

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
16 MARCH 2011  
PUBLIC SESSION  
ADVERTISING OF RECOGNISED QUALIFICATIONS**

<b><u>Classification</u></b>	Public
<b><u>Purpose</u></b>	For decision
<b><u>Issues</u></b>	This paper considers whether the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) should provide advice on standard wording for use by the osteopathic educational institutions when advertising Recognised Qualifications (RQs) prior to approval.
<b><u>Recommendations</u></b>	To agree to reissue the advertising guidance as proposed at Annex B.
<b><u>Financial and Resourcing Implications</u></b>	None
<b><u>Equality and Diversity Implications</u></b>	None
<b><u>Communications Implications</u></b>	This policy must be communicated to all existing osteopathic educational institutions (OEs) with existing RQs and those in the process of applying for recognition. It will also need to be incorporated in the material issued to new RQ applicants in the future. We should also publish this guidance on our website to help students be clear about the status of courses that are not listed on our website as 'RQ's.
<b><u>Annexes</u></b>	Annex A      Advertising guidance letter previously issued to OEs in February 2011 Annex B      Proposed revised guidance to be issued to all OEs.
<b><u>Author</u></b>	Marcus Dye

## **Background**

1. The GOsC Corporate Plan states that we will 'review Quality Assurance procedures to ensure they are fit for practise'. It also states that we will 'Identify what further streamlining steps are needed and implement them'
2. At its last meeting on 14 December 2010, the Education Committee agreed to issue a letter of guidance for OEIs on the advertising of osteopathic qualifications prior to the award of a RQ. This was to ensure clarity for potential students, patients and the public on the status of qualifications. The agreed wording of the letter is provided at Annex A and this was issued in February 2011.

## **Discussion**

3. The guidance was developed with the intention that it be used in relation to new qualifications/courses that had not previously received an RQ.
4. Subsequent to issuing the guidance, the OEIs have identified a situation which causes them great difficulty in terms of following this advertising guidance. Following the agreement of Council to recognise a new qualification or renew the recognition of an existing qualification, under Section 14 (2) of the Osteopaths Act, it must seek the approval of Privy Council for this recognition.
5. The Privy Council in turn consults the Department of Health for legal advice on the recognition. As outlined in paper 8a, this stage of the process has become prolonged and has led to the situation where the GOsC may have recognised a qualification for many months prior to it gaining formal approval from the Privy Council.
6. During this time, under the existing guidance, it would be difficult to advertise the new course or the fact that an existing course has been renewed despite recognition from the GOsC. This may have a significant impact on the OEI, particularly financially if the time taken to approve is protracted.
7. It is not the intention of the GOsC that the administrative process and any delays should have a detrimental affect on the management and viability of courses. This is unfair to the OEI and creates uncertainty for existing and potential students.
8. Having gained legal opinion, the GOsC is confident that the following wording could be used by OEIs in advertising qualifications/courses which have been recognised by the GOsC:

'The General Osteopathic Council has agreed to recognise/renew the recognition of the [insert qualification title] and this is awaiting final approval from the Privy Council at the time of going to press.'

9. Guidance could be revised to incorporate this wording and the proposed draft is outlined at Annex B.
10. In addition, we propose to add RQs to our website with similar wording at the point of 'recognition' of the RQ by Council to be clear that the Council has made a positive decision which simply needs approval from the Privy Council. This is also consistent with the legislation in Section 15(8) of the Osteopaths Act 1993 which requires us to notify the institution of the Council's decision to 'recognise' the qualification as soon as is reasonably practicable after that decision is made.
11. In order to be absolutely clear to students, we also propose to publish the guidance at Annex B on our website.

**Recommendation:** To agree to reissue the advertising guidance as proposed at Annex B.

## GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL

PATRON: HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES



General  
Osteopathic  
Council

OSTEOPATHY HOUSE  
176 TOWER BRIDGE ROAD  
LONDON SE1 3LU

TEL: +44 (0) 20 7357 6655

FAX: +44 (0) 20 7357 0011

DX 80729 Bermondsey

[www.osteopathy.org.uk](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk)

4 February 2011

Dear

### **Advertising osteopathy courses prior to recognition by the General Osteopathic Council**

The Education Committee has become aware of a lack of consistency in advertising, to the public, courses which have not yet been awarded a 'Recognised Qualification' (RQ). It is important to ensure that advertising literature is correct to ensure that the public (and potential students) are not inadvertently misled.

Following further discussions, the Education Committee agreed that a form of standard wording should be recommended to all osteopathic educational institutions for them to use when advertising new courses which will eventually lead to a RQ. This is to ensure that a clear and consistent message is issued by all institutions.

When advertising courses that have not yet been awarded a RQ, OEIs are asked to ensure that the following wording is used in all advertising materials both electronic and other forms of advertising:

'Only individuals holding qualifications approved by the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) may register with the GOsC and practice as osteopaths in the UK. In order for a programme of study to lead to a qualification which is registerable with the GOsC, the programme must be approved by the GOsC and granted 'Recognised Qualification' (RQ) status. The **[insert name of qualification]** programme of study offered by **[insert name of institution]** has not been awarded RQ status. An application for RQ status has been made to the GOsC but there is no guarantee that such an application will be successful. The GOsC assumes no responsibility for students who enrol on this course prior to recognition.'

The advertising should also include wording which references the following where appropriate:

- Confirmation that the institution is working with the General Osteopathic Council towards recognition of the qualification.

## Annex A to 8b

- A clear statement of the options available to the students should the qualification not achieve 'recognition' at an appropriate time.

If you have any questions in relation to this letter then please contact my colleague Marcus Dye by email: [mdye@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:mdye@osteopathy.org.uk) or on 020 7357 6655 ext 240.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Hughes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof. Ian Hughes  
Chair of Education Committee

# Annex B to 8b

## Guidance about advertising osteopathy courses prior to their recognition by the General Osteopathic Council

Students with 'Recognised Qualifications' are entitled to apply for registration with the General Osteopathic Council.

Recognised qualifications are awarded following an extensive and detailed quality assurance process undertaken on behalf of the General Osteopathic Council by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Their report is scrutinised by the General Osteopathic Council's Education Committee before the General Council takes a decision about whether to 'recognise' the qualification.

Once the General Council has made a decision to 'recognise' a qualification, this must be formally ratified and approved by the Privy Council.

It is important to ensure that advertising literature of those offering osteopathic qualifications is correct to ensure that the public (and potential students) are not inadvertently misled.

The Education Committee has agreed that a form of standard wording should be recommended to all educational institutions for them to use when advertising new courses which have not yet been confirmed as a 'Recognised Qualification' by the General Osteopathic Council. This is to ensure that a clear and consistent message is issued by all institutions for the benefit of students and the public.

When advertising courses that have not yet been awarded a 'RQ', educational institutions are asked to ensure that the following wording is used in all advertising materials (including electronic and other forms):

'Only individuals holding qualifications approved by the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) may register with the GOsC and practice as osteopaths in the UK. In order for a programme of study to lead to a qualification which is registerable with the GOsC, the programme must be approved by the GOsC and granted 'Recognised Qualification' (RQ) status. The **[insert name of qualification]** programme of study offered by **[insert name of institution]** has not yet been awarded RQ status. An application for RQ status has been made to the GOsC but there is no guarantee that such an application will be successful. The GOsC assumes no responsibility for students who enrol on this course prior to recognition being granted.'

In order for a RQ to be issued, it must be 'approved' by the Privy Council. Sometimes, the approval can be awarded some months after the decision to 'recognise' the qualification by the General Osteopathic Council.

Legislation requires that the decision to 'recognise' the qualification must be notified to the institution as soon as it is made by Council. In order to reflect this legislation, the GOsC will also make clear on its own website when institutions have been successful in obtaining a Council decision to 'recognise' a qualification which is awaiting Privy Council approval. Institutions in this situation could use the following wording in their own advertising materials:

'The General Osteopathic Council has agreed made a decision to recognise the [insert qualification title] and this is awaiting final approval from the Privy Council at the time of going to press.

The advertising should also include wording which references the following where appropriate:

- Confirmation that the institution is working with the General Osteopathic Council towards recognition of the qualification.
- A statement of the options available to the students should the qualification not achieve 'recognition' at an appropriate time.

Any questions about the status of a qualification should be referred to Marcus Dye at [mdye@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:mdye@osteopathy.org.uk) or 020 7357 6655 x240