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**PRESS RELEASE:**

**26 May 2010**

## **Dental Schools encouraged by increase in clinical academic staffing levels**

Data published today by the Dental Schools Council reveal a 2% increase in the number of clinical academics in UK Dental Schools during the 2008-09 academic year, to a total of 478 Full Time Equivalents (FTE), the highest number since 2000. The 2009 data reveal a return to total staffing levels higher than in 2000. However, this disguises a 21% decline (101 FTE) in the number of research active clinical academics - Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers - in the same time period.

The Dental Schools are especially encouraged by the 12% (15 FTE) increase in the number of Lecturers between 2008 and 2009, and the evidence that younger clinical academics are being drawn from a more diverse population in terms of gender, age and ethnicity.

Despite this, there remain areas of concern:

- Women continue to be underrepresented at senior clinical academic grades, with just ten of the seventeen Dental Schools employing a female Professor
- 55% of clinical academics are aged over 46, compared with 51% in 2004
- The recent increase in lecturers alone may be insufficient to replace the expertise and leadership in clinical academia lost through retirement
- The small staffing levels in many dental specialties renders them especially vulnerable to change

Professor William P Saunders, Chair of the Dental Schools Council, said 'Dentistry is unique amongst the health professions, with funding from both Higher Education Funding Councils and the NHS, and teaching of dental students as a primary role of Higher Education Institutions. Clinical academic dentistry is one of the most stimulating and rewarding careers involving patient care, education and innovative research'.

'We are delighted by the recent increase in staffing levels in UK Dental Schools. However, we do anticipate the added pressures to the public purse over the coming years, and, as a community of Dental Schools, we look to work closely to protect and support the quality of teaching and research, as well as the contributions of clinical academics to the NHS and of clinicians to academia.'

The survey can be accessed online at: [www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/clinical\\_academic\\_staffing\\_survey.htm](http://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/clinical_academic_staffing_survey.htm)

**Notes to editors:**

1. This is the eighth data update to be published by the Dental Schools Council since 2000. 17 Dental Schools were asked to return data on clinical academic grade, specialty, percentage full-time, source of funding, age, gender and ethnicity for each individual in post as at 31 July 2009.
2. The Dental Schools Council is the authoritative voice of the Heads and Deans of the University Dental Schools across the United Kingdom. The Council is currently chaired by Professor William P Saunders, Dean of the School of Dentistry, University of Dundee. Its Executive Director is Dr Katie Petty-Saphon.
3. For more information please contact Amy Stringer, Communications Officer, on +44 (0) 20 7419 5427
4. For further information about the work of the Dental Schools Council please see [www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk](http://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk)
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