



Studying Dentistry in Hong Kong



**An introduction to being a dentist
in Hong Kong and training
at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry**

- What a dentist does
- How to become a dentist in Hong Kong
- Dental careers in Hong Kong



Table of Contents

Dean's Message

1

**Top 10 Reasons
for Studying Dentistry in Hong Kong**

2

Being a Dentist

3

**Becoming a Dentist
in Hong Kong**

6

**Dental Careers
in Hong Kong**

10

Dear Reader

We hope you enjoy reading this brochure, which gives an introduction to dentistry in Asia's World City of Hong Kong and training at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry in the purpose-built Prince Philip Dental Hospital.

The Faculty's mission is *"to serve the people of Hong Kong and the region by advancing their oral health and well-being through excellence in learning, discovery, patient care, and engagement"*. Our institution is the only provider of university dental education in Hong Kong and is now considered to be the premier centre for dental education and training in Southeast Asia.

An outstanding feature of our undergraduate curriculum is our reliance on problem-based learning to produce well-rounded dental graduates who are capable of critical thinking and life-long learning. In addition, our facilities are state-of-the-art and our teaching staff come from all over the globe and are highly recognised experts internationally in their respective disciplines.

We are confident of the high quality of the education you will receive at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry. We look forward to sharing your future and helping you start your new career!

Professor Lakshman Samaranayake

*Dean, Faculty of Dentistry,
The University of Hong Kong*



Top 10 Reasons for Studying Dentistry in Hong Kong



The University of Hong Kong:

(1) Is ranked **18th in the top 200 universities in the world** [*The World University Rankings. The Times, Higher Education Supplement: November 2007*]

The HKU Faculty of Dentistry:

(2) Has been delivering **world-class dental training** for more than 25 years

(3) Generates graduates who are keenly sought after and **very well compensated** by employers soon after graduation [*Graduate Employment Survey 2006. HKU Careers Education and Placement Centre*]

(4) Provides a stimulating **problem-based learning** environment that encourages self-directed and life-long learning

(5) Comprises a **truly international team** of dedicated and internationally recognised teachers, researchers, and clinicians

(6) Has **outstanding** clinical, learning, and research facilities; students are also supported by the Dental Society of the HKU Students' Union

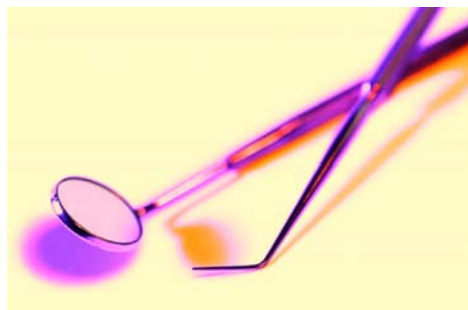
(7) Provides **excellent support** from teams of Dental Surgery Assistants, Dental Technicians, and Laboratory Staff

(8) Offers courses leading to **internationally recognised** degrees and diplomas, the majority of which are accredited by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine as part of the training pathways of the eight dental specialties in Hong Kong

Dentists in Hong Kong:

(9) Belong to a **well-respected health profession**, sharing a seat in the Medical Functional Constituency in the Legislative Council with medical colleagues; all registered dentists have full voting rights in that Constituency

(10) Have a **wide range of career paths** and can register and own an independent practice straight after graduation from the HKU Faculty of Dentistry, without a preregistration year of training, which is compulsory for medical graduates



To be a dentist

Dentists deal with people, and their job involves diagnosing, preventing, and treating all aspects of oral disease.

An ideal dentist is:

- Understanding, caring, and sympathetic to the needs of others
- Willing to serve the community
- Able to think, enquire, and process information logically
- Able to work with others in a team and be a team leader
- Able to communicate well with others
- Fit, with a healthy, cheerful disposition

Oral health matters

Dentists improve people's oral health, which is important for general well-being because it affects:

- Speaking
- Biting, chewing, and eating
- Appearance and hence self-image and self-esteem
- Retaining healthy teeth and gums into old age, especially as improved living conditions and medical services mean we're living longer than previous generations
- Quality of life, especially among medically compromised patients



What a dentist does

Dentists enjoy the daily challenge of using sound scientific knowledge, modern techniques, and advanced equipment and materials to solve clinical problems.

Dentists:

- Diagnose, prevent, and treat aches and pains originating from jaws and teeth due to disease, injury, or malformation
- Improve a patient's appearance via cosmetic dental procedures
- Perform surgery such as metal implants, tissue grafts, and extractions
- Educate patients to better care for their teeth and prevent oral disease

In addition, dentists can:

- Teach future dentists and dental professionals
- Perform research to improve oral health and develop new treatments

The dental team

The dentist is the leader of a team of dental professionals, which may comprise:

- Dental hygienists
- Dental therapists
- Dental surgery assistants
- Dental technicians



Recent advances

Thanks to advances in technology and understanding of disease mechanisms, dentistry has evolved quickly, and previously hopeless dental cases can now be rehabilitated by sophisticated techniques and advanced materials.

Some examples of advances in dentistry are as follows:

- Fillings can be tooth-coloured
- Crowns, bridges, and dentures can restore or replace damaged or missing teeth
- Teeth that previously would have needed extraction can now be saved with root canal therapy
- Crooked or crowded teeth can be corrected by orthodontic (tooth-straightening) treatment
- Bad breath and gum diseases can be prevented and treated

Facial appearance can also be greatly improved by these procedures:

- Tooth restoration
- Periodontics (affecting tissues around teeth)
- Orthodontics (tooth-straightening), and/or
- Oral and maxillofacial (jaw and face) surgery



Studying at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry

The Faculty of Dentistry at The University of Hong Kong is the premier dental school in Asia and the only institution in Hong Kong that provides undergraduate and postgraduate dental degrees.

The Faculty was established in 1982 and is located in the Prince Philip Dental Hospital in Sai Ying Pun on Hong Kong Island. It has recently been re-equipped with the most up-to-date dental equipment.

The undergraduate intake is about 50 each year, and the degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (HK) is recognised internationally and by the Hong Kong Dental Council, the independent local authority with full legal status that looks after the registration of dentists and monitors their practice.



Entry requirements

In addition to satisfying the University entrance requirements, candidates for admission to the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (HK) course need to gain a Grade E or above in either 2 AL subjects or 1 AL and 2 AS subjects from the following:

- Chemistry
- Physics
- Biology
- Pure Mathematics
- Applied Mathematics
- Mathematics and Statistics

Candidates who do not have Grade E or above in AL or AS Chemistry, Physics, and/or Biology are required to obtain Grade D or above in the subject in HKCEE.

Selection criteria

For HKALE applicants, preference is given to candidates who list dentistry as a Band A choice, although consideration may also be given to those who list dentistry as a Band B choice.

A limited number of overseas students are also be considered each year.



The undergraduate course

Like the dental courses in many dental schools around the world, the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (HK) course lasts 5 years. The curriculum at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry has undergone a complete redesign so that graduates will be well suited to handle evolving demands on the dental profession in Hong Kong.

Problem-based learning

The curriculum at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry is student-centred and encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning. Instead of attending lectures, students are given a series of structured, integrated, and interesting dental “problems” to allow them to be exposed to the main elements of basic biological, behavioural, and social sciences that underpin dental surgery.

Active learning takes place through regular small-group tutorials during which each student contributes to the learning process in a discussion of a dental “problem”. This problem-based learning method makes it easier to acquire and retain knowledge, instils life-long learning habits, and fosters teamwork skills, all attributes of a good dentist.



Course outline

Students will learn:

- Basic biological, behavioural, and social sciences underlying oral diseases and oral disorders
- Prevention, clinical features, and management of oral diseases
- Diagnostic, operative (manual), interpersonal, and communication skills to allow students to become competent dental practitioners

Learning environment

Multidisciplinary learning takes place at the HKU Faculty of Dentistry in the Prince Philip Dental Hospital, which has a simulation laboratory that allows students to practise dental procedures in a virtual-reality setting, and the world's largest specialist Dental Library. Students also benefit from the latest in video and computer-aided design and manufacturing technology.

Some learning occurs at other clinics and venues in Hong Kong, including the University Departments of Medicine and Surgery. In the fifth year, students have an opportunity to spend time in a dental school abroad.



Career prospects

Dentistry is a well-recognised health profession in Hong Kong, and dental graduates command the benefits of a high professional status as well as a stable, above-average income. In 2006, the average total monthly income of fresh graduates of the HKU Faculty of Dentistry was HK\$24,155, compared with the University average of HK\$15,226.

Dental graduates from the HKU Faculty of Dentistry normally secure gainful employment in the field of dentistry shortly after graduation. In 2006, all Bachelor of Dental Surgery (HK) graduates found jobs or took up further studies within the first 6 months of graduation.

[Data from the HKU Careers Education and Placement Centre, <www.hku.hk/cepc/survey/ges>.]

Career paths

A degree in dentistry can open various career paths. Graduates can pursue any of the following careers:

- Private general dental practice
- Hospital dentistry
- Government dental service
- Institutional general practice
- Further studies
- Specialist practice
- University teaching and research



Private general dental practice

Most dental graduates go into private general dental practice. This career avenue offers:

- Flexibility
- The opportunity to practise almost all aspects of dentistry
- The choice to practise alone or in partnership with other dentists
- The chance to be an associate of other private dentists and, after a few years, to become a partner or set up a new clinic

Bank loans to establish private clinics are usually easy to secure, and equipment can be leased or purchased in instalments. The Hong Kong Housing Authority provides clinic space for doctors and dentists in every public housing estate.

If a private dentist offers high-quality care and is kind to patients of all ages from all backgrounds, a successful practice is almost assured. They must also have:

- Good management skills
- A keen interest in finance
- A good work ethic, enthusiasm, and business efficiency

Some dentists choose to practice a part-time rather than full-time business. Furthermore, an individual practitioner can choose to devote a large part of working time to particular areas of interest.



Hospital dentistry

Hospital dentistry may suit the tastes of those who want the support and career structure of a large organisation.

Although a hospital dentist may not treat many patients a day, their problems are likely to be more complicated than those seen in general practice. In a hospital, a dentist:

- Is part of a much larger team
- Has access to operating theatre facilities
- Has contact with specialists from other disciplines
- Can see patients with unusual medical conditions, developmental abnormalities, and complex facial injuries, who are referred by other dentists or doctors

Much hospital work is highly specialised. Working hours may be quite long and a hospital dentist may be on call. However, hospital work is interesting and satisfying. Also, because posts are salaried, hospital dentists do not face financial pressures that exist in private practices.

Most hospital dentists in Hong Kong work in the Prince Philip Dental Hospital (the only dental hospital in Hong Kong) or in the maxillofacial and dental units of general hospitals.



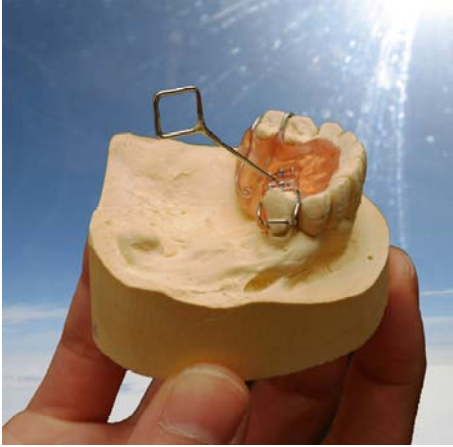
Government dental service

More than 200 dentists are employed by the Hong Kong Department of Health. Government dental officers work in the following services:

- Government dental clinics, providing general oral health care to civil servants and eligible dependents; some clinics also provide limited emergency dental service to the general public
- Maxillofacial and dental units of public hospitals, providing services to in-patients
- School dental service clinics, providing dental care to primary school students and supervising dental therapists who offer dental care in the School Dental Care Service
- Oral Health Education Unit, promoting oral health awareness in the community

Institutional general practice

Various organisations, including large companies and religious bodies, have dental clinics to provide dental treatment for employees, members, and the general public. Dentists working in these institutions are usually salaried, and their work is similar to that of private dentists.



Further studies

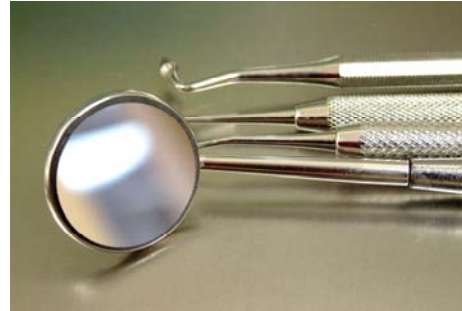
There are many opportunities for further studies in dentistry, both in Hong Kong and abroad.

Some courses are set up for dentists who wish to improve their skills and knowledge while continuing to practise as general dentists. And some courses are designed for dentists aspiring to become specialist practitioners, dental teachers, or researchers. Dentists wanting to practise abroad may need to pass special exams abroad; those who trained abroad but want to work in Hong Kong need to pass Hong Kong Dental Council exams.

The HKU Faculty of Dentistry offers postgraduate degree and diploma courses including the following programmes:

- Postgraduate Diploma in General Dental Surgery (courses in the major dental disciplines)
- Master of Dental Surgery (courses in most dental subjects)
- Master of Orthodontics
- Master of Science in Implant Dentistry
- Research degree of Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy

Full details can be found at the Faculty website at www.facdenthk.org.



Specialist practice

Some dentists choose to specialise in particular areas of interest in dentistry. Different specialist training pathways are recognised by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine. Dentists who wish to become recognised as specialists have to obtain a higher degree and to undertake advanced training in the specialty concerned.

Specialists can work in private practice or be employed in the government dental service, in hospitals, or in universities.

University teaching and research

Research is usually combined with teaching in university dental schools and offers the opportunity to pursue particular areas of interest in greater detail. The range of topics is very broad, from the study of cell biochemistry to study of dental materials and development of new treatment strategies.

By obtaining higher degrees and advanced clinical qualifications and by committing to teaching and research, an enthusiastic dentist may progress through the academic ranks to become a university professor.

Acknowledgements

The University of Hong Kong
Faculty Office, HKU Faculty of Dentistry

Prof Lakshman Samaranayake

Mr Raymond Leung

Prof Edward Lo

Dr Alex Chan

Ms Sau-wan Cheng

Prof Esmonde Corbet

Dr Frederick Chu

Mr Jonathan Ku

Dr Thomas Li

Dr Trevor Lane

Ms Anita Leung

Ms Jessica Wong

Dental Society, HKUSU

Copyright and Disclaimer

**© 2008 Faculty of Dentistry, The University of Hong Kong.
All rights reserved.**

This brochure is a guide to the HKU Faculty of Dentistry, the courses it offers, and dental training and practice in Hong Kong. The information set out is an expression of intent only and should not be taken as a firm offer or undertaking; the Faculty and the University accept no responsibility for errors or omissions. The HKU Faculty of Dentistry reserves the right to make alterations to any information contained within this publication without notice.

For more information:

E-mail: <dental@hkusua.hku.hk>

Website: <www.facdenthk.org>

**Faculty of Dentistry
The University of Hong Kong
Prince Philip Dental Hospital
34 Hospital Road
Hong Kong**