



Education and Registration Standards Committee
3 March 2016
Student fitness to practise guidance review update

Classification	Public
Purpose	For noting
Issue	An update on the review of guidance on student fitness to practise
Recommendation	To note the progress on the review.
Financial and resourcing implications	There will be a small cost incurred in consulting on the documents and designing them for publication which are contained within the Professional Standards/Communications budgets.
Equality and diversity implications	These will be addressed within the revised documents.
Communications implications	The revised guidance will be subject to a limited consultation.
Annex	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance about professional behaviours and fitness to practise for osteopathic studentsB. Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for osteopathic educational institutionsC. Consultation document – student guidanceD. Consultation document – osteopathic educational institution guidance
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Background

1. The GOsC issues guidance on Student Fitness to Practise and on Student Health and Disability, in the following documents:
 - a. *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance about professional behaviours and fitness to practise for osteopathic students*
 - b. *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for osteopathic educational institutions*
2. These documents originally date from 2012. The fitness to practise guidance was written before the publication of the Francis Report and issues such as the duty of candour became prominent within healthcare.
3. The guidelines have therefore been reviewed in the light of developments within osteopathy, osteopathic education, and healthcare regulation generally over the last five years.
4. The aim of the existing documentation, and the proposed revisions, is to provide guidance to applicants, students and osteopathic educational institutions (OEs) on issues relating to professional behaviours and fitness to practise, including processes for managing these within OEs. This will help students, and those considering becoming students of osteopathy, understand the expectations of them regarding professional behaviours, and issues which might lead to concern. Detailed guidance regarding the management of professional behaviour and Fitness to Practise issues is provided to aid OEs, and to enhance the understanding of students in this respect.
5. A review was conducted of similar guidance on fitness to practise and professional behaviours, issued by other healthcare regulators, to gauge current developments and activity within the sector. A number of the regulators have recently, or are currently conducting their own reviews, as was reported in the last update to the ERSC on 13th October 2015.
6. As part of the initial review process, each of the OEs were contacted with a set of questions regarding their experience in utilising the guidance documentation. Where practicable, face-to-face meetings were held with representatives of OEs to explore their views and experiences in more depth.

Initial outcomes and proposed changes in draft guidelines

7. The draft revised student guidance document is included within Annex A and the OEI guidance is in annex B.
8. We considered whether there was value in maintaining separate documentation aimed at students and OEs respectively, or whether the guidance would be better combined. The OEs generally prefer having separate documents aimed at different audiences. Where regulators (such as the GDC) have combined documentation, the general trend is to revise these and create separate

documents for students and educators. We have, therefore, maintained separate documents in each case for students and potential students, and for OEIs.

9. We have attempted to provide more detailed guidance to students on professional behaviours, and the expectations on them, giving specific examples of the types of activities or behaviours which might call their fitness to practise into question. We have developed more case examples to aid with this.
10. Guidance on the duty of candour and 'whistleblowing/speaking up' have been incorporated into the draft student document.
11. Some guidance has been included regarding boundaries. This includes boundaries between students in the context of practicing osteopathic techniques on each other, and on the question of relationship boundaries between teaching staff and students.

Next steps and further consultation

12. The draft revised guidance documents will be published on the GOsC website in March and a consultation process will be held between March and June 2016.
13. The review will be publicised in *The Osteopath* and in e-bulletins.
14. Further consultations will be held with the osteopathic educational institutions, with efforts made to involve a broader range of teaching faculty as well as students.
15. The draft documents will be shared with other regulators for comment, as part of the consultation process.
16. The consultation document for the revised student guidance is included in Annex C, and the guidance aimed at OEIs is in Annex D.

Recommendation: to note the progress on the reviews.