

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE****22 SEPTEMBER 2011****STUDENT FITNESS TO PRACTISE AND THE MANAGEMENT OF DISABILITY OR HEALTH IMPAIRMENT IN OSTEOPATHIC EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PRACTICE****Classification**

Public

**Purpose**

For decision

**Issues**

To publish student fitness to practice guidance and guidance for OEIs and students about the management of health impairments and disability.

**Recommendations**

- A. To recommend that Council agrees to publish the consultation analysis and response, *Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students* and *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for Osteopathic Educational Institutions*
- B. To agree that the Student Fitness to Practise Working Group should be convened to further consider issues of implementation and evaluation.
- C. To note the plans to discuss piloting a proposed e-learning tool to explore the development of professionalism, subject to discussions with OEIs.
- D. To recommend that Council agrees to publish *Osteopathic Education and Training: Guidance for Applicants and Students with a Disability or Health Impairment* attached at Annex D and *Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for Osteopathic Education Institutions* at Annex E.

**Financial and resourcing implications**

The cost of the development and electronic publication of the guidance in this paper is less than £20000. This includes the costs of the external consultants to develop the guidance about students with a disability or health impairment in the sum of £10 000.

**Equality and diversity implications**

Specific guidance about the management of health and disability in training has being commissioned as part of our commitment to 'reassure all that the only concern of the regulatory body is the person's capability to practise

in line with competence and conduct standards, not the state of their health or any impairment that they might have.' We have sought to achieve fairness and consistency in conduct matters through publication of guidance which emphasises the safety of patients rather than punishment.

### **Communications implications**

We will issue a press release about the publication of the suite of guidance about student fitness to practise and the management of health impairments and disability. We will also publish the guidance electronically. It is proposed that implementation proposals are considered further by the Student Fitness to Practise Working Group.

### **Annexes**

**Annex A** – GOsC Student Fitness to Practise Consultation Analysis and Response

**Annex B** – *Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students*

**Annex C** – *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for Osteopathic Educational Institutions*

**Annex D** – *Osteopathic Education and Training: Guidance for Applicants and Students with a Disability or Health Impairment*

**Annex E** – *Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for Osteopathic Education Institutions*

**Annex F** – A Report from Prime R and D Ltd about the development of the Osteopathic Education and Training Guidance for Applicants and Students with a Disability or Health Impairment and Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for Osteopathic Education Institutions.

### **Author**

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## Background

1. The GOsC Corporate Plan states that we will 'identify ways in which the GOsC can provide support to OEIs in making fair and consistent fitness to practise decisions, to ensure that only those students who are fit to practise are awarded a RQ.' It also states that we will 'provide information and guidance to OEIs on how they can effectively comply with their equality duties under anti-discrimination law.'

### *Development of Student Fitness to Practise Guidance*

2. A short life working group comprising osteopathic students, newly qualified osteopaths, OEI representatives and the Chair of the Education Committee developed two pieces of guidance about Student Fitness to Practise: *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for Osteopathic Educational Institutions* and *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students*. The Education Committee and the Council agreed that the Guidance be published for consultation. The consultation period ran from 1 May 2011 to 1 September 2011 and was supplemented by dissemination to a wide variety of interested parties as well as seminars and presentations to students and osteopaths and a medical educationalist.

### *Development of Guidance about the Management of Health and Disability*

3. The Education Committee have overseen the appointment of Prime Research Development Ltd: Lindsay Mitchell and David Moore to complete the following work: The proposal should deliver:
  - a. A scoping report including an outline of the methods to be used to undertake this research.
  - b. Guidance on the new Equality Act 2010 setting health and disability issues within the wider equality and diversity legislative framework.
  - c. Guidance on managing impairments and health conditions in osteopathic education and clinical placements including illustrative case examples. This would include
    - i. Clarification of the Council position related to people with disabilities and health conditions in the profession.
    - ii. Consideration of the issues posed by students who are able to reach the required outcomes with considerable reasonable adjustments in the clinic

but who may experience difficulties in practising independently where the same support is not available.

- d. Guidance on formal processes for assessing compliance with competence and conduct standards.
- e. Guidance on sources of further information and advice.
- f. Proposals for effective implementation.

## Discussion

### *Development of Student Fitness to Practise Guidance*

4. An analysis of responses received and a proposed response to the consultation is at Annex A. The responses were very positive about the guidance and offered some constructive feedback about ways to improve the guidance. The feedback was from a good range of sources including students, osteopaths, Osteopathic Educational Institutions (including one with a broad health faculty), other regulators and the CHRE as well as a response from a medical educationalist offering proposals for implementation. We have also benefited from seminars and presentations to two groups of osteopathic students and also the Regional Communications Network meeting comprising osteopaths from across the UK and these views have also fed into the consultation analysis.
5. The guidance has been amended to take account of the responses. A detailed analysis of each response and the action taken is available on request from Joy Bolt ([jbolt@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:jbolt@osteopathy.org.uk)).
6. In light of the very positive response to this Guidance it is recommended that it is published as soon as possible. The revised *Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students* is at Annex B and the revised *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for Osteopathic Educational Institutions* is at Annex C.
7. In terms of implementation of the Guidance, we propose to reconvene a meeting of the Student Fitness to Practise Working Group early in the 2012 to explore the feedback from the consultation about implementation and to help to advise on a detailed implementation strategy and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Guidance. We will report back to the Education Committee about this work in due course.
8. We are also proposing to pilot a proposal received from the University of Dundee about an e-learning module, if agreed by the OEIs, to feed into our understanding of e-learning and the ways that it might contribute to effective implementation of our

guidance. Costs are minimal and our experiences will help to inform our implementation plan.

### **Recommendations:**

- A. To recommend that Council agrees to publish the consultation analysis and response, *Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students* and *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for Osteopathic Educational Institutions*.
- B. To agree that the Student Fitness to Practise Working Group should be convened to further consider issues of implementation.
- C. To note the plans to discuss piloting a proposed e-learning tool to explore the development of professionalism, subject to discussions with OEIs.

### *Guidance about the Management of Health and Disability*

- 9. The guidance about the management of health and disability has also been developed for students and for OEIs. The two documents are: *Osteopathic Education and Training: Guidance for Applicants and Students with a Disability or Health Impairment* attached at Annex D and *Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for Osteopathic Education Institutions* at Annex E.
- 10. The guidance has been developed in accordance with the Scoping Report. A detailed report about the development of the guidance and a consultation with the OEIs about the draft guidance is set out at Annex F. The development of the guidance has involved focus groups and interviews with OEIs including clinical faculty as well as anonymised data about Health Committee cases, the GOsC Osteopathic Practice Standards, the QAA Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy and the GOsC Student Fitness to Practise policy. Account has also been taken of guidance in other areas of healthcare where appropriate. The examples in the Guidance have been provided by OEIs and so there is a real sense of ownership of the work. The guidance has also benefitted from input from GOsC staff and the Chair of the Education Committee.
- 11. Some tensions in the guidance were considered at length. For example, is the guidance clear enough about the responsibilities of students, OEIs and GOsC in relation to the award of the RQ? Does the guidance provide realistic expectations of what it means to train as an osteopath. It is submitted that these questions have been considered and that the right balance has been met in the guidance.
- 12. This is the first time that guidance on these matters has been published by GOsC and as such this guidance represents new territory for osteopathic students and OEIs. In line with the recommendations for implementation set out in the Report at Annex F, it is recommended that the suite of guidance be published and evaluated

and reviewed in about two years time to see if it is helpful to prospective students and to OEIs and to see whether any improvements need to be made.

### **Recommendation**

- D. To recommend that Council agrees to publish *Osteopathic Education and Training: Guidance for Applicants and Students with a Disability or Health Impairment* attached at Annex D and *Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for Osteopathic Education Institutions* at Annex E.