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Academic Programme Accreditation MAS in Microinvasive Aesthetic Dentistry, University of Geneva

External review report | 29.07.2015



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1 Accreditation procedure

The accreditation procedure for academic programmes in Switzerland comprises an internal evaluation performed by the study programme followed by an external evaluation by a team of independent experts. The group leader of this team is responsible for the report which, after approval by the team as a whole, is sent to the accreditation agency AAQ. The AAQ sends the report to the evaluated unit, which may express an opinion on the report's contents. Based on these documents and the self-evaluation report, the AAQ sends its recommendation to the decision-making authority, the Swiss Accreditation Council.

The accreditation demand was made on 17 June 2014. The accreditation procedure was formally opened on 8 September 2014. In January 2015, the new framework law on higher education in Switzerland entered into force (Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector). Since then, the accreditation bodies have been reorganised and the Swiss center of accreditation and quality assurance in higher education (OAQ) has been replaced by the Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ).

The present procedure being carried out during the transition phase between the old and new legal framework in Switzerland, this report has been compiled according to the procedures of the OAQ. It records the outcomes of a process conducted using the quality standards of March 2013 for the accreditation of continuing education programmes in Switzerland. The procedure is based on the Accreditation Guidelines of 28 June 2007 of the Swiss University Conference.

1.1 Presentation of the unit

The unit seeking for accreditation is the continuing education programme Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Microinvasive Aesthetic Dentistry, offered by the Faculty of Medicine, University of Geneva. The strategic aims of University of Geneva (henceforward called "the university") in continuing education are to improve the competitiveness of the institution, to serve the public and to monitor developments at the outskirts of the fields under interest. The Continuing Education Commission (COFO) and the Continuing Education Centre (SFC) are in place to support the development of continuing education at the university.

The MAS in Microinvasive Aesthetic Dentistry (henceforward called "MAS") is offered to experienced dentists wishing to improve their professional skills. The main focus of the programme is on restorative aspects of dentistry. Emphasis is given on reasonable conservation of sound tooth substance. The main target population of patients are those with high cosmetic demands. The main target population of dentists are those treating also patients with such treatment needs. The MAS programme is very much clinically oriented and enables dentists to solve complex and aesthetically demanding cases in a self-contained way.

The programme runs over 2 years. Six dentists are admitted per period, three of which are interns and three externs. Due to the distance teaching modules it is possible to include foreign dentists in the programme, who do a large part of their studies in an extra-occupational manner at their home countries.

1.2 Self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report has been sent to the agency on 19 March 2013. As a complement, a strength and weaknesses analysis (synoptic SWOT table) has been added beginning of May, following the request of the agency. It has been prepared by the steering group members of the self-assessment, composed of the director and the co-director of the programme, a holder of a post-graduate degree and a holder of a degree of the MAS to be evaluated, and finally an independent external expert.

The report presents the university and, more specifically, relevant aspects of its offer in continuing education, in Chapters II and III. In Chapter IV, the outcome of the confrontation of the MAS with the quality standards is discussed. Documents underpinning the different descriptions and analyses are given in an electronic annex delivered on CD-ROM.

The external analysis could have been conducted more efficiently if the presentation of the university and the continuing education (Chapters II and III) were also linked in some way to the quality standards. For example, training material for teaching staff as well as for programme responsible and administrators are presented in chapter III, without reference to Areas of evaluation 2 (Internal organization and QA) and 4 (Teaching staff).

1.3 Group of experts

The group of experts assembled for this accreditation procedure was approved by the OAQ Scientific advisory board. Its membership was constituted as follows:

Peer leader:

- Prof. Dr. Franco Cavallo, former Vice-Dean Faculty of Medicine, University of Turin, Italy

Experts:

- Prof. Dr. Hans van Pelt, associate clinical professor, University Medical Center Groningen, the Netherlands
- PD Dr. Klaus Neuhaus, senior lecturer, School of Dental Medicine at the University of Bern, Switzerland
- em. Prof. Dr. Karl Weber, former Head of Continuing Education at the University of Bern, Switzerland

At the outset of this group report, the experts engaged to recommend on accreditation wish to record their appreciation of the contributions to the process made both by the staff and students of the unit under accreditation and by the administrators of the AAQ. Thanks to the input of all these individuals, the group found itself able to conduct its work effectively and in an atmosphere of shared commitment to quality.

1.4 On-site visit

The on-site visit was undertaken on 21-22 May 2015, with a briefing session for the group of experts on the evening of 20 May 2015, followed by a preparatory meeting. The various sessions comprising the visit may be summarised as follows:

- Thursday 21st May. Preparatory meeting of the panel of experts. Meetings and interviews: with the management of the programme; with the teaching staff; with students and alumni; with technical and administrative staff; and with external stakeholders. Short Visit of the premises.
- Friday 22nd May. Meetings and interviews: with the management of the university; and with those responsible for quality assurance, including central services and equal opportunities. Preparation by the group of its conclusions and debriefing session for the university staff.

The group felt that the range of individuals with whom it was able to meet, the nature of the discussions and the supplementary material produced in response to requests during the course of the visit enabled it to make a well-informed appraisal of the programme being considered for accreditation and of the infrastructural and other resources of the institution

necessary to underpin it. Accordingly, it was happy to make the analyses and recommendations relating to compliance with quality standards, which appear in Section Two.

1.5 Position statement of the programme

The preliminary report has been submitted to the self-assessment steering group members at the university on 16 June 2015. The position statement, dated 9 July 2015 and signed by the head of the MAS, Prof. Dr. Ivo Krejci, indicates how the programme responsible intend to fulfil the conditions set by the expert group (see chapter 4). The statement also gives some clarification, namely with respect to weaknesses of the MAS, as identified by the expert group.

The experts carefully analysed the position statement and decided unanimously to leave the report as it stands, releasing thereby the final version of the expert's report.

2 Evaluation of the Quality Standards

Area 1: Implementation and teaching objectives

Standard 1.01

The range of programmes is carried out regularly
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Background information

The programme started in 2012 with 9 students, a 2nd session in 2014 with 6 students, and a third is planned for 2017-19.

The MAS has been developed after the former specialization programme of the Swiss Society for Preventive and Restorative Dentistry (SVPR) was abandoned due to the difficulty in recognising an adequate title by the Swiss Dental Association (SSO). The university requires that the programme be fully financed by the student's fees; so far it came out that enough people are interested in this programme, which has been therefore able to sustain its activities.

Analysis

The programme has been delivered regularly for the enrolled students of the first batch and it will also for the second one. The third batch is foreseen for 2017 and it is likely that a sufficient number of attendants will be enrolled. It is difficult to judge whether in the future the programme will be delivered on a regular basis.

A suggestion was made by the experts, inviting the program's responsible to better assess the future needs of the market, and/or link the programme to a wider European platform.

Recommendation for quality improvement:

The programme responsible should carry out systematically a market needs analysis to be sure that the demand for this kind of specialisation shall maintain in the future.

Conclusion **fulfilled**

Standard 1.02

The objectives of the programme correspond to the institution's mission and strategic plan.

Background information

The main focus of the programme is on restorative aspects of dentistry. Emphasis is given on reasonable conservation of sound tooth substance.

The SFC guarantees the strict verification of all conditions set by the university to be respected by a MAS, with respect to its strategic aims and quality criteria. The SFC has a consulting and supporting position when a new programme opens, besides checking that the programme is likely to enrol a sufficient number of participants.

The Faculty of Medicine keeps a close eye on the development of these programmes aiming at developing a closer link between the school of human medicine and the school of dental medicine. Moreover, the Faculty of Medicine is carefully re-evaluating the demand for the programme, in order to avoid misallocation of human and other resources and possible overlap among different programmes.

Analysis

The programme appears to be in line with the Institution's mission and strategic plan, given the close link with the relevant offices and the one with the Faculty of Medicine. There is a clear philosophy underneath the programme, which is known to the experts and which is also worldwide known (published in 2001) even if not clearly described in the self-evaluation document. The experts are also aware that the programme complies with the quality standard set out by SSO, which are strict and unique in the world.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 1.03

The stakeholders concerned (for example: responsible departments, participants, alumni, professional organisations, employers and research centres) are identified and according to the need involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programme.

Background information

Stakeholders are difficult to identify; the programme responsible say that the MAS was conceived and carried forward with the help of the leading academic experts, former students and SVPR graduates, but no formal groups of persons (either experts, scientists or scientific associations) are mentioned.

Analysis

There is no formal identification of whom could be considered a stakeholder in this domain, even if, for example, members of the local sections of SSO sharing the philosophy of this MAS could be identified. In addition, former students could represent a group to refer to, as well as the specialists working on the territory.

Recommendation for quality improvement:

Even if this profession is mostly private-based, a better identification of possible stakeholders could be done (SSO, groups of practitioners, dental scientific societies) in order to help the programme responsible to carry out this endeavour and have an external support for their effort.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 1.04

Target audience and learning objectives have been defined. The objectives are formulated in terms of professional competences, associated with a particular function, or personal aptitudes.

Background information

When planning the MAS, the MAS responsible and other professors were asked by the university to write down their learning goals and the expected competences to be acquired. The identified learning objectives and competences are summarized in the *plaquette* describing the programme.

According to the *plaquette*, the aim of the MAS is to build on the theoretical knowledge and practical skills gained from studies in the area of conservative dentistry and microinvasive aesthetics. It is also designed to promote excellent practice amongst dentists.

The programme responsible describes the main target population *of patients* to be those with high cosmetic demands. The main target population *of dentists* are those treating also patients with such treatment needs.

A request for at least 1-2 years of practical experience is formulated and an individual check is carried out with the applicants to guarantee their adequacy to enter the programme.

Analysis

The MAS provides a specialisation in the well-established field of dental medicine. Despite the differences in former education (in Switzerland or abroad), the admission procedure is conducted in order to select participants having a common background and being on a level allowing them to successfully integrate a continuing education programme.

In the booklet entitled “MAS Microinvasive Aesthetic Dentistry”, the experts found no specific learning objectives. The identified topics are listed, but they are not described as professional competences associated with a particular function, or personal aptitudes.

Condition:

Professional competences and specific learning objectives to be acquired during the programme should be made explicit and published.

Conclusion: **partially fulfilled**

Area 2: Internal organization and quality assurance measures

Standard 2.01

The decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities have been determined and communicated to all those involved.

Background information

The internal management structure is clearly defined:

The MAS is governed by the management committee designated by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. It is composed of 5 members, the director, the co-director and coordinator, the scientific director, a teacher of the university and an external member as independent expert.

The coordinator, who also acts as co-director, is responsible for managing all of the competencies, information, programmes and timetables. He acts as an intermediary between the management committee, the teaching faculty, the tutors and the students, and is in close contact with the university's continuing education services (legal aspects, website, budget and diverse publications).

Analysis

Management and responsibilities are well defined at each level and efficiently carried out. The respective roles are defined in programme guidelines, approved by the university in 2011. The relevant documents are available on the internet and are sent to candidates of the programme and to other stakeholders.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 2.02

Measures are taken to ensure the active participation of the academic staff and of the students in decision-making processes affecting education and teaching.

Background information

Involvement in planning and modifying the programme is straightforward for students at the clinic in Geneva, more difficult for external students. Feed back from the students is taken into account at the end of each module.

Analysis

Even if the teaching staff says that students feed-back is taken into account, which we of course believe it is, a better and more formal involvement in the decision-making process of the course should be put into effect. The same is true for the teaching staff not directly involved in the management committee, which appeared in the meeting quite unaware of any decision taken by the school, including the way exams are carried out. The involvement of students and teachers should be a strong resource not only for programme planning and assessment, but also for the future sustainability of the programme itself.

Condition

The participation of teaching staff and students in the decision making processes affecting education and teaching should be documented by the MAS responsible.

Conclusion: **partially fulfilled**

Standard 2.03

Quality assurance measures exist for the programmes. The institution makes use of the results to periodically revise the range of programmes

Background information

Programmes and their hosting Faculty are encouraged by the university to get accredited by AAQ or by other agencies or professional associations. Whilst it is a free choice of the MAS programme to apply for an external evaluation, the SFC supports the procedure in various ways.

Learning modules are assessed every second year with respect to 4 dimensions (objectives, pedagogy, administration, outcome). The QA instruments are the same as for pedagogic activities carried out through large lectures at the university. In case of activities carried out with small groups of students, the evaluation may be done using focus groups.

Programmes are evaluated as a whole with respect to communication, results etc. in an internal quality procedure (with self-evaluation report, evaluation and an action plan).

Also, at the programme level, similar instruments of quality evaluation are used and the given information considered.

A special attention has been given during the first years to the student's feed-back on the effectiveness of the internet communication systems, as many activities of the programme are based on long-distance communication.

The delay of one year in starting the 3rd session has been decided to improve the offer for external participants, especially on this aspect of the programme delivery, considering the fact that they pay an important fee (50'000 Swiss francs).

The MAS management considers and makes use of feedback letters of alumni. The SFC encourages the programme to gather another feedback from alumni 5 years after graduating.

Programme responsible meet with colleagues from other programmes and SFC to share a common view on continuing education throughout the university.

Analysis

Considering that the programme includes a large part of practical work in case studies, and that it is conducted using a broad range of different teaching methods, the implementation of quality assurance measures is particularly challenging.

The experts have fully appreciated all this engagement on quality assurance, considering also the very young experience of the Master and would like to advise all responsible to make sure to take full advantage, in a systematic way, of the results of these quality assurance measures.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Area 3: Curriculum and teaching methods

Standard 3.01

The programme has a structured curriculum which corresponds to the coordinated implementation of the Bologna Declaration in Swiss higher education.

Background information

The Rectorate of the university approved the study programme composed of different modules, all of them allowing to acquire a fixed number of ECTS credit points. Upon completion of the programme, when 60 ECTS credit points have been accumulated, the MAS degree is delivered to the successful candidate.

The programme is divided into successive modules starting with a foundation module, modules on oral Biology, and going on with two specific modules, together with the intermediary courses that ensure the gradual building up of the required skills. Each module is subject to a final exam and it is essential to have completed all of the required clinical cases to obtain the degree.

Analysis

The MAS degree corresponds to the description given in the National Qualification Framework for Swiss higher education, the nqf.ch-HS, and consequently it is compatible with the way the Bologna Declaration has been implemented in Switzerland.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 3.02

The range of programmes covers the major aspects of the field in question. It allows students to acquire scientific working methods and ensures that scientific findings are integrated into their studies. The teaching and evaluation methods used are in line with the defined teaching goals.

Background information

The whole treatment philosophy determining the range of the MAS is up-to-date and based on expert opinions and on available external evidence. According to the MAS management, the term "aesthetic" has to be comprised in the name of the programme in order to be understood in the USA.

The intended outcomes of the MAS range from competences in conservative dental treatment and proper diagnosis, to reading scientific articles in a critical way, and, as major aspect, to prepare students to evidence based dentistry. The programme is described in the *plan d'études*, indicating also the number of contact hours, total hours and ECTS credit points awarded upon successful completion.

Each module is described in a table listing the taught subjects, the schedule for examination and the responsible teacher. However, in the available documentation, formulation of learning goals for the different modules was not specified.

Analysis

The experts agree that the MAS programme is very much clinically oriented and enables dentists to solve complex and aesthetically demanding cases in a self-contained way. On the basis of the module descriptions and the discussion with the teaching staff during the on-site visit, they came to the following rough analysis concerning the field covered by the MAS.

- Clinical traineeship could be implemented in the 2nd year in order not to be taught only in an *ex vivo* ‘phantom’ environment, but also to let the applicants observe the clinical workflow of an expert dentist.
- The programme, by its nature, focuses on operative interventions. Still, the decision making process before operative interventions could be stressed a bit, e.g., using structured caries risk assessment, erosion index etc. Differential therapeutic thinking and epicrisis should be part of written case-reports.
- The master thesis is somewhat exiguous. The programme director may want to consider open access journals to submit one of the MAS cases, in order to define one published case report as mandatory requirement.
- Considering that “Microinvasive” is not a protected term and could be misunderstood, it is suggested to define the approach in a better way. Gerodontology could be strengthened as a supporting competence.

The analysis appeared to be more difficult when assessing whether teaching and evaluation methods used were in line with the defined teaching goals. The experts found that, without a syllabus for each module of the programme, specifying contents, learning goals, teaching methods, ways of assessment and learning material, they were unable to judge the coherence of the teaching with the evaluation methods. They noted that the European Core Curriculum in Cariology could be helpful when setting up a syllabus.

Condition

A set of specific learning goals should be listed for each module, in line with ways of assessment and teaching objectives. The programme should clearly list learning domains and assign major and supporting competences to each one of them.

Conclusion: **partially fulfilled**

Standard 3.03

The conditions for acquiring certificates of achievement and academic degrees are regulated and made public.

Background information

A practical and/or oral exam is scheduled at the end of each module, where all the members of the MAS committee evaluate the students: each of the 5 members gives a grade, and the average provides the final grade. Teachers delivering some courses during a module formulate test questions for the final examination of the module.

The clinical cases (8 pieces of documented practical work and 10 documented clinical exercises) are supervised through to completion by a tutor and a committee member. They are also presented to all the students at some point during the weekly plenary session. There is a well-established processing sequence and a ‘clinical cases supervision’ table, enabling the

coordinator and the tutors to ensure that the cases meet the prescribed conditions, and to monitor the progress made by each student.

The MAS management recalls that the levels of students are different when entering the programme. In order to allow for different progression speeds by the different candidates, negotiation is ongoing with the university.

Analysis

All the requirements for attending the course and the certificates to be delivered are clearly formulated and communicated on the website.

All participants get the opportunity to discuss not only their own cases but also the cases of the other students, which means that they can discuss up to 100 cases along their training.

While the evaluation of the modules, seminars and courses, the practical work (8 clinical cases) and the final work (Master thesis) are regulated in the programme guidelines, no such regulation is available for the 10 study cases (clinical exercises).

Recommendation for quality improvement:

The experts recommend setting up and publishing explicit modes of clinical exercises evaluation.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 3.04

The programme meets academic standards and is geared towards professional practice. It is based on current academic research and up to date professional practices.

Background information

As we have seen before, the programme is clearly geared towards professional practice. According to the MAS management, it implies a sort of reprogramming of their earlier learning in “classical” dentistry.

Moreover, the “journal club” makes the participants familiar with current academic research. They have to write a final thesis, accounted for by giving 5 ECTS credit points. The main intended outcome is that their mind should be sharpened for what is academic research.

Analysis

The education portfolio addresses and discusses treatment options that are understood to be the “Geneva approach”. This dental philosophy is based on biological, biomimetical and ethical requirements for a modern restorative treatment.

The following options could be considered when evaluating whether the programme is really based on current academic research:

1) The interdisciplinary approach: more teaching in cosmetic surgery of the periodontal tissues and improvement of pink aesthetics by orthodontics might be included;

2) In orthodontic teaching, the improvement of the balance between pink and white aesthetics might have more attention in the MAS;

3) Learning objectives could also include the traumatized dentition in juvenile patients and young adults and address the possibilities and perspectives of autotransplantation.

The following up-to-date professional practices could be considered:

4) Digital analysis of the occlusion, stress distribution and its relation to failure of restorations and overload;

5) References in the portfolio could also address and discuss treatment options other than the Geneva approach

6) More attention should be paid to resin-bonded FPD's, endocrowns made of LDS and full Zirconia and reparative dentistry using physic-chemical surface treatment;

7) More attention should also be paid to aesthetics in elderly patients and the cost-effectiveness of healthy ageing.

Recommendation for quality improvement:

The experts recommend to MAS teachers to address and discuss other treatments than just the Geneva approach, and to be more attentive to autonomous further learning by MAS holders.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 3.05

Teaching methods are appropriate and take into account the diverse competences of the participants and their professional backgrounds.
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Background information

It might be recalled that half of the students come from the Geneva section of dental medicine and the other half come from abroad. General FORMACO courses taught as continuing education of practitioners are open to MAS participants.

Students report that 2 years are not enough to do the required training for the expected level of dentist practice. The MAS management agrees that students who start from a lower level, mainly the external students, generally need the entire two last semesters, or even more, to be ready for the final exam.

Analysis

The participants of the MAS programme consist of Swiss trained or elsewhere trained persons. The teaching staff is aware of the different backgrounds of the applicants, and tries to compensate with individualized teaching.

Experts recognise a critical point in opening the programme for every dentist with just 2 years of professional experience, the practical entrance test being limited to restorative dentistry on a model.

The experts suggest to ask for a portfolio, in order to evaluate the candidates during the admission procedure and to take into account different backgrounds when implementing teaching methods.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Area 4: Teaching staff

Standard 4.01

Courses are taught by educationally competent and academically qualified teachers.
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Background information

The teaching faculty in the MAS are recruited according to their internationally recognised expertise and their teaching skills. They deliver their expertise both at the University of Geneva and in their home universities and clinics. Besides professors of the university, a broad range of internal and external teachers are contributing, selected according to their scientific and/or clinical work, in line with the fixed objectives of the programme.

The specificity of the programme – unique in Switzerland and in Europe for its mixed delivery both at the university and via a distance learning support platform – is that students can follow distance learning courses and conferences via the “Adobe Connect” internet platform. This makes it possible for the faculty and the students to be simultaneously connected, whether they are in Geneva or in their respective countries.

Analysis

The CVs of the main teachers have been examined during the on-site visit. The teaching staff is chosen not only among the best practitioners and experts in Switzerland but also around the world. The staff is strongly motivated in carrying out their teaching duty.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard. 4.02

The workload assigned to teaching and to research activities is defined.
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Background information

The self-evaluation report states that teaching and research activities of faculty working full time at the university are free of charge for the MAS and defined in their official workload. However, no access was given to the proper assignment of workload in teaching and research to these members of the university, when appointed by the MAS.

Other faculty, working part time at the university, are paid at an hourly rate, for example the programme coordinator or tutors of practical cases. External lecturers are appointed as independent contributors. The expert group could examine the contracts concluded with lecturers of the MAS.

Analysis

In the SWOT analysis set up by the MAS committee and during the on-site visit, risks of burnout due to considerable workload in teaching and research, but also in technical issues, were discussed. Considering the heavy workload of the university faculty, on full or part time positions, the experts came to the conclusion that the workload assigned for activities relevant to the MAS should be secured and verified in some official way.

Condition:

Time devoted to the different teaching obligations (MAS, undergraduate etc.) and time devoted to research should be clearly defined and regularly verified as official workload of teachers.

Conclusion: **partially fulfilled**

Standard 4.03

The mobility of the teaching staff is facilitated

Background information

According to the general rules of the university, the mobility of teaching staff is possible. However, because of the composition of the teaching staff with faculty holding a full time position either in Geneva or at their home university, with part time positions, tutors and external lecturers, the standard is not applicable *stricto sensu* to the MAS programme.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 4.04

Teaching staff are academics or expert practitioners. They are competent in the fields concerned. They use appropriate teaching methodologies, particularly in the field of adult education.

Background information

The teaching faculty tries to take full advantage of the new IT technology in the teaching process, which enables them to include staff from the United States into the curriculum.

Training material for faculty is provided through a web space for continuing education and the use of self-study CD-ROM is suggested to those concerned by the SFC. Teaching principles for continuing education are published by the university and regularly updated.

Analysis

The experts are well aware of the learning environment available in the School of Dentistry, which is clearly adapted to adult teaching. Shortcomings deriving from the fact that the building and technical infrastructure are outdated (from 1975!) will be arranged when moving to the new University medical centre in 2016/17. The demonstrations and practical work in the second specific module are hosted by the Geneva Smile Center.

Experts noted that there is no proper chairside teaching happening: the tutor is available for debriefing after the teaching session. Experts agree that the high level of candidates makes chairside teaching obsolete.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Area 5: Students

Standard 5.01

The conditions for admission to the institution and / or programme are made public.

Background information

The admission conditions are set in the programme guidelines, which are publicly available on the internet.

Analysis

All necessary information for students are easily available and the relevant offices are ready to support them in any query.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 5.02

Equality of men and women is assured.

Background information

Figures given for the two sessions show a substantial equality in the gender balance among the students enrolled in the programme.

Analysis

The present gender balance is fine but it will have to be monitored, as a majority of women are studying dentistry; it should be noted that gender balance should be kept also in the managing body, which is so far represented at almost 100% by men, and in the composition of the teaching staff.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 5.03

The mobility of students is possible and is promoted by mutual recognition of credits between universities and between disciplines

Background information

ECTS credits are certified in a diploma supplement and can therefore be recognised by any relevant European Educational Institution. No offer of mobility is given as many students come

from abroad to attend the programme. Due to the distance teaching modules it is possible to include foreign dentists in the programme, who are doing a large part of their studies in an extra-occupational manner at their home countries.

Analysis

The programme is correctly expressed in European ECTS and its value is therefore in agreement with the Bologna standards. No emphasis is put on students mobility as the focus of the programme is working on the local resources and foreign students are attracted for this very reason.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Standard 5.04

Measures are taken to ensure that students have access to adequate counselling

Background information

CUMD infrastructure are made available to the students and for every two students there is a supervising tutor. Standardised equipment is given to each student at the beginning of the programme as the possibility to use a sophisticated apparatus for diagnosis, prevention and clinical cases management.

The participants of the MAS programme consist of Swiss trained or elsewhere trained persons. The teaching staff is aware of the different backgrounds of the applicants, and tries to compensate with individualized teaching.

Analysis

The quality of the equipment and of the tutorial support guaranteed to the students is up-to-date and of very high level, but the engagement requested to the students is high and sometimes it seems that some student are not able to complete the programme in the assigned time.

Recommendation for quality improvement:

Staff should check with more attention the actual workload assigned to each student in order to guarantee that they can comply with the requirements for ending their programme in due time.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Area 6: Facilities and premises

Standard 6.01

The programme has adequate resources available to attain its objectives. These resources are available on a long-term basis.

Background information

The resources to run the programme are secured by the income through student's fees.

Facilities at the moment are a bit out-dated; however, this problem will be overcome with the transfer in the new University medical centre in 2016/17. Moreover, technical support for teaching and practical classes of the MAS are described to be lacking in some cases.

All students have access to the relevant scientific literature; external students do have access to Medline through VPN.

Analysis

With the transfer in the new building there will be more integration with the dental laboratory and therefore also a better learning environment. The requirements for an adequate technical support for MAS teaching should be carefully discussed with the Faculty of Medicine.

Experts could imagine a reinforcement of digital workflow and dental technology, e.g. 3shape Trios scanner to evaluate tooth wear and restorations.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

Area 7: Learning outcomes and professional competences

Standard 7.01

The learning outcomes of the participants are assessed according to the competences to be developed.
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Background information

As described before, the main target population of dentists entering the programme are those treating patients with high cosmetic demands. Two years of practical experience is required and an individual check is carried out with the applicants to guarantee their adequacy to enter the programme.

The aim of the MAS is to build on the theoretical knowledge and practical skills gained from studies in the area of conservative dentistry and microinvasive aesthetics. The programme is also designed to promote excellent practice amongst dentists.

Analysis

This formulation of competences to be developed is certainly an excellent starting point to address potential candidates to get in contact with the programme. However, they are not specific enough for evaluating whether the outcomes of the participants were assessed according to the competences to be developed.

Condition :

Professional competences should be listed and published. Learning objectives should be formulated in general, but also specified by module.

Conclusion: **not fulfilled**

Standard 7.02

Participants and alumni confirm the positive impact of the competences acquired on their professional practice and/or career.

Background information

The course obviously provides a step further in the professional career. Indeed, students report to have been prepared to deal with their own practice and been taught to make a broad analysis of patient's needs.

The MAS seems to be clearly oriented towards practical application in conservative dentistry surgery and holding such a title is a preferential title when patients have to deal with aesthetic issues.

Analysis

All participants refer to have consistently improved their professional competence and feeling more confident in running their practice.

Conclusion: **fulfilled**

3 Strengths and weaknesses, recommendations for quality improvement

On the basis of the previous analysis the expert team would like to summarise in a short synthesis what they have identified as main strengths and weaknesses of the reviewed programme.

Strengths

- Very strong commitment and motivation of the teaching staff in favour of the patient. The same teaching staff is chosen among the best practitioners and experts in Switzerland and around the world. Students are very well supported in terms of facilities, equipment and tutor's support.
- The level of facilities and premises (which will be further improved with the construction of the new building) is very high and there is also a good level of integration with the dental laboratory, providing thereby a better learning environment for the students.
- The learning environment is clearly adapted to adult teaching. Moreover, the staff tries to take into account the different backgrounds of the applicants in order to put them on the same starting basis.
- The programme takes full advantage of the new IT technology in the teaching process especially for what concerns the possibility to deal with distance learning.
- The treatment philosophy is absolutely up-to-date and based on sound scientific evidence.
- All participants get the opportunity to discuss and get acquainted, along their training, with a wide number of cases, which gives them a broad view of all the possibilities and variety of case treatment.

- All students refer to have consistently improved their professional competence following this programme and feeling now more confident in running their practice.

Weaknesses / Areas of improvement

- There is no real assessment of the demand for this type of training and of its sustainability in the future. The lack of clearly identified stakeholders is going to worsen this situation, unless a clear strategy in this direction be identified.
- There is no clear list of identified learning objectives for the different taught modules nor a list of professional competencies to be acquired, and tested, at the end of the programme.
- The teaching staff and the students are not much involved in the decision-making processes and in the planning of the future of the programme. This might weaken, in perspective, the sustainability of the programme, which relies only upon the energy and motivation of the coordinating committee.
- There are no syllabi for the different modules, identifying learning objectives, teaching contents, assessment methods and learning materials.
- The gender balance in the steering bodies of the programme is by far in favour of males' representation, while the dental profession, as the medical one, is now represented by a majority of women.
- There is no real control on the workload assigned to students and in fact some of them seem to require more time than foreseen to end up the programme.

Recommendations for quality improvement:

(Standard 1.01) The programme responsible should carry out systematically a market needs analysis to be sure that the demand for this kind of specialisation shall maintain in the future.

(Standard 1.03) Even if this profession is mostly private-based, a better identification of possible stakeholders could be done (SSO, groups of practitioners, dental scientific societies) in order to help the programme responsible to carry out this endeavour and have an external support for their effort.

(Standard 3.03) The experts recommend setting up and publishing explicit modes of clinical exercises evaluation.

(Standard 3.04) The experts recommend to MAS teachers to address and discuss other treatments than the Geneva approach, and to be more attentive to autonomous further learning by MAS holders

(Standard 5.04) Staff should check with more attention the actual workload assigned to each student in order to guarantee that they can comply with the requirements for ending their programme in due time.

4 Recommendation for accreditation

The group of experts came unanimously to the conclusion to recommend to the agency AAQ to accredit the Master of Advanced Studies in Microinvasive Aesthetic Dentistry with five conditions. The conditions should be fulfilled after a period of 12 month, starting with the notification of the Swiss accreditation council to the University of Geneva.

Fulfilment has to be notified in a short report to the AAQ, within the set period. The verification has then to be completed within 6 month

The experts noted that standards 1.04, 3.02 and 7.01 were partially or not fulfilled for very similar reasons. Therefore, conditions 1, 3 and 5 may be fulfilled with very similar or with the same measures. The conditions are the following:

1. Professional competences and specific learning objectives to be acquired during the programme should be made explicit and published. (Standard 1.04)
2. The participation of teaching staff and students in the decision making processes affecting education and teaching should be documented by the MAS responsible. (Standard 2.02)
3. A set of specific learning goals should be listed for each module to be in line with ways of assessment and objectives. The programme should clearly list learning domains and assign major and supporting competences to each one of them. (Standard 3.02)
4. Time devoted to the different teaching obligations (MAS, undergraduate etc.) and time devoted to research should be clearly defined and regularly verified as official workload of teachers. (Standard 4.02)
5. Professional competences should be listed and published. Learning objectives should be formulated in general, but also specified by module. (Standard 7.01)

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