



## **Education and Registration Standards Committee**

Minutes of the Education and Registration Standards Committee Part I held on  
Thursday 12 March 2015 at 13.30

### *Unconfirmed*

Chair: Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas

Present: John Chaffey  
Dr Jorge Esteves  
Dr Jane Fox  
Professor Bernardette Griffin  
Robert McCoy  
Dr Joan Martin  
Alison J White

In attendance: Fiona Browne, Head of Professional Standards  
Ben Chambers, Registration Assistant (Item 12)  
Dr David Gale, Quality Assurance Agency  
David Gomez, Head of Regulation  
Kit Holmes, Professional Standards Manager  
Matthew Redford, Head of Registration and Resources  
Marcia Scott, Council and Executive Support Officer

### **Item 1: Apologies and interests**

1. Apologies were received from Liam Stapleton and Tim Walker, Chief Executive and Registrar, both of whom were unable to attend this meeting.
2. The Chair reminded members that any interests must be declared and that when a conflict is determined that the member would be requested to leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

### **Item 2: Minutes and matters arising**

3. The minutes of the public meeting of the Education and Registration Standards Committee of 2 October 2014 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

### **Item 3: Quality Assurance – Process for Monitoring Closure**

4. The Professional Standards Manager introduced the item presenting the updated process for monitoring course closures. It was noted that the two OEIs undergoing closure had reviewed the process in detail. All other OEIs had also been invited to provide feedback and no amendments were suggested.
5. Members highlighted the following points:

- a. That this was a more comprehensive and consistent process for monitoring closures.
  - b. That the paper outlined a proportionate and clear process which is not overly burdensome.
  - c. That it was important to ensure that all relevant matters about course closures were brought to the attention of the Committee. Thus, the paper provided that if there were sensitive issues, it was open to the OEI to indicate matters which should be discussed on the private agenda and this would be looked at on a case by case basis.
6. The Committee welcomed this process.

**Agreed:** the Committee agreed the 'Recognised Qualification Course Closure Process, Guidance and Report Template' including the proposal for public and private papers.

**Item 4: Quality Assurance – Notification of change in accordance with general conditions process and guidance**

- 7. The Professional Standards Manager introduced the item concerning clarification about the notification of change processes for Recognised Qualifications (RQs). Under the general conditions applied to all RQs, osteopathic educational institutions (OEIs) must 'inform the Education Committee of the General Council as soon as practicable of any change, or proposed change, likely to influence the quality of the course leading to the qualification and its delivery'.
- 8. Currently such changes are reported to the GOsC through the RQ Annual Report and at other points throughout the year, as determined by each OEI. The opportunity to further develop the change notification process was identified through the preliminary information gathering stage of the quality assurance major review.
- 9. The Professional Standards Manager confirmed that feedback had been sought on the draft 'Notification of change in accordance with general conditions process and guidance' from OEIs during January and February 2015. The OEIs provided review comments and discussed the proposals at a meeting of the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions (COEI). Minor drafting amendments were made following this.
- 10. It was acknowledged that it would be important to pilot this to test the guidance and process for the wide range of possible notifications. The Committee welcomed the process and pilot approach.

**Agreed:** the Committee agreed the pilot of the Recognised Qualifications: Notification of Change Process and Form.

### **Item 5: Quality Assurance – update on tender process and major review**

11. The Professional Standards Manager introduced the item which concerned the update on the procurement of education quality assurance services and major review.
12. The Professional Standards Manager informed Members that following the tender process the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education had been awarded the quality assurance contract. A handover process will not be required due to the continuity in provider and the contract is due to come into force on 1 August 2015.
13. Part of the specification for the quality assurance contract was for tenderers to propose their contributions to the development of a new quality assurance method. Therefore a new timeline has been developed for the major review to better align with this procurement.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the updated of the education and quality assurance tender process and major review.

### **Item 6: Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education (GOPRE)**

14. The Head of Professional Standards introduced the item which concerned the next steps for the *Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education*. She noted that the *Guidance* had been approved by Council in February 2015 and that work is now progressing to develop and undertake an implementation and awareness strategy.
15. Members queried whether all the OEIs fielded representatives to contribute to the *Guidance*. The Head of Professional Standards responded that attendance at meetings had varied but that all the OEIs had been represented throughout the process.
16. The Head of Professional Standards commented that an upcoming focus was to take forward the Working Group's recommendations about implementation and the possible need for more explicit standards related to the delivery of education – including assessment – in a collegiate manner. It was agreed that this should be reviewed again following the publication of the QAA's *Subject Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy*.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the progress of the implementation of the Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education.

### **Item 7: Quality Assurance: Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy – Review**

17. The Head of Professional Standards introduced the item which gave an update about the review of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) *Subject Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy*. She then invited David Gale of

the QAA, who is leading the revision and consultation of the Benchmark Statement, to comment.

18. Dr Gale commented that the last QAA Working Group meeting was held in November 2014, which discussed the consultation responses. It was agreed that the document would be further developed following the consultation and that the anticipated publication date for the Benchmark Statement would be by July 2015.
19. Members queried to what extent the document reflected the *Osteopathic Practice Standards*. The Head of Professional Standards responded that mapping had been completed against the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* and submitted as part of the GOsC's consultation response, which found overall alignment. It was noted that the Subject Benchmark Statement would now also be able to take account of the *Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education*.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the development of the revision of the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement.

### **Item 8: Professionalism**

20. The Head of Professional Standards introduced the item which gave an update on the current work being conducted on professionalism. This comprises a range of different tools including the collection of empirical data, development of targeted guidance, and mechanisms supporting peer learning and discourse around areas of dissonance in views.
21. She highlighted that the first meeting of the undergraduate professionalism group took place on 11 March 2015. This began work to explore membership and an approach to work collaboratively.
22. It was noted that the data from the professionalism surveys is beginning to show areas of agreement in lapses in professionalism and areas of possible dissonance in views appear to be emerging in areas of dishonesty and boundaries. It is planned to publish the data in an accessible format later in 2015 and consider the further development of these survey tools and responses.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the update on the work being conducted relating to Professionalism.

### **Item 9: Review of the *Osteopathic Practice Standards***

23. The Head of Professional Standards introduced this item concerning the review of the *Osteopathic Practice Standards*. It was noted that the Business Plan 2015-16 includes an activity to scope the review of the OPS. The paper aimed to outline current, emerging thinking regarding reviewing the OPS. It was also considered by the Osteopathic Practice Committee on 12 March 2015.
24. It was highlighted that the intention is currently to focus scoping on the development of the 'right' standards and guidance and supporting understanding

about 'why' standards are there and 'how' they can best be applied in the complexity of clinical practice.

25. The Committee made the following points in discussion:

- a. Members commented that not all of the OPS had been absorbed by the profession so significant changes to the standards might be too early. It was agreed, however, that some changes might be needed to reflect issues such as candour.
- b. Support for developing shared interpretation was welcomed. Ideas suggested included running workshops to bring osteopaths together to share perspectives. The Head of Professional Standards commented that the second Values Seminar in May 2015 was part of this approach.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the initial implications for the review of the Osteopathic Practice Standards.

### **Item 10: Concerns about transgressions of professional and/or sexual boundaries**

26. The Head of Professional Standards introduced the item which concerned the review of the regulatory approach to the patient safety issues highlighted by complaints about breaches of professional and/or sexual boundaries.

27. The Head of Professional Standards informed members that the Chair had received a letter from the Investigating Committee setting out concerns relating to increased number of cases citing the breaching of professional boundaries. She also highlighted that comments were received from the PSA relating to these issues. It was noted that this item was also presented to the Osteopathic Practice Committee for consideration on 12 March 2015.

28. The following questions were posed:

- a. *What further actions might the GOsC take – either themselves – or in partnership with others to protect patients? (Actions may include the production of guidance or revision of existing guidance, but also mechanisms for implementation of that guidance or other teaching mechanisms etc).*
- b. *How will the GOsC know whether any action that is taken has been effective in achieving the goal? (For example, is a decrease in fitness to practise cases a success or failure in this area?)*

29. The Committee discussed the following points:

- a. Members commented that the increase in fitness to practice cases did not necessarily indicate an increase in the problem of transgressions but that witnesses were perhaps more willing to come forward.

- b. Members agreed that the challenge was how to teach and support in a safe and balanced way.
- c. Members agreed that dialogue(s) must be developed within educational settings about building and maintaining boundaries. It was commented that this should be included as part of a course programme as early as possible in the curriculum.
- d. It was suggested that motivation may also require investigation. Were the issues the same for other health professions or, for example, was the issue of dependency, which could lead to breaches in boundaries on the part of both osteopath and patient, particular to osteopathy?

**Noted:** the Committee noted the regulatory approach to the patient safety issues highlighted by complaints about breaches of professional and/or sexual boundaries.

### **Item 11: Registration Assessment Review – overview of project streams**

- 30. The Professional Standards Manager introduced the item which concerned the overview project streams comprising the Registration Assessment Review. This work intends both to maintain and enhance registration assessment processes for the integrity of the Register, and the quality of service provided to applicants, registrants and patients.
- 31. The Professional Standards Manager added that internally there was a more detailed project plan and that the subsequent items, 11a-c, discussed some of the key project streams in more depth for the Committee's consideration.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the Registration Assessment Review.

### **Item 11a: Registration Assessments Review – Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive**

- 32. The Professional Standards Manager introduced the item which gave an update on the scoping of a review of registration processes and assessments for EU/EEA rights applicants to align with the revised Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive and its transposition into law by 18 January 2016.
- 33. This work incorporates activities to confirm our interpretation of the Directive and transposing legislation, revising documentation and undertaking assessor and internal staff training.
- 34. It was confirmed that the GOsC has engaged with the Department of Health, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, members of the Alliance of UK Regulators in Europe and the UK Inter-Professional Group to contribute to formal consultations and calls for feedback as the implementation process has developed. However, there are still aspects of the implementation of the Directive which need clarification in the transposition legislation.

35. Members commented that there may be some slippage with the envisaged timetable due to the elections which will take place in May 2015. The Professional Standards Manager responded that while draft legislation is expected in March 2015 the finalised legislation is not due to be in place until January 2016.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the approach to the review of registration processes and assessments (EU/EEA rights pathway).

### **Items 11b: Transition into practice for international applicants**

36. The Professional Standards Manager introduced the item which gave an update on the scoping of support for internationally qualified applicants and new registrants to aid their transition into UK practice.
37. Further to the previous paper considered by the Committee in October 2014, a two-stage model of providing support was emerging:
- a. At application stage
  - b. At the point of joining the Register.
38. It was suggested that the transition would be smoother if there was support during these two stages – and not just at the point of joining the Register – to better embed understanding of factors such as cultural differences, the UK healthcare system and the role of the GOsC. It was suggested that this approach could also help to build effective relationships with registrants that could impact positively on ongoing engagement with regulation.
39. The Committee discussed the following points:
- a. Members welcomed the work being undertaken relating to international applicants and particularly agreed that practitioners need to be aware of cultural differences when coming to work in the UK.
  - b. Members cautioned that it should be ensured that applicants were clear that joining the Register would not directly result in employment, nor that work within the NHS was guaranteed.
  - c. Members highlighted the importance of gaining the views of registrants who had joined the Register through the international route when developing resources for support. The Professional Standards Manager confirmed that this was a key element of the next phase of the project.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the proposals for supporting internationally-qualified osteopaths' transition to UK practice.

**Item 11c: Registration Assessor appraisal and training**

40. The Head of Professional Standards introduced the item which gave an update on the appraisal and training of the Registration Assessors and Reviewers. Members recalled considering a detailed background to the registration assessment and return to practice processes at the October 2014 Committee meeting. It was noted that both appraisal and training activity is undertaken to ensure that Assessors and Reviewers maintain the skills required to assess whether international registration applicants and those returning to practice meet our standards to ensure patient safety.
41. The Committee noted the updated timeline for completing the appraisals process and the two stages of training events over the course of 2015.

**Noted:** The Committee noted the update on registration assessor and reviewer appraisal and training.

**Item 12: New Registrants' Survey 2014 – analysis of responses**

42. The Registration and Resources Administrator introduced the item which concerned the three-month survey of individuals who had registered for the first time during 2014. This survey sought to gauge the effectiveness of the registration process and the resources available to new registrants.
43. He highlighted that registrants had in particular expressed their satisfaction with the good customer service they had received from GOsC staff. It was identified that some enhancements could be made to the final year student presentations and registration documentation, which have been addressed.
44. Another main finding was new registrants' request for business support information; this finding has already been shared with the Institute of Osteopathy to consider possible actions.
45. The Committee welcomed the paper and discussed the following points:
  - a. Members enquired if there was a breakdown of where respondents had studied. The Head of Registration and Resources informed members that feedback had been received from across the OEIs but the data was not divisible by OEI. It was noted that the findings had been shared at the GOsC/OEI meeting which took place on 11 March to consider possible learning points and/or actions. He added that HMRC have an online tool for healthcare professionals starting in business which has been passed on to the OEIs, which could support the new registrants' requests for further business support information.
  - b. Members asked whether new graduates could be encouraged to have their DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks submitted earlier as the checks can take some time to be completed and returned. The Head of Registration



and Resources informed members that the student presentation talks given by the GOsC provide advice on DBS checks. He added that the system for DBS checks has been revised meaning that checks are being completed more quickly.

- c. Members were also advised that the commencement of the graduate registration process is started in advance of graduation with forms being sent to students in January.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the content of the report.

**Item 13: AOB**

46. There was no other business.

**Item 14: Date of next meeting:** 9.30am on Thursday 18 June 2015.