The purpose of UK Dental Schools is to produce degree level health care Professionals and researchers and to undertake and disseminate research to improve global health. The dental team is changing with increasing recognition of the dentist as ‘the team leader’ and the team is changing to include, dental nurse, dental hygienist, dental therapist. Orthodontic therapist, dental technician, and clinical dental technician. Currently the dentist undertakes 80% of clinical activity. However, we need better models of the ‘dentist as team leader’ and the UK payment system does not encourage this philosophy.

The UK is part of the EU with free transfer of people and so of the total number of 40,500 registered dentists, 2,200 are new registrants/year, of which 1,300 are UK graduates and 40% of new registrants are EU/overseas dentists.

Worldwide there are 810 Dental Schools, In the UK there is 1 School per 3.5 million population and 1 graduate per 57,000. In Brazil there is 1 School per 1 million and 1 graduate per 20,000 and 140 (70%) of Schools are private. There are no private Dental Schools in the UK yet. In the UK Dental Schools total academic staffing has increased over the last decade and we have introduced the ‘Clinical Teacher’ grade with career progression. However, there is a Clinical Academic shortage and the Research Base has reduced. The number of Postgraduate Educational places is very variable throughout the UK Schools but places are increasing.

Teaching and Learning system are changing with more use of Enquiry-Based Learning, There are opportunities for students to intercalate and take a BSc degree during their dental degree. There is a harnessing of technology with use of Internet Teaching, Podcasting, Lecture Capture, and Asynchronous learning becoming popular. The role of staff is discrimination. Students are encouraged to bring their own devices but connectivity needs to improve. This is all good for knowledge but not so useful for clinical skills and communication skills. There needs to be educational research so that there is an Evidence-Based methodology and teaching needs to be informed by research. Training needs to follow patient services and there are currently UK changes to patient services to encourage more care in primary care and less in hospitals. Students often attend ‘Outreach Placements’. Three of the new UK Dental Schools almost entirely outreach teaching based with much of the education provided by general dental practitioners rather than dental specialists. There is emphasis on a robust system of admissions to ensure that the individuals values are based on those of our NHS constitution and that they will be able to develop leadership, accountability, and high standards of care in putting patients first that are required. We want to ensure that the attributes of a professional are instilled. We also have a need to keep up with an aging population and an education that is responsive to the development of contemporary materials and techniques. We want professionals to recognise their limits and understand the importance of maintaining skills and self-development.

Professor Paul Coulthard has been Dean of the School of Dentistry since 2013. He is Professor of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Consultant in Oral Surgery at Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust where he undertakes adult and paediatric Oral Surgery. He has a special interest in advanced surgical oral implantology including zygomatic Implants and management of patients with congenitally absent teeth and supporting tissues. He undertakes oral and maxillofacial reconstruction especially using bone grafting and extra-oral harvesting techniques. He has a special interest in the Control of Pain and Anxiety and especially the use of Conscious Sedation techniques. Professor Coulthard is Chair of the Oral Surgery and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Commissioning Guide Working Group for NHS England responsible for developing a needs led outcome focused Care Pathway and producing a single operating Commissioning Framework to deliver improvements in quality and clinical outcomes.