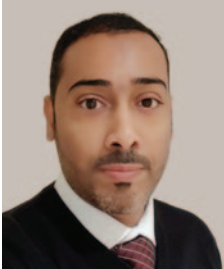
**Introduction:** Divergence in undergraduate teaching methods in prosthodontics is widely reported, and this could impact on graduate dentists' competence and affect patient safety.

**Objectives:** To explore the perspectives held by senior dental academics worldwide regarding the undergraduate prosthodontics curriculum, teaching and assessment methods, and teaching staff profile.

**Materials and methods:** Twelve senior dental academics from seven countries participated in semi-structured interviews exploring their perspectives and opinions of the undergraduate prosthodontics curriculum, and current and best teaching and assessment methods. Interviews were undertaken virtually, video-recorded and auto-transcribed. Semantic thematic analysis was used for data analysis.

**Results:** Academic professors, consultants and specialists were considered the most suitable staff members to supervise students during preclinical hands-on sessions due to their experience level. Additionally, participants mentioned the availability of suitable patients for treatment, dental schools' curricula, and the level of students' skills as factors influencing the start of clinical sessions in fixed prosthodontics. The course contents and the extent of teaching on dental implants were different between schools. Tailoring the curriculum according to what is expected from the graduating dentists and allowing students to observe dental implant cases before dealing with simple cases were suggestions made by the participants, to include an implant course at undergraduate level.

**Conclusions:** Despite some differences in opinions and current practices in different institutions, barriers to the implementation of an ideal curriculum seemed to be similar in the different institutions. This study provided deeper understanding of the current divergence in prosthodontics teaching, which would allow for future improvement in the dental curriculum.



**Dr Khaleel Al Khalaf**  
BDS MSc PhD

Restorative Dentistry Department,  
University Dental School and Hospital,  
University College Cork, and Prosthodontics  
Department, Dammam Specialist Dental  
Centre, Dammam Medical Complex,  
Dammam, Saudi Arabia

**Corresponding author:** Dr Khaleel Al Khalaf BDS MSc PhD, Restorative Dentistry Department, University Dental School and Hospital, University College Cork E: k.alkhalaf@umail.ucc.ie; k.alkhalaf@live.co.uk

**Prof. Christopher D. Lynch**  
DDSc PhD FDS (Rest Dent) RCSI PFHEA  
Professor/Consultant in Restorative  
Dentistry  
Restorative Dentistry Department,  
University Dental School and Hospital,  
University College Cork

**Dr Cristiane da Mata**  
BDS MFD(RCSI) MPH PhD  
Lecturer in Restorative Dentistry  
Restorative Dentistry Department,  
University Dental School and Hospital,  
University College Cork