

HAND IN HAND TOWARDS DENTAL DEGREE

*With whom do dental students spend most time with?
Or should it be rephrased "with what"?*

Thousands of dental students around the world have worked with a Planmeca dental unit during their studies. Why are these units so often chosen as the first working partner for the dental professionals of the future? We visited Dublin Dental School and Hospital (DDSH) to find out about their relationship with Planmeca units.

Student's best friend

In their present form, the Planmeca Compact series dental units are a result of 15 years of product development: Prostyle Compact launched at IDS in 1995 was the first model of the series, and the most modern model, Planmeca Compact i with new control panel, was launched in 2009. By the spring of 2010, Planmeca has delivered more than 2700 Planmeca Compact series dental units for teaching institutions.

Dublin Dental School and Hospital has had their Prostyle Compact units for thirteen years.

"I have taught here since 1999, and in my opinion our Prostyle Compacts have done a good job and are still performing very well, considering the heavy use," says **Dr Osama Omer**, Senior Lecturer Consultant at DDSH.

Dr Saoirse O'Toole who has studied at the university for five years and is now employed by the school accompanies: "They are very workable chairs."

During the time of purchase, it was a big step for DDSH to change from the traditional hanging tubes concept to the balanced instruments concept. The balanced instrument arms allows minimised hand, arm and body movements, resulting in a much more ergonomic way of working.

Dublin Dental School and Hospital has a certified infection control protocol. The dental unit hygiene and infection control features have also been developed over the years in cooperation with Planmeca to make the dental unit cleaning procedures as easy as possible.

Proactive care protects

As an environment for practicing dentistry, a university clinic is somewhat special. The lifecycle of the dental unit in a teaching clinic tends to be shorter than in a regular clinic.

"Teaching clinic is hard surroundings for a dental unit," tells **Mr James Swan**, Facilities Manager at DDSH. As the students don't own the equipment, they may be relatively rough on them. "Indeed, the units get a lot of use – and of abuse," avouches clinic's Maintenance Supervisor **Mr Declan Clark**.



"I think Planmeca dental equipment is exceptional," praises Clark, who has worked at the hospital for 37 years – enough years to see every make of a dental equipment there is.

Swan and Clark are responsible for unit servicing and ensuring that the equipment is up and running, with a minimum downtime. In their opinion, the key word to guarantee a long life span for a dental unit is preventive maintenance. "In the long term, preventive maintenance is much more cost-effective than reactive. There's no doubt in my mind, that we wouldn't have the dental units working the way they are, if we hadn't invested in preventive maintenance," states Swan.

What does this preventive maintenance mean? In addition to simply addressing the service calls caused by technical issues, the maintenance team replaces unit parts at regular intervals before they actually need replacing. Preventive maintenance is a way to proactively service the units. For instance

operating light bulbs can be changed before they reach service limits. In Dublin the service team replaced all polymerisation lights at once after encountering several of them reaching the end of their lifespan. This means servicing can be done cost-effectively, without interruptions to patient care. Furthermore, the team monitors the state of the units and records the use and the maintenance calls.



“By doing this we reduce interruptions during treatment, cut down the need for reactive maintenance considerably, and lengthen the lifespan of the units,” says Swan. “Our records actually show that the down-time of our units has been remarkably low during these 13 years, less than 0,5 percent.”

Specialized studies in maintenance

Mr Brian Murray, Chief Executive Officer for DDSH, who was part of the school’s faculty already at the time when Planmeca units were purchased, has been satisfied not only with the products but Planmeca’s after sales support and efforts as well. “They are a wonderful piece of equipment and Planmeca’s support service has given us great comfort during the years,” he praises.

“Providing us with comprehensive training was good for Planmeca, as they don’t need to send their staff over to us. And good

for us, obviously, as this gives us the true ownership of the equipment and the ability to address the problems at once,” says Murray.

“The key has been the training provided to us,” continues Swan. “It is vital that our people fully understand how the units work, especially from the proactive point of view.”

Longevity worth reaching for

Many of Planmeca’s university and institutional customers have shown their satisfaction and trust towards Planmeca equipment and the after sales support by replacing older equipment with new ones or by purchasing additional dental units to the university’s satellite clinics, for example University of Maryland, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery in the U.S. and Prince Philip Dental Hospital in Hong Kong.

“Once planning our future investments, we will look at many decision criteria, one of them being the knowledge we have of the

Dublin Dental School, based at the Trinity College campus, purchased over a hundred Prostyle Compact dental units already in 1997. All units are still in daily use. “We have never taken a dental chair out of commission and not been able to repair it,” says Facilities Manager James Swan.

manufacturer and their product quality,” tells Murray. “Planmeca would, obviously, feature strongly in those terms for us.”

“From my experience, we need to look at the life cycle costs,” continues Swan. “Planmeca equipment lifecycle has met our expectations and proved to have the longevity to last for the period of time we would want. You have set the bar really high.”

We leave Dublin with contentment; it’s always a pleasure to meet truly satisfied customers. ▣