



## Education and Registration Standards Committee

Minutes of the Education and Registration Committee Part I (Public)  
held on Tuesday 13 October 2015

*Confirmed*

Chair: Professor Colin Coulson-Thomas

Present: John Chaffey  
Jorge Esteves  
Jane Fox  
Bernardette Griffin  
Robert McCoy  
Joan Martin  
Liam Stapleton  
Alison White

In attendance: Matthew Redford, Head of Registration and Resources (Items 7)  
Marcia Scott, Council and Executive Support Officer  
Tim Walker, Chief Executive and Registrar  
Brigid Tucker, Head of Policy and Communications (Items 4)

Observer: Dr Caragh Brosnan, visiting lecturer in Health Sociology,  
University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia

### **Item 1: Welcome, Apologies and interest**

1. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. A special welcome was extended to Dr Caragh Brosnan of the University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia.
2. The Chief Executive gave apologies on behalf of Fiona Browne and Kit Holmes.
3. 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**

4. Minutes: The minutes of the ERSC meeting, 18 June 2015, were agreed as a correct record.
5. Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

### **Item 3: Corporate Plan 2016-19 – Committee consideration of initial themes**

6. The Chief Executive introduced the item which asked that the Committee give their initial consideration on the themes and activities in the Corporate Plan 2016-19. He informed the Committee the listed themes and activities were not in any order of priority as they were initial thoughts only. The draft plan would be presented to Council in November.
7. In discussion the following points were made:
  - a. It was pointed out that any revised education quality assurance process would need a clearer understanding of what risk is when considering the OEIs.
  - b. It was pointed out that as a regulator with a statutory remit there is little room for discretionary activity, therefore it was important that any discretionary activity should have measurable outcomes if possible.
  - c. It was also acknowledged that the Corporate Plan would require engagement with stakeholders to successfully deliver against the objectives. Collaborative working would help the GOsC achieve its primary objective in protecting patients and the public.
  - d. Members agreed there should be an emphasis on standards of education and quality with some underpinning of implementation. It was thought that the GOsC is doing well with its processes and much has been achieved therefore it was important to ensure that this continues.
  - e. The Committee was advised that any further thoughts and comments on any aspects of the Corporate Plan could be submitted to the Chief Executive by 29 October.

**Agreed:** the Committee supported the themes and activities for the Corporate Plan 2016-19.

### **Item 4: Common Classification System for recording and monitoring concerns about osteopathic practice.**

8. The Head of Policy and Communications introduced the item which included the independent analysis of the findings of data collected during 2013 and 2014 by the GOsC, the Institute of Osteopathy (iO) and providers of professional indemnity insurance in relation to complaints and claims about osteopaths.
9. Members were informed that the information had been very useful to the GOsC in underlining the prevalence of recurring issues and these have been published in *the Osteopath* as teaching/training material.

10. It was suggested the findings would be an opportunity for the ERSC to review the implications for pre-registration education where the data suggested weaknesses in practice. It was added that useful discussions had taken place with the OEIs and, in the year ahead, it had been agreed with the insurers to extend data collection fields to other demographics to address some of the issues identified in the report. There had been some good feedback from the OEIs which had used some of the resulting data for teaching purposes.
11. In discussion the following points were made:
- a. It was agreed that the length of time in practice from date of graduation may be more important than age.
  - b. On advice from insurers the GOsC had been informed that it may not be possible to find out whether a respondent was a sole practitioner or part of a group practice. However, it was thought that the question could be broached at the point of a claim.
  - c. In considering the data to be collected about individual's members were reminded about adherence to the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, with reference and Principle 2 which states that *Data shall be used for limited, specifically stated purposes*. Therefore any data collected and stored must be for a clear, defined purpose.
  - d. Members were advised that currently there was no up to date information on the number of osteopathic patients that are being treated across the UK.
  - e. It was stated that the numbers given in the report were too small to be able to detect trends but it appeared that complaints remained at a stable level. It was difficult to understand trends across regulators but for the GOsC the increase in numbers, in part, reflected the growth of its register. It was also pointed out that osteopaths often deal with issues before they become a complaint.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the contents of the paper.

### **Item 5: Review of the Osteopathic Standards**

12. The Chief Executive introduced the item which outlined the proposed approach to the review of the 2012 *Osteopathic Practice Standards*.
13. In doing so, there was a need to be mindful of the McGivern report which found that osteopaths sometimes misinterpret or misunderstand the current standards but it was not believed that the standards were at fault. Therefore, the focus needed to be on guidance and providing practical materials to support the standards, as well as asking the profession itself where they thought the sticking points of the OPS lay.
14. In discussion the following points were made.

- a. Members agreed on the approach and the suggested timetable. It was commented that it would be important to get feedback on the values although it was not clear how these would be joined up with the standards.
- b. It was agreed that engagement with the profession would be important to help embed the standards. Members were advised that it was planned that the regional groups would be asked to consider the current standards and provide feedback.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the approach to the review of the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* as set out.

### **Item 6: Health and disability and student fitness to practise guidance review**

15. The Chief Executive introduced the item which gave an update on the review of guidance on health and disability and student fitness to practise.
16. Four guidance documents were published in 2010 in collaboration with stakeholders, two aimed at students and two at the OEIs:
  - *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance about professional behaviours and fitness to practise for osteopathic students*
  - *Student Fitness to Practise: Guidance for Osteopathic Educational Institutions*
  - *Guidance for applicants and students with a disability or health impairment*
  - *Students with a disability or health impairment: Guidance for osteopathic educational institutions.*
17. More recently there has been a focus on mental health issues in higher education and work was in progress to incorporate this into the GOsC's guidance. Also more case studies are to be included to help bring the guidance to life.
18. In discussion the following points were made:
  - a. Members pointed out that the GOsC must be realistic at the outset in support to students with disabilities and realistic about their prospects once they have graduated. Recent discussions highlighted it was easier to make provisions in a learning environment than it is in practice. Institutions are alive to the issues and all individual cases were judged on merit. The institutions have been mature in managing applicants and were doing good work in addressing these issues.
  - b. It was suggested that at page 3, reference to candour should be 'specific' rather than 'broader' and that guidance needs to be 'focused rather than 'generic'.

- c. It was stated that across the profession people have been more alive to the issues relating to disability and taking a positive approach in light of the Equality Act 2010. It was agreed that each institution's policy on health and disability would be influenced by its validating university but needed to reflect the difference between osteopathic education and other courses.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the progress of the reviews.

### **Item 7: Recognition of Professional Qualifications: IMI Alert Mechanism**

19. The Head of Registration and Resources introduced the item which set out the requirements of EU Directive 2013/55/EU which aims to facilitate the professional mobility of individuals across the EU. The Directive requires competent authorities to use the Internal Market Information (IMI) system to send alerts about registrants or applicants, in accordance with the Directives requirement.
20. It was added that an alert system already existed between GOsC's Regulation and Registration teams so the EU directive would only mean a slight amendment to already existing protocols.
21. In discussion the following points were made:
  - a. Members were informed that there were a number of checks for individuals which varied for UK and overseas graduates. It was unclear as to how aspects of IMI would work but for the GOsC this should not be an issue as the numbers that were expected to be dealt with would be small.
  - b. Members were advised that most countries in the EU did not regulate osteopathy. Where there is no competent authority there would be no requirement to comply but there are other mechanisms that could be used.
  - c. It was confirmed that a registrant could not resign from the register while they were under investigation by the Regulation team.

**NOTED:** the Committee noted the report.

### **Item 8: Quality assurance annual reports**

22. The Chief Executive introduced the item which concerned minor amendments to the guidance for Recognised Qualification (RQ) Annual Reports.
23. Comments from the OEIs had been incorporated into the Annual Reports.
24. Members asked when the quality assurance review would be completed. In response, the Chief Executive said that due to unforeseen circumstances the consultation document on the quality assurance method had to be put on hold and it was hoped that this would now be presented to the March 2016 meeting.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the RQ Annual Report 2015 template and timeline.

### **Item 9: Subject Benchmark Statement and Guidance on Osteopathic Pre-Registration Education**

25. The Chief Executive introduced the item which gave an update on publication of the Subject Benchmark Statement and Guidance on Osteopathic Pre-Registration Education.
26. It was confirmed that both documents had been published:
  - a. The Subject Benchmark Statement July 2015 and available on the QAA website at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-Osteopathy-15.pdf>
  - b. The GOPRE Guidance is available at: <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/training-and-registration/information-for-education-providers/>

**Noted:** the Committee noted the publication of the Benchmark and Guidance.

### **Item 10: Leeds Beckett University and Oxford Brookes University course closure updates**

27. Rob McCoy and John Chaffey declared interests for Leeds Beckett University (LBU) but remained in the meeting as the item was for noting and no decisions were to be made.
28. The Chief Executive introduced the item which concerned submissions given by LBU and Oxford Brookes University (OBU) on their course closure plans for the Education and Registration Standards Committee. In particular, LBU had highlighted staff vacancies and how they were dealing with these, and OBU had also advised all students were on target to complete courses in 2015-16.
29. It was suggested by the Committee that at LBU low student satisfaction and staff changes may be interrelated. It was suggested that more information should be requested on progress in this area in the next update for the ERSC in March 2016.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the course closure plan updates from LBU and OBU

**Agreed:** to request further information from LBU on staffing in the closure update to the ERSC in March 2016.

### **Item 11: Quality Assurance Contract**

30. The Chief Executive introduced the item which gave an update on the contract award for quality assurance services.
31. It was confirmed that the contract has been finalised, signed and is in place.

32. Concerns were raised relating to the timing for training of visitors. It was commented that visitors required earlier notification or attendance would probably be poor. The concern would be followed up with the QAA.

**Noted:** the Committee noted the update on the education quality assurance contract and timeline.

**Item 12: Any other business**

33. There was no other business.

**Item 13: Date of the next meeting:** 3 March 2016 at 10.00