

Two Decades of International Periodontology from Heidelberg

The Summerschool as a Model for Scientific Exchange, Clinical Excellence, and Global Networking

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Introduction

The “*International Summerschool for Clinical Periodontology and Implantology*” is a two-week international training program designed for dentists, particularly postgraduates and young faculty members providing both theoretical knowledge and hands-on skills in Periodontology and Implantology. The program integrates lectures, case discussions, interactive seminars, and practical courses. Since its introduction in 2004, it has been held biennially—with the exception of the covid restriction year 2020—at the Section of Periodontology, Department of Conservative Dentistry at the Heidelberg University Hospital.

Today, the Summerschool has been well established as an international training platform in Periodontology. Its development reflects both organizational continuity and a vision that existed prior to its official launch in Heidelberg.

Origins: developing an international teaching concept in Asia

The Summerschool's roots trace back to 2002, when Prof. Ti-Sun Kim, who has been the Head of the Section of Periodontology at University Hospital Heidelberg since 2004, conceived it as a binational collaboration between Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea, and Heidelberg University. Initially funded for three years by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the project was part of Germany's higher education internationalization strategy, aiming to enhance the global visibility of German universities and foster long-term scientific collaborations.

In 2002, 2003, and 2004, leading German periodontologists traveled to Seoul to support the *Summer School for Clinical Periodontology and Implantology* together with their South Korean colleagues from Yonsei University for postgraduate dentists and young faculty members (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Group photo with the acting Dean of Yonsei University in 2003, South Korea.

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2004: establishing the Summerschool in Heidelberg

The first Summerschool held in Heidelberg in 2004 has been already a multinational event, attracting young dentists from around the world. Positive feedback from this inaugural program laid the foundation for a structured, recurring academic format.

The program was designed to teach clinical Periodontology within the context of diverse health-care systems, scientific and cultural perspectives. From the outset, it emphasized core principles that continue to define the Heidelberg Summerschool:

- Intensive small-group interactions.
- Integration of theory with clinical practice.
- Intercultural learning as an important component.
- Development of long-term scientific networks

Beyond knowledge transfer, the Summerschool aimed to create an environment that nurtures clinical reasoning, scientific reflection, and personal interaction (Fig. 2).

Adapting Didactics to an Evolving Discipline

Over the past two decades, the Summerschool has not only imparted knowledge but also mirrored the evolution of Periodontology. “The curriculum reflects the field’s evolving focus in different perspectives demonstrating how the summer school integrates current trends and developments over the years, alongside:

- Introduction of regenerative treatment strategies.
- Minimally invasive surgical approaches.
- Growing emphasis on implantology and peri-implantitis.
- Integration of patient-centered outcomes into treatment planning.

The analysis of complex cases, particularly Stage IV periodontitis, has become a central component of advanced training (Fig. 3 and 4).

International networks: a lasting impact

A major factor in the Summerschool’s success is its lasting influence. Over the years, it has fostered an international network that extends well beyond the program itself. This global dimension is evident not only in the diversity of participants, but also in the multinational, internationally recognized lecturers. Since the last Summerschool in 2024, about 200 dentists from more than 30 countries have participated.

Many alumni now occupy leadership roles in clinical practice, research, and academia, connecting with their peers across the globe. The Summerschool thus serves as a significant multiplier for evidence-based Periodontology worldwide.



Figure 2. Case-based discussion in small groups.



Figure 3. Interactive seminar focusing on Stage IV guidelines.



Figure 4. Hands-on training in furcation therapy (tunnel preparation) on porcine jaws.

2025: Expanding the program – advanced course in Bali

In summer 2025, the Summerschool extended beyond Germany for the first time with an “Advanced Course”. Held from August 1-4 in Bali in collaboration with the Faculty of Dentistry at Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, the course welcomed 22 participants from Indonesia, Germany, and the United Kingdom, three-quarters of whom were already specialized periodontists (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Participants and lecturers of the Summerschool 2025.

The course focused on the management of complex Stage IV periodontitis cases, emphasizing evidence-based decision-making, interdisciplinary treatment planning, and clinically applicable strategies. Prof. Ti-Sun Kim (University Hospital Heidelberg) led the scientific program, presenting innovative biomaterials such as hyaluronic acid and practical techniques for splinting periodontally compromised teeth. Prof. Yuniarti Soeroso (Universitas Indonesia) offered a structured classification of Stage IV cases with corresponding therapeutic pathways.

Regenerative and minimally invasive surgical approaches for complex periodontal defects were presented by Prof. Peter Eickholz (University Hospital Frankfurt)

(Fig. 6), while Prof. Christian Mertens (University Hospital Heidelberg) demonstrated advanced implant procedures for sites with limited bone, including augmentation, sinus lift, and tenting-screw techniques.

Prof. Ki-Tae Koo (Seoul National University, South Korea) discussed contemporary peri-implantitis treatments, and Prof. Kee-Joon Lee (Yonsei University, South Korea) presented interdisciplinary orthodontic strategies for periodontally compromised dentitions. The course concluded with a virtual lecture by Prof. Maurizio Tonetti (Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China) highlighting the critical importance of patient-centered decision-making.



Figure 6. Hands-on training in regenerative periodontal surgery on porcine jaws.

“The Summerschool was not only a learning program, but it was an experience that I will never forget.”

Interpersonal exchange remains a cornerstone of the Summerschool. Direct interaction between participants and faculty fosters an open culture of discussion, encourages critical thinking, and broadens perspectives.

The Summerschool offers more than technical expertise—it thrives on personal connections and shared experiences. Community dinners, guided city and campus tours, hikes in the surrounding countryside, scenic Neckar river cruises, picnics along the Neckar meadow, or visits to Schloss and Schlossgarten Schwetzingen, all provide opportunities for intercultural exchange and sustainable networking (Fig. 7 and 8).

It is precisely this combination of scientific excellence and personal interaction that has enabled the Summerschool to grow continuously over two decades.

Outlook: continuity and innovation

The past 20 years demonstrate that sustainable education in Periodontology requires more than knowledge transfer alone. The integration of evidence, clinical experience, and international dialogue will remain central. Future developments may include:

- Greater integration of translational research.
- Digital and hybrid teaching formats.
- Expansion of global partnerships.
- Enhanced engagement of alumni.



Figure 7. Group picnic at Neckarwiese, Heidelberg.



Figure 8. Excursion to Heidelberg Castle, including a guided tour.

Summerschool 2026 in Heidelberg

The next “*International Summerschool for Clinical Periodontology and Implantology*” will take place in Heidelberg from August 3-14, 2026, continuing the program’s long-standing tradition (Fig. 9).

Alongside the latest scientific developments, the focus will remain on clinically relevant topics, interdisciplinary treatment strategies, and interactive teaching formats.

Further information on the program, registration, and applications is available at:
<https://www.perio-summerschool.com>

HEIDELBERG UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL **HEIDELBERG FACULTY OF MEDICINE**

SUMMERSCHOOL FOR CLINICAL PERIODONTOLOGY AND IMPLANTOLOGY FROM AUGUST 3RD – AUGUST 14TH 2026

at the Heidelberg University, Germany, organized by the Section of Periodontology, Department of Conservative Dentistry, in cooperation with University of Frankfurt, University of Freiburg, University of Kiel and Forsyth Institute/Harvard Dental School, Boston USA

Lecturers
Prof. Dr. Peter Eickholz, Prof. Dr. Ti-Sun Kim, Prof. Dr. Tom van Dyke, Prof. Dr. Christian Mertens, Prof. Dr. Karim El-Sayed
Prof. Dr. Petra Ratka-Krueger & others

Topics

- periodontitis prevalence and incidence
- clinical periodontal diagnosis
- scaling and root planing
- non-surgical or surgical periodontal therapy
- periodontal surgery: flap techniques
- etiology and diagnosis of furcation involvement
- antibiotics in periodontology
- the role of resolution of the inflammation
- locally administered antibiotics in periodontology
- supportive treatment and individual periodontal risk
- periodontal regenerative therapy
- general health and periodontitis
- prognosis of teeth
- prognosis of implants
- nutrition in the therapy of periodontal diseases
- treatment of periimplantitis

Interactive learning seminars
classification of periodontal diseases, treatment planning, the principle of full mouth scaling, oral health and general health

Hands-on courses
periodontal flap surgery, placement of implants, regenerative periodontal surgery, augmentation procedures, mucogingival surgery

For more information about our summerschool please visit our homepage: www.perio-summerschool.com

Figure 9. Flyer of the upcoming Summerschool 2026.