A helping hand
A difficult situation, a chance meeting and a world of difference made possible by KaVo

It is not an easy thing to admit that a helping hand would be nice, but sometimes it’s just what you need.

And that’s exactly what happened for Peter Soin, dental surgeon, practice principal and student on the MSc in Restorative and Aesthetic Dentistry.

Peter, who qualified from the University of Liverpool in 1995, owns two practices - one NHS and one soon to be developed private cosmetic practice. He says: “I’ve been committed to the NHS for the last 15 years but as time has gone on and so many things have changed I’ve been beginning to feel a little bit lost and I have been searching for a way to bring myself closer to dentistry.”

To achieve this, Peter chose the new offering from Smile-on and The University of Manchester, a two-year MSc in Restorative and Aesthetic Dentistry that is provided through online webinars, to allow students the flexibility to study wherever they are. “The MSc was something I would be able to manage because of my experience and my familiarity of many of the key components of the course and I felt that a degree course of this kind would give my career the focus it needed.

“The MSc has allowed me to not only to develop the cosmetic side of my career and be a fantastic refresher on other subjects to bring me up to current standards of dentistry, but also has enabled me to pick a new part of dentistry and focus on it.”

Though, like many students, Peter’s plan hasn’t quite followed the script! “I’m loving it. I thought I’d picked a course that would be easy for me, but that hasn’t been the case! I have had to work a little harder than I’d expected, which has been a challenge in itself managing my time around my work and my life, especially with three children and a newborn!”

Despite the love for the course, there was more than just the time issues making life difficult for Peter. An increased commitment to his study meant a decrease in his clinical working time, as well as being the sole earner while his wife is on maternity leave. This has meant extra purchases such as a clinical digital camera for recording of his case studies and an extra burden. This is where a chance meeting at the recent Clinical Innovations Conference gave him the helping hand Peter needed. “There was a discussion at this year’s Clinical Innovations Conference about the availability of bursaries for students in the 2011 MSc uptake. I had a discussion with Noam Tamir, Director at Smile-on, about how a bursary would be very useful to a student such as me on this year’s course.

“I was later contacted and offered a bursary of £1,000 from KaVo. This bursary is exactly what I need right now and has been absolutely invaluable.”

Peter is very honest about what the KaVo bursary has meant to him. “It has meant that I have been able to buy camera I need for the MSc without having to hold that money - it’s just taken some of the pressure off. At the start off the course I had to get the camera and I’ve been putting it off for as long as possible and now it means I don’t have to worry.

“This is a very generous gesture by KaVo – as a practitioner for 15 years I have been a user of KaVo products and have always been very happy with them. But to give me this bursary with no direct contact is very kind and shows their strength to be able to support practitioners in this way. It’s funny, a bursary is something you think of giving to a 25-year-old dentist just starting out, but everyone is struggling and this has made a world of difference to me.”