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Dentistry at Birmingham up for THES award

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A team of staff from the University of Birmingham's Dental School head to London on 29th November as finalists in this year's prestigious Times Higher Education Supplement Awards.

The nomination in the Outstanding ICT Initiative category focuses on the school's newly developed Content Management System, which complements traditional learning and teaching environments and materials.

The new system allows students to create their own content online as well as giving staff a way of delivering interactive learning and teaching materials. This includes a range of educational podcasts, which are available through iTunes, and video content, which helps students prepare for clinical problems at short notice.

Giles Perryer who leads the ecourses team comments: "We have a diverse student body, who are based away from the University's main campus and also spend a significant period of time in clinics.

"This makes interactive learning particularly important to make sure we give students a high quality experience. This open environment also encourages a stronger sense of being part of a student community even when our students aren't in the school."

Giles has an additional reason to celebrate after winning the national Dentist Teacher of the Year award at the Caledonian Club in London on 7th November.

Recently the system has been enhanced further by the development of a component-free virtual microscope allowing students to view slides remotely. The virtual microscope recognises what features are on a slide, and guides students to zoom in on areas of specialist interest.

The system will also allow staff to create virtual patients with a variety of dental conditions to simulate the experience of testing and applying knowledge in the clinic.

Professor Damien Walmsley adds: "We are extremely pleased to be nominated for this award. We do feel that offering students flexible interactive learning will become more important in future as technology makes delivering content far easier.

"The response from students has been extremely positive and they are increasingly generating their own content, including uploading coursework and essays to the ecourse network. It also allows our visiting lecturers and staff who work outside the school to familiarise themselves with policies on all aspects of dental treatment and contribute positively with their own views to our teaching."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The Nominated Team shortlisted for the Times Higher Education Supplement Award in the Outstanding ICT Initiative category members of the Ecourse Team from the University of Birmingham's School of Dentistry. Team members are:

Giles Perryer – Ecourse Developer / Lecturer in Clinical Practice

Dr Deborah White – Director of Learning and Teaching / Head of Dental Public Health

Professor Damien Walmsley – Chairman of ICT Committee / Professor of Restorative Dentistry

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