



General
Osteopathic
Council

General Osteopathic Council

Invitation to Tender:

Revision of Registration Assessments used by the General Osteopathic Council to meet revised Osteopathic Practice Standards

Purpose

1. The purpose of this invitation to tender is to review and update the assessment criteria and guidelines for the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) registration assessments and to deliver training on the revised criteria and guidelines to the GOsC registration assessors.

Background

2. On 1 July 2012, the GOsC published a revised set of practice standards of competence, conduct and ethics known as *[Osteopathic Practice Standards](#)* (OPS) (Annex A). This replaces the current *[Standard of Proficiency \(Standard 2000\)](#)* (Annex B) and the *[Code of Practice \(2005\)](#)* (Annex C). The OPS will become effective on 1 September 2012.
3. The OPS outlines the standards of practice that the GOsC requires for all osteopaths to be entered onto our Register from 1 September 2012. Osteopaths must continue to meet these standards in order to maintain registration with the GOsC and practise lawfully in the UK. Any assessments undertaken by the GOsC will use the OPS as the basis of the assessment criteria against which participants are assessed.
4. Further information on the development of the Osteopathic Practice Standards is provided on the GOsC website: <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/practice/standards-of-practice/>.
5. During the intervening period between the publication and the implementation of the OPS the GOsC will be ensuring that its processes and requirements are benchmarked against the new set of standards – the Osteopathic Practice Standards. This tender forms a part of this programme of work.
6. This document invites tenders from experts in assessment to deliver:
 - Revised assessment criteria against the OPS in both written and practical assessments.
 - Revised assessment criteria against the OPS in return to practise assessments.
 - Training to the whole pool of assessors.

Background to Osteopathy in the UK

The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC)

7. The primary purpose of the regulation of health professionals is to ensure the safety of patients and the general public. The GOSc regulates the practice of osteopathy in the United Kingdom and is governed by the [Osteopaths Act 1993 \(as amended\)](#). By law osteopaths must be registered with the GOSc in order to practise in the UK.
 - The GOSc keeps the [Register](#) of all those permitted to practise osteopathy in the UK.
 - We work with the public and osteopathic profession to promote patient safety and we set, maintain and develop [standards](#) of osteopathic training, practice and conduct.
 - We also assure the quality of osteopathic education and ensure that osteopaths undertake [continuing professional development](#).
 - We help patients with any [concerns or complaints](#) about an osteopath and have the power to remove from the Register any osteopaths who are unfit to practise.

Osteopathy

8. Osteopaths are primary healthcare practitioners who work mainly in the independent sector, although pockets within the NHS also offer osteopathy.
9. Osteopaths are able to undertake an initial consultation with any patient. This includes taking a case history, performing an examination of the patient, formulating a differential diagnosis and undertaking treatment where appropriate. Osteopaths are trained to refer patients to other healthcare professionals when they are unable to provide a diagnosis or where they may not be the most appropriate professional to manage an underlying condition (although they may still provide treatment to the individual referred).
10. Using many of the diagnostic procedures applied in conventional medical assessment, osteopaths seek to restore the optimal functioning of the body, where possible without the use of drugs or surgery. Osteopathy is based on the principle that the body has the ability to self-heal, and osteopathic care usually focuses on strengthening the musculoskeletal systems to treat existing conditions and to prevent illness. There are also a range of different approaches to osteopathy.
11. Osteopaths' patient-centred approach to health and well-being means they consider symptoms in the context of the patient's full medical history, as well as their lifestyle and personal circumstances. This holistic approach ensures that all treatment and management is tailored to the individual patient.
12. Some consider that this holistic approach is best described in terms of the 'bio-psycho-social'¹ model of health. However, this model has also been criticised. Some have argued that the model promotes artificial distinctions between biology and

¹ See for example Frankel R et al, *The Biopsychosocial Approach: Past, Present and Future*, 2003, University of Rochester, New York, 2003

psychology which are not helpful to the holistic approach.² However, others consider that there are other models which better describe this approach, for example, medical humanism³ and ⁴.

13. For the purposes of this work, it is important to highlight that some of the treatments used by osteopaths include manipulation. Other professions may also use a form of manipulation, for example, physiotherapists, chiropractors and podiatrists. The distinction with osteopathy relates to the holistic and osteopathic way in which techniques may be applied to patients to achieve particular treatment goals.

14. There are currently around 4600 osteopaths on the GOsC Register.

GOsC Registration Assessments

15. Currently the GOsC undertakes assessment exercises to support its registration processes and, in some circumstances, its fitness to practise processes. These include the following:

- Written and clinical assessments for non-UK qualified osteopaths.
- Clinical assessments prescribed by Fitness to Practise panels.
- Return to practice interviews for those who have been non-practising for two years or more.

16. Further details of the GOsC staged registration processes can be found on the pages of the Registration pages of the GOsC website: [Annex D](#).

Written Assessments

17. Written assessments form one of the assessment stages which may be applied to non-UK qualified osteopaths once qualifications have been verified. Currently the written assessment is undertaken by applicants completing a 'Further Evidence of Practice' questionnaire – [Annex E](#). There are currently four appointed assessors for written assessment and each submission is reviewed by two of these assessors.

18. The current Written Assessment guidelines for this process are attached at [Annex F](#).

² See for example, Tavakoli T, A Closer evaluation of current methods in psychiatric assessments: A challenge for the biopsychosocial model, 2009, v6(2) Psychiatry (Edgmont), 25-30

³ See for example the Institute of Medical Humanism website at <http://www.communicationinmedicine.org/programs/medicalhumanist.html> accessed on 12 January 2012.

⁴ See also The biopsychosocial model--have we made any progress since 1977? Article available at http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-5416895/The-biopsychosocial-model-have-we.html, Families, Systems and Health, December 2005, and accessed on 12 January 2012.

Clinical Assessments

19. Successful completion of the written assessment will normally allow the candidate to undertake an Assessment of Clinical Performance (ACP). The ACP guidelines are attached at [Annex G](#). There are currently nine appointed assessors for the ACP. Two assessors and one moderator take part in the assessment of each candidate.

Return to Practice Process

20. The GOsC Return to Practice assessment is applied to registered osteopaths who have been 'non-practising' for a period of two years or more. The Return to Practice guidance is provided at [Annex H](#). Two assessors from a pool of three take part in the assessment of each candidate.

Deliverables of the Project

21. The deliverables of the tender are as follows:

- a. To deliver a scoping report.
- b. To develop appropriate assessment criteria and guidance for the written 'Further Evidence of Practice' assessment against the Osteopathic Practice Standards, effectively liaising with the pool of osteopathic assessors.
- c. To develop appropriate supporting materials and deliver training to the four written assessors in the new standards and assessment criteria.
- d. To develop appropriate assessment criteria and guidelines for the Assessment of Clinical Performance (ACP) against the Osteopathic Practice Standards effectively liaising with the pool of osteopathic assessors.
- e. To develop appropriate supporting materials and deliver training to the nine ACP assessors in the new standards and assessment criteria.
- f. To develop appropriate assessment criteria and guidelines for the Return to Practice process effectively liaising with the pool of osteopathic assessors.
- g. To deliver appropriate supporting materials and training to the three Return to Practice assessors in the new standards and assessment criteria.
- h. To deliver all revised criteria, guidelines and supporting materials by 31 July 2012.
- i. To deliver all training by 1 September 2012.

22. We have set out a proposed timetable below. However, we are willing to be flexible on timings provided that the criteria, guidelines and materials are all in place for 31 August 2012.

Date	Deliverable	Payment to be proposed
April 2012	Delivery of Scoping Report	£x
July 2012	Delivery of draft assessment criteria, guidance and supporting materials for the following registration assessments: written assessment, assessment of clinical performance and return to practice.	£x
August/ September 2012	Delivery of training sessions.	£x

Instructions to tenderers

23. We are inviting any interested party to submit a proposal (the 'Tender Proposal') to undertake the revision of the Registration Assessments – as outlined above in paragraphs 15 to 20 - used by the General Osteopathic Council following the publication of Osteopathic Practice Standards.

24. It is expected that the tenderer will include liaison and consultation with the whole pool of assessors as part of the delivery of the revision of the criteria and guidelines outlined in this piece of work.

25. The tender proposal should clearly identify:

- a. Previous relevant experience and professional information on the team/organisation wishing to tender.
- b. A realistic and deliverable plan with milestones and schedules including dates indicating how the proposed deliverables and timetable as outlined in paragraphs 21 and 22 will be met. This plan must include liaison and consultation with the whole pool of osteopathic assessors to ensure that the criteria are appropriately informed. The plan may be modified through discussion with GOsC before being finalised.
- c. The basis of the budget.
- d. The management responsibility for the project indicating clearly the person who will be accountable for delivery of the project and for managing risk.
- e. A single point of contact for all correspondence relating to the project.
- f. Compliance with ethical principles and data protection requirements.
- g. Affirmation that intellectual property rights will rest with GOsC.

Submission instructions

26. The specifications for the tender, budget and contract are set out in this document and the attached annexes.
27. The tender must be received in a sealed envelope on or before **12:00hrs on 10 February 2012**. Five paper copies of the tender and one electronic copy of the tender are required and should be sent to:

Joy Bolt
Professional Standards Officer
General Osteopathic Council
Osteopathy House
176 Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 3LU
Email: jbolt@osteopathy.org.uk
Tel: 020 7357 6655 ext. 238

28. This invitation to tender does not represent an offer, representation or agreement and does not imply that agreement will be entered into.
29. The General Osteopathic Council will not pay for any expenses or losses incurred in the preparation of the tender proposal.
30. The General Osteopathic Council will not bind itself to accept the lowest tender.
31. No tender will be deemed to have been accepted until such acceptance has been notified to the tenderer in writing.
32. The General Osteopathic Council does not warrant that the information in this document is accurate, complete or updated. However it will take reasonable steps to ensure that it is.
33. The tenderers shall assist and co-operate with the General Osteopathic Council (at their sole expense) to enable the General Osteopathic Council to comply with any information disclosure requirements contained in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and any other relevant information.
34. The General Osteopathic Council will determine at its absolute discretion whether any information in connection with this Tender (including commercially sensitive information) is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of relevant legislation.
35. In carrying out the activities anyone acting on behalf of the General Osteopathic Council must comply with the law for the time being in force in the United Kingdom.

Attention is drawn in particular to the need to avoid committing any act of discrimination rendered unlawful by the Equality Act 2010.

36. Attention is also drawn to the obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Tenderers should also note that any liability incurred under health and safety legislation, or liability for redundancy or unfair dismissal under employment legislation, will be their responsibility. If there is any doubt over any of the above mentioned matters, legal advice should be sought.

Budget

37. A **maximum** budget of £20,000 is available for this work. This sum of money will be paid in installments on delivery of deliverables.

Evaluation of the Tender

38. The tender proposal will be evaluated using the following criteria:
- a. Background and experience of the team/organisation. Does the team/organisation have a track record of undertaking similar work? Does the team/organisation have capacity to undertake the work? In undertaking the elements of this project, it is likely that a variety of people with a variety of skills and disciplines will be helpful.
 - b. Evidence that the tenderer understands the project specifically and osteopathy in general.
 - c. Goals / Objective: Will the tender proposal deliver the requirements?
 - d. Are appropriate methods and disciplines used?
 - e. Are the timescales proposed timely and sufficient to ensure that the quality of work is not compromised?
 - f. Does the proposed tender demonstrate value for money?
 - g. Demonstration of commitment to ethical principles and equality and diversity.
 - h. Ability to comply with our terms and conditions.

Contract timetable

39. The tender proposal should set out a detailed preliminary schedule that indicates realistic and final deadlines:

Issue of invitation to tender	12 January 2012
Return of Tenders	10 February 2012
Shortlisting	Week commencing 13 February 2012
Interviews	22 February 2012 in London
Preferred Tenderer Appointment confirmation	Week commencing 27 February 2012
Contracts to be signed by	Week commencing 12 March 2012

ANNEXES

ANNEX A – [*Osteopathic Practice Standards*](#)

ANNEX B – [*Standard of Proficiency \(Standard 2000\)*](#)

ANNEX C – [*Code of Practice \(2005\)*](#)

ANNEX D – [Registration Process](#)

ANNEX E – [Further Evidence of Practice questionnaire](#)

ANNEX F – [Written assessment guidelines and assessment criteria](#)

ANNEX G – [Assessment of Clinical Performance Guidelines](#)

ANNEX H – [Return to Practice Guidelines](#)