



General
Osteopathic
Council

GENERAL OSTEOPATHIC COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK

DECEMBER 2010

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1. KEY TO USE OF TERMS

The Act	The Osteopaths Act 1993, as amended
General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)	the regulatory body known as the General Osteopathic Council (i.e. incorporating the Council, statutory and non-statutory committees, working groups established by the Council, and staff)
The Council	the 14 members (7 lay, 7 osteopath) appointed by the Appointments Commission to govern the work of the GOsC
Governance structure	the structure that includes the Council, committees, both statutory and non-statutory, fitness to practise panels, ad hoc working groups
Members	members of the governance structure, whether of the Council, of committees, of panels or of working groups established by the Council
Committee members	members of committees, both statutory and non-statutory
Fitness to Practise panellists	members of panels composed from the membership of the Investigation Committee, Professional Conduct Committee and Health Committee
Legal assessors	legally qualified persons appointed to give advice on questions of law to the Screener, Investigating Committee, Professional Conduct Committee, Health Committee or Registrar.
Medical Assessors	registered medical practitioners appointed to give advice on matters within their professional competence to the Screener, Investigating Committee, Professional Conduct Committee, Health Committee or the Registrar.
Visitor	a person/persons undertaking a visit, on behalf of the GOsC, to an Osteopathic Educational Institution to assess courses of training as part of the process of accreditation. At present such visits are undertaken by the Qualifications Assurance Agency
The Executive	The Chief Executive & Registrar and members of the GOsC's staff

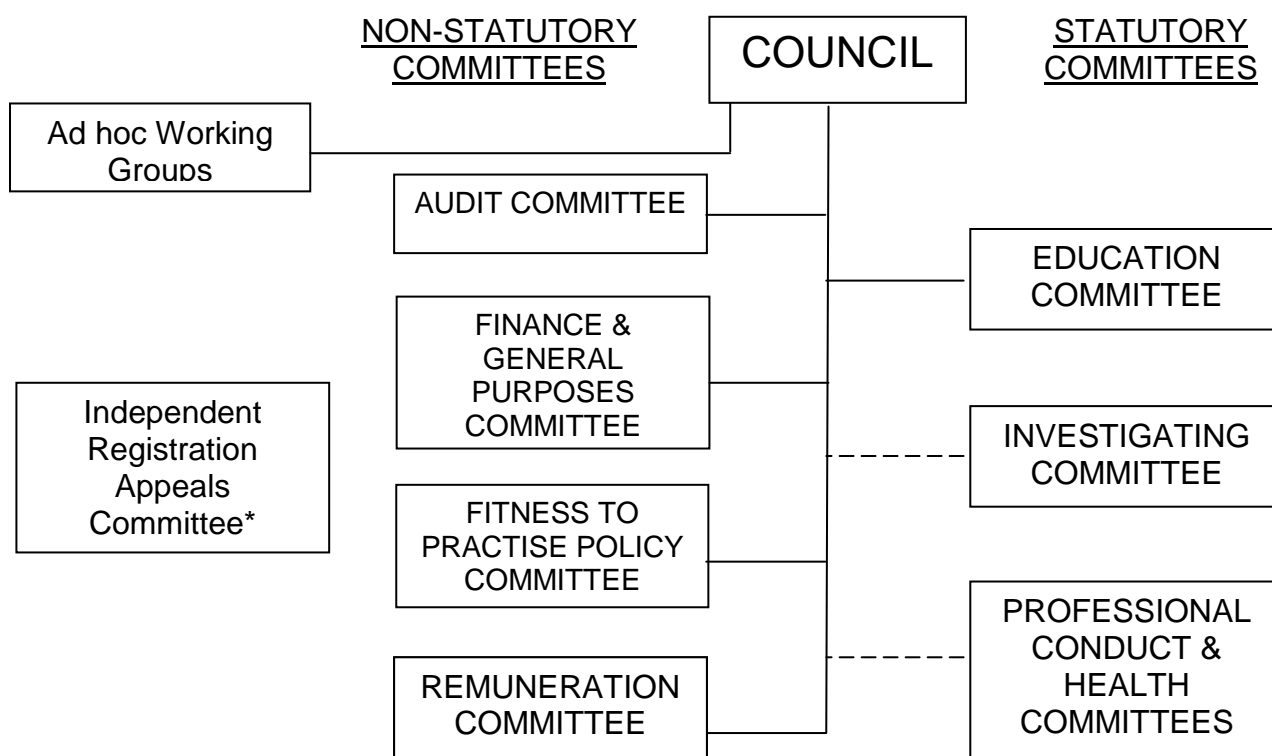
2. ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

1. This handbook sets out the GOsC's governance structure, how it operates and the procedures followed, in compliance with:
 - The Osteopaths Act 1993, as amended
[http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/uploads/osteopaths%20act%201993%20\(as%20amended\).pdf](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/uploads/osteopaths%20act%201993%20(as%20amended).pdf)
 - The GOsC (Constitution) Order 2009 (SI 2009 No.263) ('Council Constitution Order') [The General Osteopathic Council \(Constitution\) Order 2009 No. 263](#)
 - The GOsC (Constitution of the Statutory Committees) Rules Order of Council 2009 (SI 2009 No. 468) ('Statutory Committees' Rules') [The General Osteopathic Council \(Constitution of the Statutory Committees\) Rules Order of Council 2009 No. 468](#)
2. It also incorporates the Code of Conduct for members of the governance structure (Annex 1); Standing Orders (Annex 2), where the GOsC is required by legislation or has chosen to make Standing Orders to govern some aspects of governance; and the supporting documents for the Handbook contained in Annex 3.
3. It is designed to be an aid to members in discharging their statutory responsibilities effectively.
4. The Handbook replaces previous editions and the substantial revisions reflect new governance arrangements introduced in April 2009 (see below); it is a living document and will be reviewed in consultation with members annually and amended as necessary, with the approval of the Council.

Recent governance changes

5. Following various Public Inquiries and the publication of the White Paper: *Trust, Assurance and Safety, The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century* and the Health and Social Care Act 2008, the GOsC in common with all healthcare regulators, was required by government to implement a series of reforms, including key changes to its governance structure. The Government made it clear that, in order to be effective, regulators must be seen to be independent, transparent, accountable, ethical, dispassionate and just. It concluded that key changes to regulators' governance were necessary to achieve this level of effectiveness.

6. Some of the specified reforms are reflected in the Health and Social Care Act which received Royal Assent on 22 July 2008. Others are being progressed through subordinate legislation and include provisions requiring all regulators to effect the following changes to their governance:
 - Wholly appointed, smaller Councils
 - Parity of lay and professional membership of Councils
7. The Council Constitution Order provides for the establishment of a new Council composed of 7 lay members, one of which is the Chair, and 7 osteopaths. The new Council took effect in April 2009, following an independent appointment process conducted by the Appointments Commission (Appointments Commission - Home) on behalf of the Privy Council.
8. In a further important change to the GOsC's governance structure, Council members are no longer required to be members of Fitness to Practise committees. This underpins the independence of Fitness to Practise panels which are appointed by the Council following a recruitment campaign carried out by the Appointments Commission. The new Fitness to Practise committees took up office on April 2009. The Statutory Committees' Rules cover this important governance change.
9. The Act, Constitution Orders and Procedural Rules are all set out in full on the public website – www.osteopathy.org.uk and in the Members' Area (see below).
10. The GOsC has revised its governance structure as follows:



*The Independent Registration Appeals Committee hears appeals from individuals against decisions made by the Registrar of the kind set out in section 29 (1) of the Osteopaths Act, for example a refusal by the Registrar to register an applicant for registration.

Members' Area - Online library for members

11. All Members will be provided with password-protected access to an electronic Members' Area accessible through the public website. The area will contain electronic copies of all documentation necessary to enable members to carry out their remit.

3. GOsC'S STATUTORY DUTIES

Statutory objective

1. The GOsC's statutory objective, set out in the Act, is 'to develop and regulate the profession of osteopathy'.

Strategic aims

2. Through the strategic aims set out below, the GOsC aims to fulfill the statutory objective.
 - a. To ensure patient and public protection through effectively targeted regulation
 - b. To promote high standards of osteopathic healthcare
 - c. To maintain and enhance the integrity of the Register
 - d. To engage effectively with osteopaths, patients, the wider public, educators, and other key stakeholders to ensure our policies and processes are informed
 - e. To keep our activities and use of resources under review, making changes where necessary to ensure optimum performance and cost-effectiveness

Values of the GOsC

3. The GOsC is committed to conducting all its activities as a regulator and an employer based on the following values:

Proportionate

We will ensure that the regulatory burden is no greater than it needs to be to deliver our statutory function of regulating and developing the profession of osteopathy in order to ensure public protection.

Accountable

We will build trust by accounting honestly to all our stakeholders. We will explain how we have taken their views into consideration in developing policy and in improving our performance. We will take responsibility for the consequences of our actions.

Consistent

We will be consistent in the application of our policies and procedures in order to ensure fairness.

Transparent

We will publicise our actions and decisions, wherever possible, ensuring that the information is clearly explained and easily accessible.

Targeted

We will identify and focus our resources on areas of risk to public protection and where there is scope to achieve the most in terms of improving the standards of health care provided.

Responsive

We will respond to the needs of patients and the public and to the legitimate concerns of all other stakeholders, keeping bureaucracy to a minimum. We will take the views of our stakeholders into account in deciding the most effective way to carry out our regulatory functions.

Continuous improvement

We will foster a culture of continuous improvement, taking steps to benchmark our performance periodically and setting targets to achieve best practice, in all our activities as a regulator and as an employer.

Anticipatory

We will monitor trends in healthcare regulation, in osteopathic practice, and in education and training so as to be ready to respond effectively to change and to help the profession respond accordingly.

Inclusive

We will undertake our activities in an inclusive manner, taking care always to involve stakeholders meaningfully in our activities. The aims of promoting equality, valuing diversity and removing unfair discrimination will shape all our activities as a regulator and employer.

Efficiency and value for money

We will use our resources efficiently, remaining alert for opportunities to achieve further efficiencies without compromising the quality of our work.

Discharge of duties

4. The GOsC aims to discharge its statutory duties through a governance structure made up of the Council, the committees, ad hoc working groups and the Executive (see Annex 3 for fuller details of each category).

5. Council

The Council, which is the governing body, comprises 7 members who are osteopaths and 7 lay members. It is currently chaired by a lay member. All members are appointed by the Privy Council. The principal office holders are the Chair and the Treasurer. The Council has responsibility for ensuring that the GOsC fulfills its statutory objectives. It sets the strategic policy for the organisation and oversees the implementation of that policy. The detailed role of the Council is set out in Annex 3.

6. Statutory and non-statutory committees

The statutory committees are provided for in the Act, and in statutory rules made pursuant to that Act. The Council has established 3 non-statutory committees to assist in ensuring that the GOsC fulfils its statutory duties. The committees are:

Statutory Committees

Education Committee

The role of the Education Committee is to advise and develop policy for consideration by the Council so that the Council may set, maintain and develop the standards of osteopathic training and practice.

Investigating Committee

The Investigating Committee considers whether there is a case to answer in relation to allegations which may be made against a registered osteopath, and if it considers that there is such a case to answer, to refer the allegation(s) to the Professional Conduct or Health Committee.

Professional Conduct Committee

The Professional Conduct Committee considers allegations referred to it by the Investigating Committee to the effect that an osteopath has been guilty of unacceptable professional conduct or professional incompetence, or that he has been convicted of a criminal offence which may have a material relevance to his fitness to practise osteopathy.

Non-Statutory Committees

Audit Committee

The role of the GOsC's Audit Committee is to monitor the management of risk; to provide assurance across all categories of risk; and make recommendations for any actions to the Council and executive as appropriate.

Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Finance and General Purposes Committee oversees the effective financial governance and management of the GOsC and in addition, considers the initiation and monitors the implementation of any special projects of the organisation.

Fitness to Practise Policy Committee

The Fitness to Practise Policy Committee has responsibility for considering matters of fitness to practise policy and procedure and making recommendations for any changes to the Council.

Health Committee

The Health Committee considers allegations referred to it by the Investigating Committee to the effect that the ability of an osteopath to practise as such is seriously impaired because of his/her physical or mental condition.

Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee oversees all issues of remuneration policy in relation to the staff of the GOsC and makes recommendations to the Council on issues related to non-executive remuneration.

7. Ad hoc working groups

From time to time, ad hoc working groups may be established by the Council to develop policy in new areas or to review specific issues. The composition of these groups will reflect all the necessary expertise to take forward the issue in question. The constitution, role, terms of reference and the life span of the group will be established at the outset.

At present, the Council has the following working groups:

- Revalidation Working Group
- Code of Practice Working Group
- Research Strategy Working Group
- Revalidation Standards and Assessment Working Group
- Revalidation Public and Patient Involvement Group

8. Executive

Comprises:

- Chief Executive & Registrar
- Senior Management Team
- All other staff of the GOsC

The executive is accountable to the Council and has the primary role of implementing the strategic policy set by the Council.

Corporate Plan

9. A three year corporate plan, approved by the Council, sets out the key objectives to be achieved in fulfilling its strategic aims. This is underpinned by an annual business plan detailing the operational activities and budget necessary to achieve those objectives. The corporate plan is reviewed annually and may be revised in light of new developments, external or internal. In December 2009, the Council approved a Corporate Plan for 2010-2013.

10. Each part of the governance structure plays a key role in developing and delivering the corporate plan.

Scheme of Delegation

11. The Scheme of Delegation (set out in full in Annex 3) details all the GOsC's responsibilities under the Act. It specifies where responsibility for ensuring the achievement of the GOsC's statutory responsibilities lies. Some responsibilities, such as the making of rules, are reserved to the Council. Delegation might be to the Chief Executive, in her capacity as Registrar or a head of staff, or to a Committee. The Scheme of Delegation also sets out the authority delegated to committees from the Council, outside of that provided for in the Act.
12. Other than where functions are specifically delegated to committees, the Council regards the Chief Executive & Registrar as its main point of delegation and holds the post-holder accountable for implementing its strategic objectives, including the effective management of the organisation. The Chief Executive & Registrar may delegate functions to other staff but will be held accountable by the Council for the discharge of all functions delegated under the Scheme.
13. The Scheme of delegation sets out:
 - matters reserved to the Council
 - matters delegated to the Chair of the Council
 - matters delegated to statutory and non-statutory committees
 - matters delegated to ad hoc working groups
 - matters delegated to the Chief Executive & Registrar which may also be carried out by persons nominated by the Chief Executive & Registrar

14. Withdrawal of delegated power

The Scheme remains in force subject to amendment or revocation by the Council. It is reviewed by the Council annually.

15. Exercise of delegated power

Where power is delegated under the Scheme, the power must be exercised in a manner which is consistent with the GOsC's statutory objective, other relevant legislation and the Council's current corporate plan.

Finance Procedures

16. The purpose of the GOsC's Finance Procedures (set out in full in Annex 3) is to ensure the proper use of resources and effective maintenance of assets. The Finance Procedures set out the policies adopted by the Council to ensure financial control to comply with legal obligations and accounting standards.

4. Induction, Education and Training

Members' Induction

1. All members will be required to undertake a programme of induction and training as soon as possible after appointment or, where possible, in advance of the appointment date (see Standing Orders (Annex 2) and the Council Constitution Order and the Statutory Committees' Rules). The programme will aim to ensure that members are fully aware of the implications of the GOsC's statutory role and members' responsibilities in discharging that role, whether as members of the Council or of committees. The training will cover the legislation governing the GOsC and other relevant law including anti-discrimination legislation, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All members will be required to undertake Equality and Diversity awareness training.
2. As part of the induction, members will be introduced to the day-to-day work of the GOsC and will have an opportunity to meet key stakeholders to discuss relevant issues.

Ongoing training of members of the Council and committees

3. Training needs will be kept under review and the GOsC will provide further training where this is necessary during the terms of office of members. Provision of training will be through a mix of external and internal sources, depending on the subject matter.

Appraisal of performance

4. All members of the Council and members of committees are expected to participate fully in the GOsC's appraisal process.
5. Details of the appraisal scheme are set out at Annex 3.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Use of the Council's Corporate Seal

1. The seal is held in a secure location, and the Chief Executive & Registrar maintains a written record of each document made under seal.

Remuneration for members of the Governance Structure

2. Members of the Council are paid an annual fee as set out below::

Chair	£22,440
Council members	£6,630

An additional responsibility allowance is payable to the Treasurer and the Chairs of the Education and Audit Committees as follows:

Treasurer	£5,000 per annum
Chair of Education and Audit Committees	£2,000 per annum

All members have their expenses reimbursed in accordance with the remuneration policy set out in Annex 3.

3. Committee members who are not members of the Council and members co-opted to committees are paid a daily allowance of £306 based on actual attendance; they will also be reimbursed for expenses incurred (Annex 3).
4. Annual fees, daily attendance rates and expenses will be reviewed annually in line with selected external benchmarks e.g. the recommendations of the Senior Salaries Review Body. The SSRB makes recommendations to Government in relation to Senior Civil Service posts, taking into account not only changes in inflation and the retail price index, but also other changes which affect the pay of those with roles which have a significant element of public service.