



Education and Registration Standards Committee
3 March 2016
Health and disability guidance

Classification	Public
Purpose	For noting
Issue	An update on the review of guidance on health and disability and student fitness to practise
Recommendation	To note the progress on the review of the Health and Disability Guidance.
Financial and resourcing implications	There will be a small cost incurred in consulting on the documents and designing them for publication which are contained within the Professional Standards/Communications budgets.
Equality and diversity implications	These will be addressed within the revised documents.
Communications implications	The revised guidance will be subject to a limited consultation.
Annexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Draft Guidance for applicants and students with a disability or health impairmentB. Draft Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for osteopathic educational institutions.C. Draft consultation document – student guidanceD. Draft consultation document – Osteopathic educational institution guidance
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Background

1. The GOsC issues guidance on Student Health and Disability, in the following documents:
 - a. *Guidance for applicants and students with a disability or health impairment*
 - b. *Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for osteopathic educational institutions.*
2. The Health and Disability guidance was written when the Equality Act 2010 was introduced, and its provisions were therefore new. A review process has been implemented to update the guidance generally, and in the light of developments within education.
3. The aim of the current documentation, and the proposed revisions, is to provide guidance to applicants, students and Osteopathic Educational Institutions (OEIs) on issues relating to disabilities and health impairments in students and prospective students. This will help students, and those considering becoming students of osteopathy, understand the type of support available and adjustments that might be made to help them throughout their studies. For OEIs, their obligations under equality legislation are clarified, and guidance given on the provision of support for students with a range of disabilities and health impairments. Provision is made for the entire student journey, from application to graduation.
4. A review has been conducted of similar guidance on health and disability issued by other healthcare regulators, to gauge current developments and activity within the sector.
5. Each of the OEIs were contacted with a set of questions regarding their experience in utilising the guidance documentation. Where practicable, face-to-face meetings were held with representatives of OEIs to explore their views and experiences in more depth.
6. The revised versions of the health and disability guidance for students and for OEIs are included in Annexes A and B.

Initial outcomes and proposed changes in draft guidelines

7. There has been a growing awareness of mental health issues amongst students in recent years, as evidenced by the GMC document 'Supporting medical students with mental health conditions' (2013)¹, and The Universities UK Good Practice Guide; 'Student mental wellbeing in Higher Education' (2015)². The emphasis in these documents is on the supporting of students with mental

¹ Available at: <http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/23289.asp>

² Available at: http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/StudentMentalWellbeingGuide.aspx#.Vp4lm_mLQy4

health conditions, and acknowledging that such issues are common, and not necessarily a bar to successful completion of a healthcare programme of study. In the revised document, we have made greater reference to mental health issues, and how students might be supported in this respect. We have not replicated the GMC model of a separate document on mental health issues.

8. We have retained two separate documents, one aimed at students and prospective students, and one aimed at osteopathic educational institutions.
9. We have added some case examples to help contextualise the guidance providing more examples about the types of reasonable adjustments that can be made in the context of osteopathic education.
10. We have added a section on 'Fitness to Study' processes.
11. We have increased the section on types of discrimination in both documents to provide a greater explanation of these.
12. We have made reference to the updated QAA Benchmark statement for osteopathy³ and Guidance on osteopathic pre-registration education (GOPRE)⁴

Next steps and further consultation

13. The draft revised guidance documents will be published on the GOsC website in March and a consultation process will be held between March and June 2016.
14. Further consultations will be held with the osteopathic educational institutions, with efforts made to involve students, particularly those with disabilities and health conditions.
15. As part of the consultation, we are also planning a seminar in the spring for anyone with an interest or experience in health and disability: osteopaths, osteopathy students, other healthcare practitioners, patients, carers and members of the public. An article has been published in the current edition of *The Osteopath*, promoting this and inviting expressions of interest.
16. The draft documents will be shared with other regulators for comment, as part of the consultation process.
17. The consultation document for the revised student guidance is included in Annex C, and the guidance aimed at OEIs is in Annex D.

Recommendation: To note the progress on the review of the Health and Disability Guidance.

³ Available at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-Osteopathy-15.pdf>

⁴ Available at: <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/training/guidance-for-osteopathic-pre-registration-education/>