



Council
2 May 2017
Policy Advisory Committee evaluation

Classification	Public
Purpose	For discussion
Issue	A review of the operation of the Policy Advisory Committee after its first 12 months of operation
Recommendation	To provide feedback to the Executive on the future operation of the Policy Advisory Committee.
Financial and resourcing implications	Any changes to the membership or meeting schedule of Committees will need to be accommodated within the existing governance budget.
Equality and diversity implications	None identified.
Communications implications	None at present.
Annexes	Policy Advisory Committee terms of reference
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Background

1. At its meeting in May 2016, Council agreed that it would establish a new Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) that brought together the work of the Education and Registration Standards Committee (incorporating the work of the statutory Education Committee, pre-registration education, registration and standards policy) and the existing Osteopathic Practice Committee (OPC). The terms of reference of the PAC can be found at the Annex.
2. Members will recall that this Committee is made up as follows:
 - a. Five members of Council
 - b. Four external members
 - c. Four observers to the Committee.

In addition, for its first year of operation one member who was an independent appointee to the OPC was co-opted to the PAC until the end of his term of appointment.

3. Council also agreed to include in the 2016-17 Business Plan that it would carry out a review of the PAC at the end of the first year and report to Council.
4. This report draws together feedback from members of the PAC, the observers who have participated throughout the year and the views of the Executive, and invites views on the future operation of the Committee.

Discussion

Establishment of the PAC

5. In considering the future operation of the Committee, it is worth recapping on the way in which the GOSc's committees have evolved over time.
6. The Education Committee as defined by statute has a role that is limited to:
 - a. Advising Council on the recognition of qualifications (and on their withdrawal)
 - b. Appointing and managing the performance of visitors
 - c. Exercising powers to require information from osteopathic educational institutions.

Over time the role of the Education Committee was expanded to embrace policy issues such as research, revalidation/CPD and registration assessments. The Education Committee met four times each year.

7. In addition, at various times the GOsC has operated other committees, most recently a Fitness to Practise Policy Committee, the latter operating from 2010-12.
8. In 2012 a decision was taken to create two committees: Education and Registration Standards Committee (incorporating the role of the Education Committee); and Osteopathic Practice Committee (incorporating the role of the then Fitness to Practice Policy Committee). These Committees were established with an overlap of membership, met on the same day three times a year and, on some occasions, considered some of the same items.
9. The decision taken in 2016 to have a single committee reflected the view that having a single group of people inputting to policy considerations as well as making the statutory decisions would be helpful. It was also felt that it would be possible to consider all of the business required within a single meeting of a similar length to the Council meeting, taking place three times a year.

Workload of the PAC

10. The number of items considered at each of the three PAC meetings in 2016-17 is set out in the table below.

	June 2016	October 2016	March 2017
General items			
Decision	0	2	1
Discussion	3	6	7
Noting	5	2	0
Statutory Education Committee items (public)			
Decision	0	5	1
Discussion	0	0	0
Noting	2	0	0
Statutory Education Committee items (private)			
Decision	6	4	8
Discussion	0	0	2
Noting	2	0	0
Total number of items for discussion/decision	9	17	19

Feedback from attendees at the PAC

11. In early April a survey was sent to all those who were members of the PAC in 2016-17 and all those who had attended as observers in the course of the year. The survey asked about the role of the Committee, what worked well or could be improved, and the role of observers.
12. Responses were received from five Council members, three external members and three observers.
13. Although some respondents were very clear about the role of the Committee, others indicated some measure of confusion about its role. These views varied between the need to clearly connect the education role and other areas of work, and, more commonly, having a lack of clarity about whether the Committee existed to be a sounding board or a pre-scrutiny body for Council decisions.
14. The quality of the papers and chairing were commended by a number of respondents. It was also noted that the level of engagement among attendees had been high and that the widened membership had supported this and served to 'demystify' the process. One respondent was unclear as to the success criteria for the Committee so judged it difficult to be sure of what had worked well.
15. Concerns was expressed about the length of papers and whether some of the Education Committee items had been given sufficient time. There was also a view that the Committee should be used more as a forum for sounding out ideas. Suggestions for improving papers included: producing a key issues summary for longer papers; avoiding acronyms/jargon; focusing Annual Report and RQ papers on key concerns.
16. The response of existing members to the involvement of observers was positive believing that they had broadened the input to discussions, although there was a view that they could make more of a contribution at times. All of the observers who responded believed that participation had been very useful for supporting their own organisations' work and they also valued the opportunity to provide input
17. There was majority support for continuing with the new format although one member preferred two committees. Two members thought that the name was confusing and should be changed. It was also suggested that a separate session for QA Annual Reports might be considered.

Operational considerations/conclusions

18. The GOsC's only statutory requirement is to have an Education Committee (or a body carrying out that function), including external members, to undertake the functions identified at paragraph 6 above. It is for Council to determine what additional input it wishes to have to the policy-making process and the architecture of the Committees to do this.

19. While Council has always sought to have additional input from Committees, it has been less clear about the extent to which the PAC's role 'to contribute to the development of Council policy' should be balanced between providing a sounding board for early stage policy or strategy development, 'pre-clearing' new initiatives on behalf of Council, or scrutinising ongoing projects. Guidance from Council on this balance will enable the Executive to work with the Chair of Council and the Chair of the Committee to seek to obtain the maximum value from the Committee's members and attendees.
20. The additional input from observers appears to have been valued on both sides. However, it should be noted that the GOsC's governance costs are already high, at just over 10% of total expenditure, and it is important to make best value of any additional expertise available to support Council. Creating new Committees or bringing in further external input would increase these costs.
21. The size, scope and presentation of papers always presents conflicting views. Helpful suggestions have been made for improvement, including seeking to shorten papers. However, it is important to balance this against the need for effective scrutiny particularly of the Statutory Education Committee decisions.
22. It may be possible to plan agendas so that there is a better balance of Committee workload across the year, particularly with regard to the March meeting which reviews the quality assurance Annual Reports for all osteopathic educational institutions. From a cost perspective, it is suggested that this should be the first approach adopted rather than increasing the number of meeting days.
23. If there is to be a single policy committee, then its name seems to be a minor consideration, and subject to periodic changes of view. At one time Council considered seeking amendment of the Osteopaths Act to rename the Education Committee the 'Professional Standards Committee'. Unless, there is a strong view expressed by Council it is suggested that this remains unchanged.

Recommendation: to consider the content of the report.

Policy Advisory Committee¹ (PAC)

Terms of reference

The role of the Policy Advisory Committee is to contribute to the development of Council policy. To do this it will:

- a. Advise Council on all matters of policy including:
 - i. The standards required for initial registration and appropriate means for assessing those standards.
 - ii. On all matters relating to pre-registration education and training of osteopaths, including the standards of osteopathic practice required for registration.
 - iii. Post-registration education and training, including the requirements for ensuring osteopaths remain fit to practise.
 - iv. The management, investigation and adjudication of concerns about the fitness to practise of registrants.
 - v. Matters relating to the exercise of powers under section 32 of the act (protection of title).
 - vi. The development of the osteopathic profession.
 - vii. Measures to encourage research and research dissemination within the osteopathic profession.
 - viii. Any research needs to support the GOsC's work.
- b. Take into account the decisions of fitness to practise committees, information from the PSA and other relevant sources, and external legal or other requirements.
- c. Ensure that policy development has been informed by effective engagement with the full range of the GOsC's stakeholders.
- d. Make an annual report for Council on the work of the Committee.

The Committee will also undertake the statutory functions that are reserved to the Education Committee, which are to:

¹ n.b. for the purposes of the Osteopaths Act 1993, the Policy Advisory Committee performs the role of the statutory Education Committee.

- a. Advise Council on the recognition of qualifications in accordance with section 14(6) of the Act.
- b. Appoint and manage the performance of visitors to conduct the evaluation of courses under section 12 of the Act.
- c. Advise Council on matters relating to the withdrawal of recognition of a qualification in accordance with sections 16(1) and 18(5) of the Act.
- d. Exercise powers to require information from osteopathic educational institutions in connection with its statutory functions in accordance with Section 18 of the Act.

Meeting Frequency

Three times yearly or more frequently if required. Some business may be appropriately conducted out of committee.

Membership

Ordinary members

- Five members of Council, of whom two shall be osteopaths and three shall be lay members. One of the lay members shall be appointed by Council to be Chair of the Committee
- Four members who are not members of Council.

Co-opted members

The Committee may co-opt up to five members in accordance with Rule 3 of the Statutory Committee Rules.

Observers with speaking rights

The member organisations of the Osteopathic Development Group are invited to send an observer with speaking rights to each meeting.

Observers may not take part in any part of the meeting where the business is that reserved to the Education Committee.

Quorum

Five, of which:

- at least one must be a lay person and one must be an osteopath
- at least two must be members of Council and two must be members who are not members of Council