



School of Medicine and Dentistry's outstanding success in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2008



Warden of Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Professor Sir Nicholas Wright, said "This result is official ratification of what we have known: that Barts and The London has one of the most outstanding constellations of world-class researchers in the UK and is a top medical and dental school within a leading higher education institution."

The results of the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), published in December 2008, confirmed Barts and The London as one of the UK's top four medical schools for the quality of research.

The Dental School was ranked 2nd nationally.

Queen Mary, University of London, the School's parent institution, was ranked 11th nationally by the *Guardian* and 13th out of 132 universities by the *Times Higher Education*.

RAE2008 Biomedical Units of Assessment (UOA1-10 & UOA15)

Ranking	University	%4* & %3*	GPA
1	University of Cambridge	82.1	3.157
2	University of Oxford	73.3	2.994
3	University of Edinburgh	72.5	2.900
4	Queen Mary, University of London	70.0	2.857
5	Imperial College London	69.2	2.883
6	University of Southampton	67.5	2.750
7	University of Manchester	66.9	2.806
8	University College London	64.4	2.750
9	University of Aberdeen	63.8	2.663
10	University of Bristol	61.3	2.725
11	King's College London	60.6	2.711
12	University of Newcastle upon Tyne	59.3	2.634
13	University of Dundee	57.5	2.550
14	University of Exeter and University of Plymouth	57.5	2.550
15	University of Birmingham	56.9	2.575
16	University of Leeds	55.8	2.633
17	University of Glasgow	55.0	2.571
18	University of Sussex	55.0	2.500
19	Cardiff University	54.2	2.500
20	University of Liverpool	52.5	2.533
21	University of Leicester	46.0	2.460
22	Queen's University Belfast	46.0	2.440
23	St George's Hospital Medical School	41.7	2.258
24	University of Sheffield	40.6	2.128

See table 2 on page 2

What is the RAE?

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) carries out a periodic assessment of the quality of research taking place in UK universities. Institutions are asked to define their research active staff and submit the best four papers per staff member along with details of grant income, PhD students etc. Because of the diversity of medical and dental research, submissions are divided into subject areas.

A panel of experts from the UK and overseas then looks at the papers and other research activity in each subject area and comes to a decision about quality. The better the quality of the research, the more funding is awarded by HEFCE. Well-graded research also improves a university's reputation, and helps to attract students of a high calibre.

Unsurprisingly the results from previous RAEs have shown that in London, Imperial College and UCL are top, and nationally they are joined by Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh.

Research Assessment Exercise 2008

The table below shows how the School of Medicine and Dentistry performed:

	Overall quality profile (percentage of research activity at each quality level)					3* + 4* (%)	Position Nationally in Medical/Dental Schools
	4*	3*	2*	1*	Unclassified		
Cancer Studies (Institute of Cancer)	15	70	15	0	0	85	3/18
Other Hospital Based Clinical Subjects (Institute of Cell and Molecular Sciences)	15	65	20	0	0	80	=1/28
Epidemiology and Public Health (Wolfson Institute)	30	50	15	5	0	80	2/21
Health Services Research (Centre for Primary Care)	30	35	35	0	0	65	4/24
Psychiatry (Centre for Psychiatry)	10	30	40	20	0	40	10/17
Dentistry (Institute of Dentistry)	25	50	25	0	0	75	2/14
Pre-clinical and Human Biological Sciences (William Harvey Research Institute)	20	45	25	10	0	65	3/13

Table 1

As is obvious, the School of Medicine and Dentistry did spectacularly well.

How did Barts and The London do in the previous RAE in 2001?

Better not to talk about it, but it was disappointing to say the least. Medicine did very badly, but Dentistry did quite well. The reasons for this are complex but the turmoil surrounding the merger of Barts Medical College and the London Medical College, and then the merger with Queen Mary were contributory factors.

How did Barts and The London perform in the RAE 2008?

For RAE 2008, HEFCE changed the way research was measured. They decided how much of our research was 4*, 3*, 2*, 1* or unclassified according to the definitions in the table below. The greater the percentage in the 3* and 4* bands, the better the quality of the research.

Quality Level	Definition
4*	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
3*	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which nonetheless falls short of the highest standards of excellence.
2*	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
1*	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour.
Unclassified	Quality that falls below the standard of (u/c) nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of assessment.

Table 2



So how do we compare with other medical and dental schools?

- For **Cancer** we beat Oxford, Imperial, UCL and Kings College London
- For **Hospital based subjects** we beat everyone and came joint first with Cambridge and Edinburgh
- For **Epidemiology** we beat Oxford and UCL
- For **Health Services Research** we beat Oxford and Kings College London
- For **Dentistry** we were joint first with Manchester
- For **Pre-clinical and Human Biological Sciences** we beat Kings College London.

It is difficult to make direct comparisons between medical schools because different institutions submit their staff using different Units of Assessment (UoA's). However all the main league tables show the School of Medicine and Dentistry in the top 4-5 medical schools in the UK, and other league tables which factor in the numbers of staff submitted, show the School of Medicine and Dentistry 2nd in the UK and top in London. All tables show Dentistry as 1st or 2nd.



Farida Fortune, Professor of Medicine in Relation to Oral Health and Dean for Dentistry



How was this done?

The School of Medicine and Dentistry was transformed following the appointment of Professor Sir Nicholas Wright as Warden. A world-class researcher himself, he led by example. Queen Mary was extremely supportive, investing heavily in new buildings like the Blizard at Whitechapel and refurbishment at Charterhouse and also supporting the appointment of new star researchers. Performance management of existing staff resulted in a huge improvement in research quality.

How did Queen Mary do in the RAE?

Queen Mary overall also did spectacularly well, and was singled out for press coverage as 'the biggest star' of the RAE. Queen Mary moved from 48th in the RAE 2001 to being ranked 11th nationally by the *Guardian* and 13th out of 132 universities by the *Times Higher Education*.

For full results see: www.rae.ac.uk

What next?

We will build on this success and continue to turn the School of Medicine and Dentistry into one of the leading medical and dental research schools in the world. We will continue to recruit new staff. We are also committed to engaging medical and dental students in the excitement of top-quality research.

Professor Tom MacDonald,
Dean for Research



Aine McKnight, Professor of Viral Pathology

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