General Osteopathic Council

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Education and Registration Standards Committee
3 March 2016
Registration Assessments – Alignment with the European Directive on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	Compliance with the EU Directive 2005/36/EU on the recognition of professional qualifications as amended by EU Directive 2013/55/EU.
Recommendation	To agree the revised registration assessment process for applicants with EU rights.
Financial and resourcing implications	This work has been incorporated into existing staffing resources.
Equality and diversity implications	We have sought to incorporate equality and diversity aspects into both the development of our new assessment processes and also in our consultation exercise. However, it will be important to continue to be responsive to feedback and to continue to ensure that we make appropriate adjustments to take account of the equality legislation and good practice.
Communications implications	Our new registration processes for applicants with EU rights will be published on our website.
Annexes	A. Review of Qualifications: applicants with EU rights: Guidelines for Assessors and Applicants B. Review of Non-UK Qualifications Assessor Evaluation Form (To be completed by the GOsC Assessors) C. Outline of Osteopathic Education, Work Experience and Lifelong Learning D. Mapping of academic transcript, experience and training to the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* (To be completed by the applicant) E. Professional reference form F. Applicant checklist G. Review of registration processes to align with the revised RPQ Directive and its transposition into law update – January 2016

General Osteopathic Council

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Background

1. The Recognition of Professional Qualifications European Directive 2005/36/EC (now amended by EU Directive 2013/55/EU) aims to protect the principle of freedom of movement for professionals in Europe and thus puts in place a more streamlined process for applicants with EU rights to gain registration in another European country.

2. Applications to the GOsC Register from applicants who do not hold a UK Recognised Qualification are considered through the GOsC's international registration assessment processes. There are different pathways for applicants who have EU/EEA rights and those who do not because those with EU rights are entitled to a more streamlined approach by virtue of the EU Directive.

3. In 2010 the existing Directive underwent a review led by the European Commission. Directive 2013/55/EU which amends EU Directive 2005/36/EC was adopted by the EU at the end of 2013. The transposition deadline for this Directive into UK law was 18 January 2016. Therefore we were required to review and revise our registration processes accordingly and ensure that they are in place with effect from 18 January 2016 to ensure that our own registration processes complied with the new consolidated EU Directive.

4. In October 2014, the Education and Registration Standards Committee considered our organisational approach to reviewing our registration assessments to ensure compliance with the European Professional Directive amendments when they came into force in early 2016.

5. In March 2015, the Education and Registration Standards Committee noted the key milestones for the project to ensure compliance with the Directive, these included:

    - Review current registration system for EU/EEA rights applicants against revised RPQ Directive.
    - Revisions anticipated include: registration assessment design, associated guidance, standard correspondence, website materials.
    - Training required for Registration Assessors, Moderators and GOsC internal staff.
    - Implement compliant revised system for January 2016.

6. In February 2016, we provided a brief update to Council about the progress made to implement the Directive and confirmed that the Education and Registration Standards Committee and Council would consider these changes at their forthcoming meetings in March 2016 and May 2016.

7. This paper provides an update about how our registration processes have been amended and streamlined to meet the milestones outlined above and to ensure compliance with the Directive and updates on key areas considered by the Committee during 2015. The paper asks the Committee to consider and agree the revised processes.

Discussion

8. The implementation of the European Directive for the UK has involved a wide range of stakeholders. We have engaged with the Department of Health, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, members of the Alliance of UK Regulators in Europe and the UK Inter-professional Group to contribute to formal consultations and calls for feedback as the implementation process has developed.

9. As part of our review of the Directive, we have liaised closely with other regulators in order to test out our understanding and to assure ourselves that our interpretation of the changes to the legislation is aligned with that of other regulators who are covered by the General Systems aspects of the new consolidated EU Directive. We gratefully acknowledge the advice of the Health and Care Professions Council and permission to draw on some of their documentation in revising our own approach. However, we remain solely responsible for our compliance with the Directive.

10. Our draft documentation is set out at Annexes A to F. It remains draft as it is in the process of being finalised and designed and so is still subject to very minor changes.

11. Previously, our assessment process for applicants with EU rights comprised a three stage process:

    - Stage 1 – Assessment of qualification against the Subject Benchmark Statement.
    - Stage 2 – Completion of further evidence of practice questionnaire
    - Stage 3 – Aptitude test or period of adaptation.

12. This has now been reduced to a more streamlined process, offering the applicant the opportunity to provide more information at stage 1 thus enhancing their chances of showing the requirements at this early stage and reducing the chances of compensation measures being imposed. Applicants can include information about how their osteopathic qualification, work experience and lifelong learning show in more detail how they substantially meet the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* (i.e. that there are no substantial differences between the applicant's qualification, work experience and lifelong learning and the *Osteopathic Practice Standards*.) This process is outlined in the *Review of Qualifications: applicants with EU rights: Guidelines for Assessors and Applicants* at Annex A and this approach is consistent with that offered by other regulators.

13. The justification to be provided to the applicant if compensation measures need to be imposed is important and we have redrafted the feedback form from the assessors in order to help them to provide sufficient feedback to the applicants. The Review of Non-UK Qualifications Assessor Evaluation Form (To be completed by the GOsC Assessors) attached at Annex B provides information to be given to applicants. We also held a training session for registration assessors on 21 January 2016 to explore the concept of 'substantial differences' to ensure

consistency in application. The training session was considered very useful or useful by those attending.

14. The applicant is able to provide a range of supporting evidence to support their application for registration. Annex C - *Outline of Osteopathic Education, Work Experience and Lifelong Learning* enables the applicant to detail how they demonstrate the Osteopathic Practice Standards (and no substantial difference between the Osteopathic Practice Standards, work experience and life long learning) and to demonstrate this explicitly to the assessors through the *Mapping of academic transcript, experience and training to the Osteopathic Practice Standards (To be completed by the applicant)* at Annex D. All information on the *Outline of Osteopathic Education, Work Experience and Lifelong Learning* must be verified by a professional reference and the form for this is attached at Annex E. Finally, there is an Applicant Checklist at Annex F which enables the applicant to check that they have submitted all the documentation that they wish to before the application is assessed.

15. The draft documentation has been shared with a range of colleagues internally for proofing and the use of clear language. We have also shared the draft documentation with applicants who have been through our current registration processes for comments and also our registration assessors who have significant experience of assessing applicants from the EU for the purposes of both education and registration. We have received five responses in total making the following points which we have responded to:

    - The documentation is detailed but clear, complete and well structured.
    - Whilst 'substantial difference' is a challenging area, we have made good progress in clarifying this in the draft guidance and by making explicit that features of communication, consent and clinical reasoning as important areas to evidence as these area often feature in 'substantial differences'.
    - However, it is of note that one assessor felt that the aspects of communication required in the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* can be difficult to demonstrate on paper and were best assessed in a clinical examination. We have tried to address this feedback as far as possible within the principles and requirements of the Directive. The *Guidance for Applicants and Assessors* helps to make more explicit the communication expectations within the UK which are different to those in other EU countries. We suggest that the compromise that we have suggested in the initial assessment documentation which makes expectations in the UK clearer through the use of both the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* and the *Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education* provides the applicant with more information about UK expectations at the earliest stage of the process. If the applicant prefers to undertake compensation measures, they are not required to provide lots of detailed information at Stage 1 and their application can simply be assessed on the information that they provide and move to compensation measures if substantial differences are identified.

- One assessor felt that evidence of clinical supervision was important. We hope that the verified references will deal with this point, but we will keep it under review as the new documentation is rolled out.

16. The Committee can be assured that we have worked to ensure that our documentation complies with the Directive and is helpful to applicants and assessors and we have sought feedback from both applicants and assessors and colleagues to check this.

17. As with all new processes, it will be important to continue to keep the process under review and to continually learn to ensure that the principles of freedom of movement as enshrined in the EU Directive are adhered to and that patient safety is maintained.

18. Finally, we have provided the Committee with an update about how we have managed the range of issues identified at the outset of the project. This update is provided in the *Review of registration processes to align with the revised RPQ Directive and its transposition into law update – January 2016* attached at Annex G.

Recommendation: To agree the revised registration assessment process for applicants with EU rights.