



Council
18 November 2020
Swansea University - removal of expiry date from recognition of qualification

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	The removal of expiry date for the Master of Osteopathy recognised qualifications awarded by Swansea University.
Recommendation	To agree to recognise the qualification Master of Osteopathy awarded by Swansea University, with no expiry date and with no specific conditions, and to seek approval of the recognition from the Privy Council.
Financial and resourcing implications	There are no cost implications from the removal of the expiry date. The Policy and Education Committee (performing the role of the statutory Education Committee) will still require a periodic visit as part of its approach to quality assurance. This visit may take place at any point between year four and year six of the visit cycle instead of before the end of year five whilst the expiry date is in place.
Equality and diversity implications	None in relation to this particular issue
Communications implications	If the Council agree the recommendation in this paper and it is approved by the Privy Council, the revised approval order will be published on the website alongside the most recent recognised qualification (RQ) visit report. In addition to this, an action plan providing a current update about general conditions or requirements and any specific matters of interest to the Committee will be published on our website.
Annex(es)	None
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Key messages from this paper

- This paper sets out the background in relation to the removal of expiry dates for Recognised Qualifications, and summarises outcomes of the 2019 RQ renewal visit for Swansea University and subsequent actions and Committee/Council decisions, including:
 - Decision making by Committee/Council regarding removal of expiry dates;
 - Outcome of the 2019 RQ visit, and the subsequent imposition of a specific condition by the Committee;
 - Agreement that the specific condition had been met and could be monitored through standard annual reporting;
 - Summary of how Swansea University is now eligible to have its RQ expiry date removed, and a recommendation that this be agreed.

Background

1. Section 14(2) of the Osteopaths Act 1993 provides that 'where the Council is satisfied that ... a qualification granted by an institution in the United Kingdom is evidence of having a required standard of proficiency, it may, with the approval of the Privy Council, recognise that qualification for the purposes of this Act.'
2. Section 15(1) provides Council with a power but not a duty to impose a time period on a recognition of qualification.
3. Section 15(4) provides that 'The General Council may, in recognising a qualification under section 14, direct that the qualification is to remain a recognised qualification only so long as such conditions as the General Council sees fit to impose are complied with in relation to the qualification.' Again, this is a power not a duty.
4. On 17 July 2018, following a recommendation from the Policy Advisory Committee (now Policy Education Committee - 'the Committee': undertaking the functions of the statutory Education Committee), Council agreed:
 - the principle of removal of expiry dates and the approach of publication of 'conditions'
 - the approach to further development of the implementation process.
5. This approach was subsequently developed and agreed by the Committee as outlined in the Quality Assurance Agency / General Osteopathic Council Quality Assurance Handbook which outlines the process for quality assurance of institutions which have expiry dates removed. This Handbook is available at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/general-osteopathic-council-review#> and outlines a range of mechanisms for assuring

standards. The Quality Assurance Handbook is currently under review following the appointment of Mott MacDonald as quality assurance providers, but in the meantime, the provisions of the existing handbook will continue to apply, where applicable.

6. Section 14(6) of the Osteopaths Act 1993 provides that 'Before deciding whether or not to recognise a qualification under this section, the General Council shall consult the Education Committee.'
7. This paper considers the advice from the Education Committee. It outlines the Committee's recommendation that Council recognise the qualification Master of Osteopathy awarded by Swansea University with no expiry date. Swansea University is one of the nine educational institutions offering osteopathic qualifications which are recognised by the GOsC.

Discussion

8. The Committee agreed the RQ specification for the Swansea University RQ review on 12 June 2018, and also agreed the appointment of a team of three Education Visitors under s12 of the Osteopaths Act 1993 to undertake the review.
9. The visit took place in February 2019.
10. The visit report was drafted and sent to Swansea University on the 15 March 2019 for a period of no less than one month in accordance with the Osteopaths Act 1993.
11. Swansea University responded with factual corrections on 10 April 2019 and these were considered by the Education Visitors and incorporated into the final report.
12. The final report of the Visitors is available at: <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/about-the-gosc/swansea-university-gaa-report-2019/>. The recommendation of the Visitors for the programme was approval without conditions. This means that the visitors have determined that that the course will deliver graduates who meet the Osteopathic Practice Standards.
13. At the June 2019 Committee meeting, the Committee considered the Visitors' report and noted the strengths, good practice and areas for development outlined. However, members raised the issue of quality control as it appeared in different areas of the report where the institution did not appear to be adhering to its own quality control processes appropriately, and recommended the addition of a specific condition in this regard, requiring that: *'Swansea University develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that the actions arising from all quality assurance processes, both internal and external are consistently actioned and reviewed'*.

14. The Committee further agreed that, subject to the approval of Privy Council, Council recognises the Master of Osteopathy awarded by Swansea University from 15 December 2019 until 14 December 2024, subject to the above specific condition and also the general conditions as follows:

CONDITIONS	
a.	Swansea University develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that the actions arising from all quality assurance processes, both internal and external are consistently actioned and reviewed.
b.	Swansea University must submit an Annual Report, within a three month period of the date the request was first made, to the Education Committee of the General Council.
c.	<p>Swansea University must inform the Education Committee of the General Council as soon as practicable, of any change or proposed substantial change likely to influence the quality of the course leading to the qualification and its delivery, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substantial changes in finance • substantial changes in management • changes to the title of the qualification • changes to the level of the qualification • changes to franchise agreements • changes to validation agreements • changes to the length of the course and the mode of its delivery • substantial changes in clinical provision • changes in teaching personnel • changes in assessment • changes in student entry requirements • changes in student numbers (an increase or decline of 20 per cent or more in the number of students admitted to the course relative to the previous academic year should be reported) • changes in patient numbers passing through the student clinic (an increase or decline of 20 per cent in the number of patients passing through the clinic relative to the previous academic year should be reported) • changes in teaching accommodation changes in IT, library and other learning resource provision
d.	Swansea University must comply with the General Council's requirements for the assessment of the osteopathic clinical performance of students and its requirements for monitoring the quality and ensuring the standards of this assessment. These are outlined in the publication: <i>Subject Benchmark Statement: Osteopathy, 2015</i> , Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and <i>Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education, 2015</i> , General Osteopathic Council. The participation of real patients in a real clinical setting must be included in

	this assessment. Any changes in these requirements will be communicated in writing to the Swansea University giving not less than nine months notice.
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15. At its meeting in June 2019, the Committee also considered a paper recommending the removal of expiry date for Swansea University's 'recognised qualification'. The Committee agreed that Swansea University would not be eligible for the removal of the expiry date of its RQ as there was now a specific condition in place which they would be required to meet following consideration of the RQ approval.
16. On the 17 July 2019, Council agreed to renew the recognition of the qualification outlined in this paper and this was subsequently approved by the Privy Council.
17. At its meeting in October 2019, the Committee agreed that the requirements of the condition '*Swansea University must develop and implement a mechanism to ensure that actions arising from all quality assurance processes, both internal and external, are consistently actioned and reviewed*', had been fulfilled and the effectiveness of the mechanisms implemented will be monitored as part of the 2019 annual monitoring submission.

Removal of expiry date

18. For established osteopathic educational institutions that are eligible for recognition without expiry date, the general policy is for visits to take place between years four and six of the visit cycle unless there are any serious concerns. The Committee has recommended that the qualifications Master of Osteopathy qualification awarded by Swansea University with no expiry dates and no specific conditions.
19. On 14 October 2020, the Committee agreed that Swansea University was eligible for removal of its expiry date. The Committee also considered the format and content of the action plan to be published alongside the RQ order with the expiry date removed.
20. There are no outstanding issues of concern which require reconsideration of the decision to remove the expiry date from the Swansea RQ.
21. It is the duty of the Committee to bring to the attention of Council any information which may indicate that the qualification is no longer or will no longer be evidence that graduates with that recognised qualification meet the Osteopathic Practice Standards under s16(1) of the Osteopaths Act 1993. The Committee has an extensive range of ongoing monitoring mechanisms to ensure standards. Section 16(1) means that if at any point, the Committee has information that the qualifications do not meet our standards, the Committee must bring this to the attention of Council.

22. Council can therefore be assured that the Committee is taking steps to ensure the ongoing identification, management and monitoring of standards and that the removal of the expiry date does not affect this process.

Recommendation: To agree to recognise the qualification Master of Osteopathy awarded by Swansea University, with no expiry date and with no specific conditions, and to seek approval of the recognition from the Privy Council.