



**Education and Registration Standards Committee**

**2 October 2014**

**Quality Assurance: Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy – 2014 Review**

<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Purpose</b>	For discussion
<b>Issue</b>	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is reviewing its existing Subject Benchmark Statement. The consultation is due for publication on 30 September 2014. This item will allow the Committee to respond to the consultation to inform a response from the General Osteopathic Council.
<b>Recommendation</b>	To consider the QAA Consultation on the Subject Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy.
<b>Financial and resourcing implications</b>	None
<b>Equality and diversity implications</b>	None
<b>Communications implications</b>	None
<b>Annex</b>	Draft QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy for consultation – to follow once published on 30 September 2014.
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## Background

1. At its last meeting, the Education and Registration Standards Committee noted the development of the new draft of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy. The existing Benchmark Statement (2007) is available at:  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/Osteopathy07.pdf>
2. The Committee noted that the membership of the Working Group comprised members of each of the osteopathic educational institutions, the Osteopathic Alliance, the Institute of Osteopathy as well as students and lay people. Since then, John Chaffey, has joined the group as an employer representative.
3. It is anticipated that the consultation draft of the revised benchmark will be published on 30 September (prior to the Committee but after the dispatch of this paper).

## Discussion

4. It is worth positioning the development of the Benchmark Statement and our own regulatory requirements. Whilst they are linked, they are also different.
5. We have recently published Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education (GOPRE) which we will be finalising with Council in early 2015 once the Working Group has reconvened to consider the responses from the consultation that took place earlier on 2014. The intention of the GOPRE is the provision of guidance about the professional expectations of an osteopath and supporting the delivery of the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* which set out the core requirements for Osteopathic Educational Institutions. Whilst this may overlap with the Benchmark Statement, there are also differences.
6. The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement represents a consensus of the academic community about the academic content of an osteopathy degree (delivering the *Osteopathic Practice Standards*)
7. The Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy has a number of different audiences and purposes as follows:
  - Students and prospective students: to assist their understanding of the abilities and qualities that HEIs are seeking to develop in osteopathic graduates.
  - Those involved in quality assurance of qualifications including external examiners and GOsC RQ Visitors: to provide a reference to assist in achieving consistency of standards across higher education providers delivering degree programmes in osteopathy.

- Higher education providers: to guide the design of osteopathic programmes and to provide a reference for their monitoring and evaluation.
  - Other health professionals: to enable an understanding of osteopathic education to support better integration and interprofessional education and collaboration within the wider academic community.
  - Patients: to inform them about the detailed academic content of osteopathic education and training.
8. While there is some overlap between the Benchmark Statement and our role, it is important to remember that the Benchmark Statement belongs to the academic community of osteopathy and as such it should support the delivery of both professional requirements and academic requirements in a way that allows innovation and flexibility. We suggest that it is not for the regulator to prescribe a level of detail about the academic nature and content of the osteopathic degree. This is a matter for the academic community themselves. Indeed, it might be argued, that with a maturing academic community, it is right that they should assume greater responsibility for their academic consensus including more detailed requirements about research, for example, and the academic level of the curriculum. This maturity has been seen in the way that the revised Benchmark Statement has been developed. For example, the 2007 working group was chaired and convened by the General Osteopathic Council. This working group has been chaired by the Quality Assurance Agency and membership comprises the key organisations in the osteopathic community including the Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions (COEI), the Institute of Osteopathy (IO) and the Osteopathic Alliance (OA) as well as students and lay people.
  9. To ensure consistency between the two documents, we have been attending the working group and ensuring consistency with the draft GOPRE guidance.
  10. The Committee is invited to provide its initial thoughts on the new Benchmark Statement to inform the Executive's drafting of a response.
  11. We will finalise a response with the Committee by email after the meeting.

**Recommendation:** to consider the QAA Consultation on the Subject Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy.