

# RECOGNITION OF THE BDS DEGREE BY THE GENERAL DENTAL COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN...AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DEAN, PROFESSOR DATO' HASHIM BIN YAACOB

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*Associate Editors (AE)  
Professor Hashim (Prof.)*

AE : Professor Hashim, can you take us back to how it all began?

Prof. : The staff of the Dental Faculty and I, as Dean initiated and laid the groundwork for the GDC recognition of the BDS(Mal) degree in 1987. The Vice-Cancellor then was the Royal Professor, Professor Ungku Aziz. When he asked me what I would do should I fail to secure the recognition I replied that even if we do not get it we would have learnt through the experience anyway and would try again. He then chided me and asked me what I would do if I fail in the second attempt. I told him that he would then have to find another dean who could get it!

AE : You had so much enthusiasm, strength and faith in yourself and the faculty and that is very inspiring. Would you say that from that moment on there was no turning back?

Prof. : Thank you. Yes, from 1987 onwards I, together with the various Heads of Department at that time, began laying the foundation and building the blocks which were to be presented ultimately to the representatives of the GDC when the time came.

AE : Ten years have passed before we obtained the recognition. Prof., can you elaborate?

Prof. : Well, since you asked, before the task was completed, Professor Ungku Aziz retired. Soon after that I was sacked from the Deanship and that was the last anyone ever heard of the GDC recognition effort. A few years went by. I was reappointed by the current Vice-Cancellor, Professor Dato' Sanusi Abdullah in 1994. I then literally picked up the pieces where we left and worked hard at it again.

(In December 1997 the representatives from the GDC comprising of Professor Andrew Grieve, Professor Dorothy Geddes and Dr. Shelagh Farrell arrived at the Faculty and began their assessment. Their satisfaction culminated on a very positive note which came in a letter to the Vice-Cancellor.

On 24th May 1998 Professor Hashim gathered the faculty together and very proudly announced that now our BDS degree has been recognised by the GDC. The news was greeted by one and all with loud applause. We have made it!

AE : Prof., what is then in store for us and what does this recognition mean to the profession, the faculty and the nation? And where do we go from here?

Prof. : First and foremost we have now put Dentistry in Malaysia on the World map. We have shown our capabilities and the high standards of Dentistry in this country is now evident. When asked, we may now not have to spell out what standards of Dentistry we practice nor do we have to elaborate on what facilities we have in the Faculty. Literally speaking, we can just say "we are recognised by the GDC of Great Britain".

This faculty will serve as a melting pot for people all over the world to pursue undergraduate programmes with the benefit of obtaining a GDC-recognised degree at lower costs. This prospect appears very promising. The high standards of postgraduate and research programmes practiced here will also be reflected by this recognition. Our graduates will also now find it easier to follow postgraduate dental training overseas without facing difficulties in the registration of our dental degree as we have previously.

This recognition would also mean that the activities of the academic and profession will be taken on a more serious note. To this end I hope it may open up a whole world of opportunities for collaborative research work with other schools all over the world.

AE : We know you spearheaded the whole project but can you tell us who else were involved in this project?

Prof. : Everybody, the Deputy Deans, the Heads of Departments, the lecturers, students and the supporting staff. Without their cooperation and support this would not have been possible.

AE : Thank you, Prof. And once more, Congratulations!