



Policy and Education Committee

**Minutes of the Policy and Education Committee (PEC) held in private on
Tuesday 29 June 2021, hosted via Go-to-Meeting video conference**

Unconfirmed

Chair: Professor Deborah Bowman

Present: Daniel Bailey
Dr Marvelle Brown
Sarah Botterill
Bob Davies
Elizabeth Elander
Dr Joan Martin
Professor Raymond Playford
Nick Woodhead

In attendance: Steven Bettles, Policy Manager, Professional Standards
Duncan Clarke, Mott McDonald (from Item 4)
Fiona Browne, Director of Education, Standards and Development
(Director, ESD)
Kabir Kareem, Quality Assurance Liaison Officer (QALO)
Michelle McDaid, Quality Assurance, Project Director, Mott
McDonald (from Item 4)
Matthew Redford, Chief Executive and Registrar (CE)
Marcia Scott, Council and Executive Support Officer
Holly Sheppard, Mott McDonald (from Item 4)

Observer/s Dr Bill Gunnyeon, Chair of Council (from Item 4)

Item 1: Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.
2. There were no apologies.

Item 2: Minutes and matters arising from the meeting of 30 March 2021

3. The minutes of the meeting 30 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record.
4. There were no matters arising from this meeting.

Item 3: Committee Survey and reflections (reserved item)

The notes of this discussion have been written under separate cover and reserved for members of the PEC, members of Council, and the Executive only.

Item 4: Quality Assurance – Pilot Annual Report Template 2020-21 (reserved)

The Quality Assurance Liaison Officer introduced the item which sought the Committee's approval of the Pilot Annual Report template based on the draft standards for education and training.

5. The following points were highlighted:
 - a. The paper reviews the rationale for a change in approach to the annual reporting process for 2020-21 linking to the draft Standards for Education and Training (SET) (as presented to the Committee's public meeting on 15 June 2021).
 - b. A revised format for the Annual Report 2020-21 is presented for agreement, along with a completed example of the revised format which has been shared with educational providers for feedback.
 - c. Representatives from Mott McDonald have confirmed that conversations have taken place to discuss the draft template and the completed example of the revised format.

6. The following points were made and responded to:
 - a. Members commended the work completed on the Annual Report template and the completed example of the revised format.
 - b. It was confirmed that there were still some reporting areas that needed to be incorporated into the Annual Report template including areas of innovation and enhancement. It was confirmed that quantifiable data would continue to be reported and not be lost under the new framework.
 - c. It was suggested that there could be more specifically included on student achievement and how prepared graduates will be in meeting the requirements of the Osteopathic Practice Standards when transitioning into practice. Although it was also noted that the OEI's responsibility was to the point of graduation.
 - d. It was confirmed that following discussions with the OEIs they were all happy to pilot the new Annual Review format as it was now considered there was more clarity about what is required from the institutions to complete the review. It was acknowledged that in the first-year institutions might experience some difficulties in using and completing the new format. It was

also acknowledged that completing the review would initially be time-consuming but would subsequently become easier due to the consistency in the information required and also, in the long run, it would support a more streamlined RQ process.

- e. It was explained that student data would be collected and be reported but as yet had not been transferred to the template. As the process is being changed it needed to be agreed between the GOsC, Mott McDonald and the OEIs who would receive the data for analysis.
- f. It was suggested that there should be more granularity relating to resources and the staff to student ratios making clear how many faculty members are osteopaths and what is the full time equivalent (FTE) positions.

7. The Chair summarised:

- a. The Committee commended the team for their excellent work on the Annual Report Template and are supportive of the pilot and approach.
- b. The recognition that the Annual Report 2020-21 is a pilot and that in the first year there will be a need to support the OEIs participation in the scheme.
- c. Recognition of the issues of staff to student ratio ensuring the equivalency to FTE.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Annual Report Template 2020-21 using the draft Standards for Education and Training.

Item 5: Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions' (COEI) letter and response and next steps (reserved)

- 8. The Chair introduced the item concerning the Committee response to the letter from the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions dated 29 March 2021.
- 9. The key messages from the item:
 - a. The paper provides a space for the Committee to consider its response to the letter from COEI to the Chair of the Committee dated 29 March 2021 about the Annual Report process.
 - b. The acknowledgement letter from the Chair dated 16 April 2021 was provided for background and context.
- 10. In discussion the following points were made and responded to:
 - a. It was noted that the many of the concerns raised by COEI had been addressed since the exchange of correspondence. It was agreed that a letter would be drafted by the Director of Education, Development and Standards, for signature by the PEC Chair, informing COEI that a discussion had taken

place to consider the issues raised and a dialogue would continue so as to ensure an understanding of the issues concerning the OEIs.

- b. Members agreed that the pilot of the Annual Reporting Template using the draft Standards for Education and Training would go some way in addressing some of the concerns which had been raised by COEI.

Noted: The Committee considered the response to the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions letter dated 29 March 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a letter to COEI will be drafted for signature by the Chair to confirm that discussions had taken place addressing the issues raised in the COEI letter dated 29 March 2021.

Item 6: Quality Assurance programme from 2020 to 2025: Developing a risk model for quality assurance (reserved)

11. The Quality Assurance Liaison Officer introduced the item which considered the development of a risk-based model for quality assurance.

12. Key messages from this item:

- a. The paper updated the Committee on progress in relation to the development of an enhanced risk-based approach to quality assurance for osteopathic education, and sought feedback to inform the development of a risk model.
- b. A number of changes had taken place since March 2020 including the introduction of the Standards of Education and Training, which will contribute to the final outcome on this work.

13. In discussion the following points were made and responded to:

- a. In response to a question about transparency and the information made available to students where there may be concerns about an institution, it was explained that if there was a serious concern which might lead to the removal of an Recognised Qualification (RQ) this would be included on the public agenda for consideration by the PEC and subsequently Council. It was also highlighted that there was a need of not impacting on the commercial interest of an institution disproportionately. The GOsC is moving towards being able to publish an action plan and is reaching a stage with the institutions where they have a strong enough quality management system so that issues can be agreed, monitored, managed and so that it is transparent, and can be agreed by the OEIs and the Committee.
- b. It was agreed that further thought would be given to demonstrate that meeting the requirements of the OPS and achieving an RQ was not based on a single point as suggested in the model but was a continuous process.

- c. Members were informed that resources were available to assist OEIs who might be under greater scrutiny in the management of its risk. Based on the review the right amount of resource will be allocated incrementally and at the time it is required and where the risk levels have been identified.
- d. The Chair commented that the model demonstrates how the OEIs can be empowered to improve their own quality and quality assurance mechanisms, and how they can evolve to change their 'risk status'.

Noted: The Committee considered and provided feedback on the current approach to the development of a risk model.

Item 10: London School of Osteopathy (LSO) – Annual report update (reserved)

- 14. This item was taken prior to consideration of Item 7 to inform discussion on that item.
- 15. No interests were declared.
- 16. The Quality Assurance Liaison Officer introduced the item which gave an update from the London School of Osteopathy (LSO) in relation to the issues raised in the analysis of the Annual Report submitted in December 2020 for the 2019-20 reporting period.
- 17. The following points were highlighted:
 - a. the decision made by the LSO Academic Council with regard to the minimum number of hours M.Ost students are required to complete which remains at 1200 hours; and
 - b. confirmation that LSO have formally submitted their student protection plans one with the validating University and one with COEI.
- 18. The Committee had no additional comments concerning this item and agreed the recommendations.

The Committee agreed:

- a. that the LSO has provided confirmation regarding the clinical hours for the MOst course and the governance processes behind this;**
- b. that the LSO has provided clarification regarding the student protection plan and memorandum of understanding agreed with COEI in this respect;**

and that no further action is required.

Item 7: Quality Assurance – Removal of RQ Expiry Dates (reserved)

19. No interests were declared.
20. The Quality Assurance Liaison Officer introduced the item which provided the Committee with an update on the progress of the removal of expiry data and to agree the removal of RQ expiry date for the London School of Osteopathy.
21. The key messages from the paper were:
 - a. The paper presents the process for decision making regarding the removal of expiry dates for Recognised Qualification programmes.
 - b. the status of programmes which currently have expiry dates;
 - c. the Executive's rationale for considering the eligibility of individual OEIs and RQ programme for removal of expiry RQ expiry;
 - d. and recommends that the Committee agree to recommend to Council that the London School of Osteopathy (LSO) programmes are eligible for the removal of expiry dates.
22. The Committee had no additional comments and agreed the recommendations as set out.

The Committee:

- a. **Noted the updates provided with regard to the removal of RQ expiry dates and eligibility status of individual OEIs.**
- b. **Agreed to recommend that Council recognises the qualifications (Master of Osteopathy and Bachelor of Osteopathy, full and part time) awarded by the London School of Osteopathy, with no expiry date and with no conditions and to seek approval of the recognition from the Privy Council.**
- c. **Agreed to publish the LSO Action Plan attached set out.**

Post meeting note: Following this meeting, the Chair agreed that the item will be considered at the November Council meeting, rather than July, to enable a GOsC process to complete.

Item 8: European School of Osteopathy (ESO) and British College of Osteopathic Medicine (BCOM) Merger and ESO Annual Report updates (reserved)

23. Professor Ray Playford declared an interest and did not participate in this discussion.

24. The Policy Manager introduced the item gave an update of the progress of the BCOM / ESO merger and next steps, and an update on the existing matters in the institutions.

25. The following points were highlighted:

BCOM/ESO Merger:

- a. The report outlined progress and latest plans in regard to the proposed merger of the BCOM and ESO.
- b. A draft RQ specification was provided for the Committee's approval and it is confirmed that the University of Plymouth is to be the validating body.
- c. It was confirmed that BCNO Ltd (BCOM) would be the lead in the merged BCOM/ESO entity.
- d. The target date for the merger is 1 September 2021, and during the merger process a shadow board will oversee governance processes.

European School of Osteopathy

- e. Evidence submitted confirms that external examiners from both validating universities confirm the maintenance of the OPS requirements during the 2019-20 academic year and the adaptations due to COVID.
- f. Data does not suggest that Brexit poses a risk to the sustainability of the programme and ESO have continued to implement their targeted marketing strategies.
- g. The analysis of the ESO's 2019/20 financial accounts shows a small deficit for this year. However, there are no specific recommendations arising from this, but financial sustainability is a part of the RQ specification for the merger of both institutions.

26. The following points were made and responded to:

- a. It was confirmed that the figure of £15,000 was the approximate cost of a Visit for any institution. It was also confirmed that the additional RQ was a result of the merger between BCOM/ESO.
- b. It was explained that the new structure for the new BCOM/ESO entity was not entirely clear at this stage and the final outcome is not known. The process for managing the process has been set out by the institutions but because the merger is of significance the governance and management mechanisms forms part of, and is highlighted in the RQ specification.
- c. In response to concerns about the physical distance between the sites of the ESO and BCOM, the centralisation of services and the impact this would

have on students it was explained that the institutions would retain their brand identities but as part of the programme for example, ESO students might take up placements at the BCOM clinic as part of the of the programme.

- d. A concern was also raised about the student experience and how it would be monitored. It was explained that the institutions had indicated that they had been fully transparent in communications and setting out the rationale with all stakeholders. It was acknowledged that at present the arrangements appeared complicated but as this is a new programme there would be continuous monitoring of progress. This point is included in the RQ specification for agreement by the Committee.

The Committee:

- a. Noted the updates provided in regard to the merger between BCOM and ESO.**
- b. Agreed the initial review specification for the review of the new combined BCOM/ESO programme.**
- c. Noted the annual report progress updates submitted by the ESO as requested by the Committee at the March 2021 meeting.**
- d. Noted that the ESO have submitted the accounts of the 2019/20 financial year.**

Item 9: North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) - Annual Report update (reserved)

27. The Quality Assurance Liaison Officer introduced the item which concerned Nescot and the Annual Report progress updates relating to collection and analysis of student feedback, the strategic plan and the impact of Brexit requested by the Committee at the March 2021 meeting.
28. The following points were highlighted:
 - a. The processes used by the College to formally collect student feedback during the academic year and the multiple mechanisms used to collect and analyse data.
 - b. The new draft five-year Higher Education Strategic Plan, which clearly shows that the Osteopathy RQ Programme is a core part of the College's long-term strategic vision and priorities.
 - c. The impact of Brexit and the future of the programme. This is being considered as part of the strategic plan and there is evidence that Nescot are implementing measures to mitigate the impact on the RQ Programme.

- d. The next recruitment phase would eliminate the fallow year which had been an issue for Nescot.
29. The Committee acknowledged and were encouraged by the progress which had been made by Nescot.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the requests made in relation to the collection and analysis of student feedback, the strategic plan and the impact of Brexit have been provided and that no further action is required.

Item 11: Any other business

30. There was no other business.

Item 12: Arrangements for future meetings and the Date of the next meeting

31. In May 2020 it was agreed that while Osteopathy House remained closed due to the COVID pandemic restrictions the meetings of the PEC would continue by remote means and its business split over two half-day sessions, one public and one private. With the anticipation of the restrictions being lifted the Committee were asked to consider:
- a. if it should return to single one-day meetings,
 - b. if the current arrangements should remain, or
 - c. if there should be a blended approach to the meetings.
32. Conducting two half-day meetings had worked well to date allowing more time for preparation of papers and reducing the number of papers being received for a single one-day meeting, and reducing the travel time and costs.
33. Members expressed a preference for the split meetings but raised the issue of travel and cost if both sessions were arranged as face-to-face meetings. It was suggested that the public session should be arranged as a face-to-face meeting giving members the opportunity to meet in person and interact as a group, and that the private session be conducted by remote means.
34. It was confirmed that the Council Chamber is set up with the appropriate technology to facilitate blended meetings. It was also confirmed that Osteopathy House (OH) is COVID secure and that the Council Chamber, like all desk spaces throughout OH, is set-up with screen dividers.
35. It was acknowledged that there is a balance to strike in the number of in-person and remote meetings and further consideration is required as to what would work best for all.

36. The Chair of Council commented that it would be important to learn from the experiences since March 2020, and the implementation of COVID restrictions. There are advantages and disadvantages to holding remote meetings and these need to be considered.

Ideas being considered for Council and the Committees:

- a. It is planned for Committees to meet four times per year to fit in with the cycle of Council meetings.
- b. It is considered that Council best benefits from face-to-face meetings. The arrangements for the committees are a little more complex but it is considered that the Audit Committee and the Remuneration and Appointments Committee should meet three times per year by remote means with one face-to-face meeting annually.
- c. The PEC is slightly more complex and would require some further thought by the Chair and members.

37. The PEC Chair noted:

- a. The importance of maintaining the PECs effectiveness and quality of discussion.
- b. The advantages of the public / private split.
- c. Ensuring inclusivity and maximising participation.

38. It was suggested that the PEC October public meeting should be face-to-face and the private session take place by remote means. The Chair would prepare a proposal to be discussed at the October meeting to consider the meetings schedule for 2021-22 with the intention to aim for split meetings and one full day meeting and consider hybrid sessions moving forward.

Noted: the next public meeting of the PEC will take place on 7 October 2021, at Osteopathy House.

Noted: the next private meeting of the PEC will take place by remote means on a date to be confirmed.

Noted: The Chair will prepare a proposal for the PEC to consider which setting the plans for the future sessions of the Committee.

Post meeting note: Subsequent consideration of the proposed agenda items for the October Committee demonstrated that an in-person meeting on 7 October to consider both agendas should still conclude by 2:30. This proposal is being put to members.