

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
22 September 2011
Quality Assurance review

<u>Classification</u>	Public
<u>Purpose</u>	For decision
<u>Issue</u>	In December 2009, Education Committee agreed to launch a preliminary review of the quality assurance procedures used for osteopathy education by the General Osteopathic Council. A number of issues were identified at the time to be addressed during the review.
<u>Recommendations</u>	To agree that the purpose of the preliminary quality assurance review has been met and that the review is therefore concluded. To note that further work will be undertaken as part of a more fundamental quality assurance review and as part of our own focus on continuing improvement of processes.
<u>Financial and resourcing implications</u>	None from this paper.
<u>Equality and diversity implications</u>	None in this paper.
<u>Communications implications</u>	None in this paper.
<u>Annexes</u>	Annex A – List of QAA Preliminary review issues
<u>Author</u>	Marcus Dye

Background

1. In December 2009, Education Committee agreed to launch a preliminary review of the quality assurance procedures used for osteopathy education by the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC). Prior to this there had been no real evaluation of the feedback on our QA procedures or any continual improvement mechanisms put in place and some frustration with the process was evident in feedback from the OEIs.
2. Through consultation with the Osteopathic Educational Institutions (OEIs), analysis of the CHRE Report on Quality Assurance and through the QAA Evaluation Report, a number of issues were identified at the time to be addressed during the review. These are outlined in the table at Annex A, together with an update on progress. The purpose of the preliminary review was to streamline and update some of the processes within the current legislative framework in response to feedback received before considering a more fundamental review of quality assurance requiring legislative change. It also became clear that more of a feedback cycle was required in terms of logging issues and action taken to address issues as part of a cycle of continual improvement in our own processes.
3. The preliminary quality assurance review involved a number of different workstreams to address the issues raised, including:
 - a. Development and publication of a GOsC Policy on quality assurance in particular to clarify the purpose of the quality assurance.
 - b. Renegotiation of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) contract dated August 2010.
 - c. Revision to the GOsC/QAA Review Method including a three month consultation and publication of new Handbooks targeted at OEIs and Visitors on 1 September 2011.
 - d. Development of supporting templates for the Review Method, including a standard Self-Assessment Document (SED), Action Plans for meeting conditions, structure for visit meetings, again consulted on and published on 1 September 2011.
 - e. Revision of the OEI Annual Report template including a three month consultation and publication on 1 September 2011.
Streamlining of the Recognised Qualification (RQ) process through discussion with the Privy Council and Department of Health and agreeing the process to be taken forward from June 2011 onwards. This includes a review of the wording of all RQ conditions by the Head of Regulation, advance warning of RQs for the Privy Council and Department of Health and the use of Department of Health standard templates for drafting GOsC papers. Council also agreed that any minor changes to the wording of conditions could be undertaken by the

Executive and Education Committee as long as the meaning did not change and it was informed of the outcome.

- f. Planned training for the existing QAA assessors which will take place in October/November 2011 with aims including:
 - i. To improve the moderation procedures to demonstrate more consistency albeit in a peer review process.
 - ii. To re-emphasise triangulation methods.
 - iii. To describe to visitors about meaning of 'sufficient', 'good practice', and matters that should be the subject of conditions and recommendations.
- g. Revised the Visitor specifications (individual and team) as part of the new Review handbooks, to identify the competences expected of Visitors (including confidentiality of information during the course of a review). This includes the need for experience of higher education to be a part of the Visit Team's experience and removes the previous exclusion on OEI Principals being QAA Visitors.
- h. Implementation of a formal process for agreeing that conditions have been fulfilled so that information published on the website is up to date for the benefit of students, the public and OEIs. This involves a more flexible and responsive approach by the Education Committee which will consider RQ conditions outside of meetings in certain circumstances. The involvement of the QAA in assessing whether conditions have been met is also formalised in the new Review Method Handbook, including the completion of action plans for RQ conditions completed by the OEIs and submitted to the QAA.
- i. Completion of an the Annual Report Cycle for 2009/10 and the implementation of an interim Annual Report cycle for 2010/11, using the QAA to review the reports. These were considered at the Education Committee meetings in June 2010 and 14 June 2011 respectively, with feedback given to the OEIs.
- j. Maintenance of an issues log to record feedback on the QA processes and ways in which this feedback can contribute to the improvement of the QA process.

Discussion

4. The Education Committee is asked to note the work completed during the preliminary quality assurance review as summarised at Annex A. All issues originally dealt with have either been addressed or will be taken forward as outlined below. The original purpose of the preliminary Quality Assurance Review – to consider and address the issues outlined at Annex A has been achieved or is planned imminently.

5. The review has also developed into a method of continual monitoring and improvement of our processes.
6. The Education Committee is also asked to note the outstanding issues from Annex A related to quality assurance and agree that the policy issues are taken forward and fed into the major Quality Assurance Review mainly requiring legislative change or considerable further policy development and that the operational issues are carried forward as part of our own continual quality improvement. These issues include:
 - a. Consideration of who pays the cost of quality assurance – the GOsC or the OEIs
 - b. Consideration of whether the GOsC should quality assure osteopathy courses outside the UK
 - c. Consideration of the role of Privy Council/Department of Health in RQ process and potential to adopt governance structure of other healthcare regulators such as the GMC removing the role of the Privy Council.
 - d. To consider accrediting providers rather than individual courses
 - e. To consider further ways of co-ordinating our reviews with those of others, i.e. the validating universities
 - f. To consider the point at which GOsC is involved in the recognition of new courses, i.e. early involvement or when course is up and running.
 - g. To consider whether our Quality Assurance procedures are too much like academic validation rather than professional accreditation? Are the procedures proportionate?
 - h. Refreshing the pool of QAA assessors through an appointments process to be discussed at December 2011 Education Committee.
 - i. Re-training of all newly appointed QAA assessors in the new Review Method which takes effect on 1 September 2012 as well as the new Osteopathic Practice Standards which take effect on the same day.
 - j. Renegotiating contract with the QAA for 2012-14
 - k. Ensuring the mapping of the new Osteopathic Practice Standards against the OEI curricula and learning outcomes by 1 September 2012
 - l. Launching new Annual Report template in September 2012

- m. Ensuring all GOsC documentation is updated to reference the new Osteopathic Practice Standards.
 - n. To consider whether further time is required for RQ visits.
7. Some of the major issues set out at paragraph 3 a. to d. above will also tie in with two other areas currently being looked at by GOsC:
- a. Legislative Review being conducted by the Law Commission on behalf of the Department of Health
 - b. GOsC review of costs
8. We will need to ensure that these projects are closely co-ordinated to achieve our desired outcomes.

Recommendations

9. To agree that the purpose of the preliminary quality assurance review has been met and that the review is therefore concluded.
10. To note that further work will be undertaken as part of a more fundamental quality assurance review and as part of our own focus on continuing improvement of processes.