



Education and Registration Standards Committee

2 October 2014

Quality Assurance Review – Evaluation, Performance Review and Training

Classification	Public
Purpose	For noting
Issue	This paper reports on the GOsC/QAA review evaluation and performance review activities from the 2013/14 academic year. It also outlines the plans for training for the forthcoming year.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To note the evaluation and performance review processes and findings. No significant issues regarding the adequacy of the review method were identified.2. To note the outline plans for training.3. To note initial action plans and further work to respond to findings arising from the evaluation and performance reviews.
Financial and resourcing implications	None
Equality and diversity implications	None
Communications implications	None
Annexes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. GOsC/QAA Review Evaluation Report 2013-14 (private)B. Focus Group action plan (private)C. Performance Review action plan (private)
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Background

1. The ERSC has a duty to keep osteopathic education and training under review (see s11 of the Osteopaths Act) to ensure that pre-registration training meets the standards set by the Council. The Committee, therefore, has an interest in the operational effectiveness of the GOsC's education quality assurance mechanisms.
2. The GOsC currently contracts the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to support the delivery of its education quality assurance activity. As part of its contract with the GOsC, the QAA is responsible on an annual basis for:
 - undertaking an evaluation of the previous year's GOsC/QAA Recognised Qualification (RQ) review process
 - providing performance reviews for visitors and review coordinators
 - providing training for visitors and review coordinators.
3. The QAA proposes actions to respond to the findings and outcomes of these activities, for joint discussion and implementation with the GOsC.
4. The present paper provides the ERSC with an update on the QAA's evaluation and performance review activities, findings and action planning. It also outlines plans for the upcoming training.

Discussion

Recognised Qualification reviews 2013-14 and 2014-15

5. In 2013-14, RQ reviews were undertaken at the following osteopathic educational institutions (OEIs): the European School of Osteopathy, the London College of Osteopathic Medicine, the London School of Osteopathy, Oxford Brookes University and Swansea University.
6. There are no scheduled reviews for 2014-15, but monitoring reviews may be arranged if necessary. The review method would be the same as that in operation in 2013-14.

Evaluation methods and findings

7. The QAA uses a survey questionnaire to ask the parties involved (that is, the OEIs, visitors and review coordinators who undertook review in the previous academic year) for feedback on the review method, and the performance of the visitors and the QAA officer supporting the review.
8. Feedback is passed to the QAA method coordinator to evaluate the review method's effectiveness, consider developments to the process and inform visitor

training. Feedback on the visitors and QAA officer may also be used in performance review.

9. For the first time, all of the stakeholders responded to the questionnaire survey this year. The evaluation report summarises its findings (Annex A). On the whole both the review process and the teams were well received, with respondents across all groups commenting that the review method worked well.
10. In addition to the positive outcomes of the analysis, respondents identified areas which would benefit from development or further exploration through focus groups:
 - further training on Qmmunity (the QAA extranet)
 - more training on report writing
 - improving access to and structure of documents on Qmmunity
 - support for newly trained visitors by mentoring or shadowing a visit
 - more clarification of criteria used for the review
 - more guidance to providers regarding documentation.
11. The QAA held a focus group with visitors, review coordinators and representatives from all OEIs as part of the COEI meeting on 11 September 2014. The participants discussed the feedback from the evaluation report and also relevant items raised through performance review.
12. An action plan arising from the focus group has been produced by the QAA. This is attached at Annex B. Areas identified for action included:
 - guidance on the length of report/report sections
 - flexibility in review visit dates to accommodate observations
 - criteria for deciding on the length of a visit
 - bringing validation and review together
13. Some of the QAA's proposed actions relate to amendments to documentation, some to training, and some are suggestions for consideration in the development of the new education quality assurance method.

Performance review method and findings

14. Performance reviews for the majority of visitors (9 out of 12) have been completed. The remainder are due to be completed by early October 2014.
15. The QAA has produced a summary report and action plan (Annex C) relating to the performance reviews undertaken to date. It also includes a synthesis of feedback from the ERSC and draws comparisons with evaluation findings from previous years.
16. The QAA note that in comparing this feedback with that from the previous year, some differences are evident:

- the revised documentation to support visitors in preparing for the review seems to have been effective, but there are still issues around what should be considered by visitors under each heading
 - there are no comments relating to very different approaches adopted by the review coordinators, which indicates that the training for review coordinators has been effective and that they are adhering closely to the guidance
 - there is an increasing number of comments about the need for guidance for providers which would enable them to prepare more effectively for reviews and how to follow up on actions to address the conditions
17. The QAA also notes some common themes with feedback previously raised. For example, some issues, specifically those relating to teaching observations and report writing, continue to prompt requests for further discussion and clarification. There were still comments about the interpretation of the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* and the relative importance of the QAA's *Quality Code*.
18. In common with the action plan arising from the focus group mentioned above, some of the QAA's proposed actions relate to amendments to documentation, some to training, and some are suggestions for consideration in the development of the new education quality assurance method.

Consolidated action plan

19. The new lead at the QAA for the GOsC review (Dr David Gale) has proposed that he will produce a consolidated action plan that draws together actions arising from the evaluation and the performance reviews. It is felt that it is appropriate to do this as common themes and actions have arisen.
20. This will be undertaken in partnership with the GOsC Professional Standards Manager in October 2014.

Training

21. Dates have been identified in November 2014 for the QAA to deliver training to visitors. The GOsC Professional Standards Manager will also be in attendance. The specific content of this training is currently in development, but it will draw on previous year's practice and be informed by relevant findings from the recent evaluation and performance reviews. This will be discussed further between the QAA's review method coordinator and GOsC Professional Standards Manager in October 2014.
22. The training will be an opportunity to address some of the issues and suggestions for improvement raised through evaluation and performance review regarding the current method. However, some of the comments relate more to the longer-term education quality assurance review, which is due to be consulted on in late 2014/early 2015. These matters will be captured by the GOsC Professional Standards Manager to feed into that process.

23. It will be important to communicate this clearly with the visitors, review coordinators and OEIs so that they are aware that their feedback is being considered but that it may not all be acted upon at present. An update about responses to feedback will form part of the next newsletter sent to the visitors and review coordinators and it will also be fed back to the OEIs. It is hoped that this will help to maintain engagement with these key partners in our work.

Recommendations:

1. To note the evaluation and performance review processes and findings. No significant issues regarding the adequacy of the review method were identified.
2. To note the outline plans for training.
3. To note the initial action plans and further work to respond to the findings arising from the evaluation and performance reviews.