

# THE PROBE

## Becoming a truly excellent dentist is within your grasp

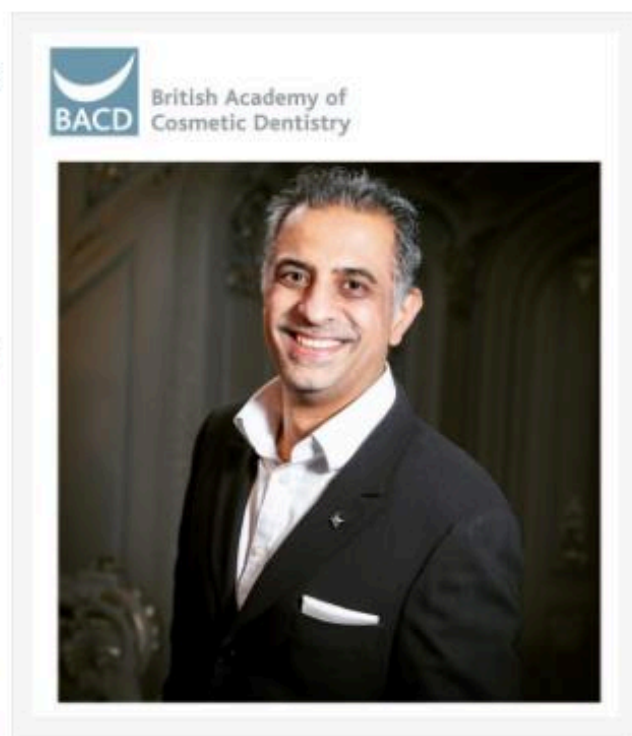
### FEATURED PRODUCTS PROMOTIONAL FEATURES

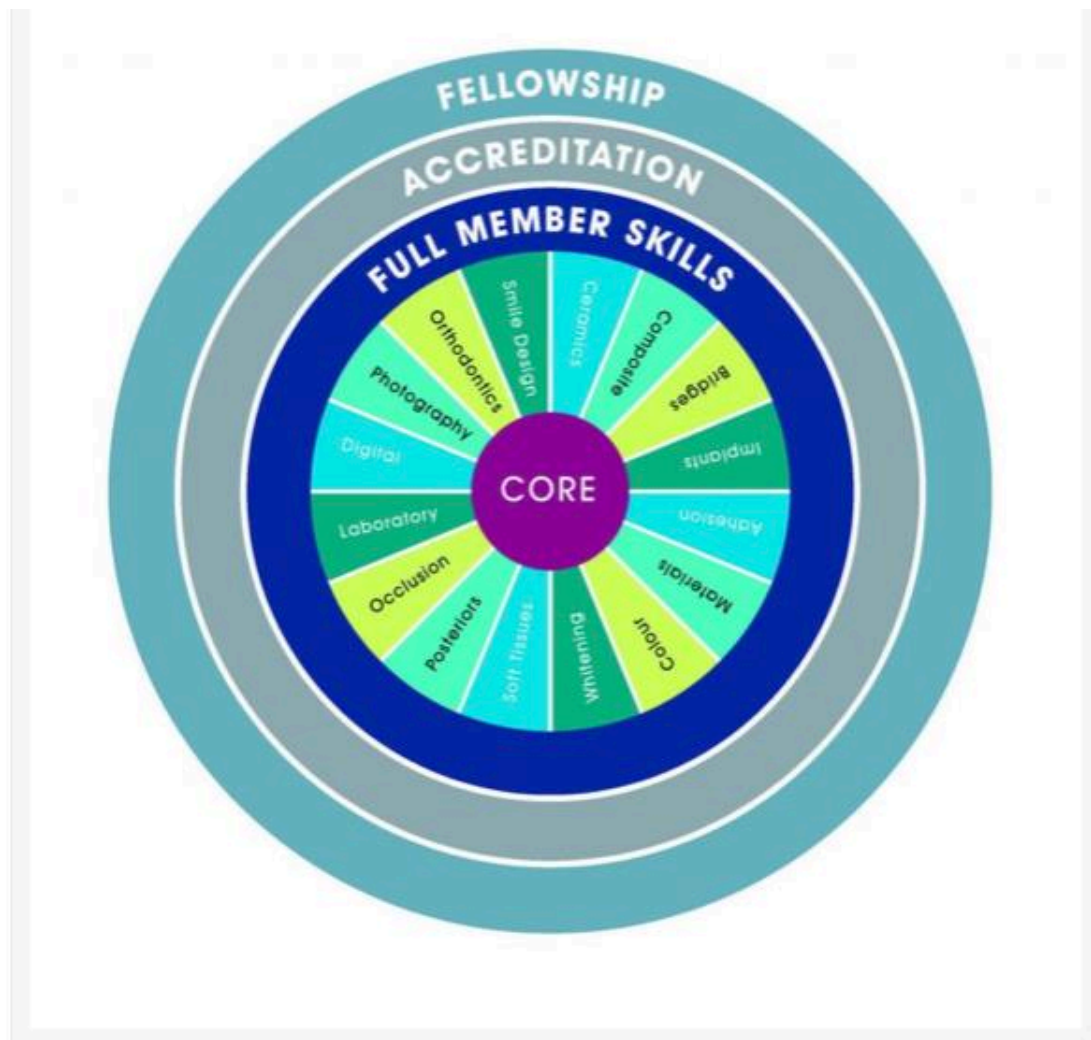
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Your journey to becoming an excellent dentist may have begun at dental school, but it certainly didn't end on the day you left. If you have been practising for a while now, how do you feel when you look back on those first few weeks, delivering *real* dentistry to *real* patients? Was the gap between what you thought you knew, and what you actually did, huge and terrifying, or was it inspiring and motivating?

For any clinician, the learning never ends because knowledge never ends. If we look back over the last 20 years in dentistry, it's astonishing how much more we can do, to support our patients. Standards have risen in all areas, and many dental situations that back then would have appeared impossible to fix, now have treatment solutions which can be delivered efficiently, ethically, and cost-effectively. There have been incredible advances in minimally invasive techniques which, in turn, have led to cutting edge materials, tools and equipment being developed, as manufacturers and suppliers raced to keep up with what modern dentists and their patients needed.

Every excellent clinician will have a thirst for knowledge, which also means having an open mind. Regularly accessing high-quality education is so important, including in aspects of dentistry that you might not think is directly, or currently relevant to the work you deliver on a daily basis. Education and training will connect you with fellow professionals too. When you seek out opportunities to connect with like-minded people, you get the chance to share experiences and best practice, to discover a new, exciting technique, or a great piece of equipment which revolutionised diagnostic accuracy for a dentist whom you admire, or an amazing material that can reduce treatment times and costs. Knowing what someone else did in a similar situation is often the most efficient way to do things better yourself.





Switching perspective is useful in any scenario that appears, at first, without an answer. Networking, either at a dental event or through a professional online platform, means you can look at a problem through fresh eyes, which can even be the eyes of someone with *less*, not more, clinical experience than you have. In our vibrant industry, those who are new to the profession have valuable contributions to make, from their different and no-less valid point of view. Great dentists are just as focussed on meticulous planning as they are treatment delivery. All-embracing, comprehensive treatment planning protocols, that can be tailored to every patient, their background, lifestyle and needs, is one of the hallmarks of excellence and can help you guarantee improved, successful outcomes every time. Throughout your career, you'll learn so much from your patients too, because every single one is unique. You can apply all your knowledge and experience to each case, but you must never lose sight of what the person in the chair, who has given you their trust, time and money, wants and expects.

So, what is the best route to take, to reach excellence? It starts with breaking down "excellence" into component parts, then making a commitment to bring together all the different threads. For a cosmetic dentist, for example, there is a core skill set to master, against a background of ongoing learning. Education will enhance your skills and your ever-evolving, growing skills will ensure you never stop learning – it's a perfect and continuous circle that will keep you at the top of your game. The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD) has a "wheel of knowledge" that represents the key areas that, when mastered, will produce a clinically excellent cosmetic dentist. These areas include photography, digital and materials, clinical concepts like soft tissue and occlusion and treatments such as implants and orthodontics – there are 16 in all. One of the many benefits of joining the BACD is that you will get the means to learn, develop, then master all these areas via its world-class programme of education (including a new online portal), events and networking opportunities. Many of the BACD's members are leading practitioners in their field, but membership is also open to all members of the dental team, also laboratory technicians and students; it's about sharing knowledge and experience, supporting, nurturing, and encouraging.



The public expects excellence and, with the challenges facing dentistry, striving to be the best and delivering ethical treatment for results that are beautiful and, when the patient understands correct maintenance, last for years, has never been more important. To be a brilliant clinician means getting the basics right, then never resting on your laurels. Joining a professional academy is the most efficient way to master all the key areas of practice, ensure you're receiving the highest-quality learning, connect to the right people that will help you further your career and, ultimately, become a true leader in your field.

**For further enquiries about membership of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, visit**  
[www.bacd.com](http://www.bacd.com)