



General
Osteopathic
Council

Draft Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education

Introduction

Osteopaths must be capable of taking full clinical responsibility for patients who attend them. This includes being able to take a full history, perform an appropriate examination using appropriate clinical tests where indicated, forming a differential diagnosis, referring to another practitioner where appropriate and/or providing appropriate treatment and care. It also includes being aware of the limits of their competence and crucially, putting the patient's interests before their own.

Putting patients first involves working with them as partners in their own care and making their safety paramount. It involves dedication to continuing improvement, both in the individual practice and also in the wider healthcare environment with which the patient interacts. Osteopaths are often part of the wider team of health professionals looking after the patient and all attempts to co-ordinate care, with the patient's consent, should be made to ensure that the patient is at the centre of the healthcare team.

Osteopathic educational institutions (OEs) equip osteopathic students for the demands of independent practice. This includes scientific and clinical knowledge, clinical and professional skills (including reflection), underpinned by a critical application of osteopathic principles and technical skills they need for practice. It also includes the communication, critical evaluation and marketing skills necessary for a thriving practice which will help to ensure that the osteopath is able to provide a high quality of patient care. However, most importantly, it also includes high personal and professional values expected to deliver high quality healthcare, ensuring that the osteopath makes the care of the patient their first concern.

Graduation is a time of great transition for osteopaths. One day, they are students treating patients under supervision and upon graduation they become osteopaths – registered health professionals – taking on independent clinical responsibility. This time of transition is a critically intensive learning period for newly registered osteopaths. This means that it will take time for osteopaths to orientate themselves into a new practice environment. Professional isolation can limit the ability of the autonomous practitioner to seek advice from colleagues (both osteopathic colleagues and those in the wider healthcare team) and this can impact on patient safety and the quality of care. It is

therefore important for osteopaths to seek support both at the beginning of and throughout their career.

As health care practitioners, osteopaths are also responsible for developing and nurturing skills to ensure that they continue to deliver high standards of care to patients both themselves and in conjunction with the local healthcare network.

It is important that newly registered osteopaths take steps to integrate fully into the professional community and to build support networks during this time whilst continuing to learn. Ways of doing this might include:

- Introducing themselves to fellow experienced osteopaths in the area in which they intend to practise.
- Introducing themselves to other health care professionals in the area, including general practitioners and others.
- Joining their local regional group.
- Joining special interest societies and professional associations.
- Keeping in touch with their fellow students.
- Keeping in touch with their osteopathic educational institution.
- Seeking out mentors.
- Knowing where to access help when things go wrong.

The outcomes in this document set out what the General Osteopathic Council expects OEIs to deliver and students to demonstrate before graduation. The outcomes focus on safe and effective clinical care. The outcomes also focus on the ability to set up a business safely and effectively. In order to provide safe and effective care, osteopaths must be fully conversant with the needs of an independent practitioner and should ensure that they are fully acquainted with the demands of setting up practice before graduation. Failure to do so could distract from patient care during the first years of practice.

These outcomes mark the end of the first stage of a continuum of osteopathic learning that runs from the first day in osteopathic education until retirement. Upon graduation, graduates will continue to maintain, develop and expand their knowledge and skills through continuing professional development (CPD).

Outcomes for graduates

In order to be granted a 'Recognised Qualification' all graduates must demonstrate that they practise in accordance with the [*Osteopathic Practice Standards*](#).

This guidance is designed to provide suggested outcomes that will help graduates to demonstrate that they meet the [*Osteopathic Practice Standards*](#). OEIs may also require students to demonstrate a range of additional outcomes.

Communication and patient partnership

The therapeutic relationship between osteopath and patient is built on trust and confidence. Osteopaths must communicate effectively with patients in order to establish and maintain an ethical relationship.

The graduate will be able to:

- Prioritise the needs of patients above personal convenience without compromising personal safety or safety of others.
- Work in partnership with patients in an open and transparent manner, treat patient as individuals and elicit and respect their perspective/views on their own treatment.
- Work with patients and colleagues to develop sustainable individual care plans to manage patients' conditions effectively.
- Communicate effectively and with understanding and empathy in straightforward consultations.
- Demonstrate ability and effectiveness in communicating more complicated information in challenging circumstances, for example, where patients' expectations are not being met.
- Reassure patients that information will be kept confidential (and will be aware of the very limited exceptions).
- Deal independently with queries from patients and relatives, ensuring that patient information is treated confidentially in accordance with the Osteopathic Practice Standards.
- Communicate sensitive information to patients or carers/relatives effectively and compassionately, and provide support, where appropriate.
- Recognise where patients' capacity is impaired and take appropriate action.
- Recognise situations which might lead to complaint or dissatisfaction.

- Disclose and apologise for things that have gone wrong and take steps to prevent or minimise impact.
- Obtain consent as appropriate in accordance with GOsC guidance. This includes:
 - Ensuring the patient is providing consent voluntarily – that the patient is able to accept or refuse the proposed examination or treatment.
 - Ensuring that the patient is appropriately informed – that they patient has understood the nature, purpose and risks of the examination or treatments proposed.
 - Ensuring that the patient has the capacity to consent to the proposed treatment or other action – this is particularly important in the case of children and adults who lack mental capacity. Further guidance about this is available on the GOsC website at www.osteopathy.org.uk
- Increase the breadth of procedures and treatments for which consent is taken.
- Encourage and assist patients to make decisions about their care.
- Work with the wider health team to plan care for those with complex or long-term illnesses receiving care from a variety of different health professionals.
- Encourage and ensure evaluation of patients' capacity to self-care.
- Set expectations about how patients can get in touch with you if they have any concerns, e.g. by telephone.

Knowledge, skills and performance

An osteopath must possess the relevant knowledge and skills required to function as a first contact health care professional.

The graduate will be able to:

- Know and understand the key concepts and bodies of knowledge to be able to practise osteopathy underpinned by osteopathic principles and appropriate guidelines. These include:
 - Normal and disordered human structure and function
 - Knowledge of basic pharmacology
 - Knowledge of principles of nutrition

- Psychological aspects of health and behaviour
- Sociological concepts of health, illness and disease
- Critical appraisal of research and professional knowledge.
- Awareness of journals and other peer reviewed resources and guidelines relevant to osteopathic practice and how to access them.
- The context of osteopathy within the wider healthcare environment.
- Know how professional osteopathic principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual. This includes knowledge of the relative and absolute contra-indications of osteopathic treatment modalities and other adjunct approaches e.g. nutrition and research.
- Take and record an accurate and appropriate patient history utilising all relevant sources of information (including, for example, diet and exercise).
- Perform an accurate and appropriate examination, including relevant clinical testing, observation, palpation and motion analysis to elicit all relevant physical, mental, and emotional signs.
- Present patient history and findings succinctly and accurately.
- Critically evaluate information collected to make an appropriate differential diagnosis and formulate an appropriate management and treatment plan in partnership with the patient, using the most effective combination of care tailored to the needs of the individual patient.
- Conduct the treatment plan skilfully and appropriately.
- Review the initial diagnosis and responsiveness to the treatment plan on a regular basis, adapting as appropriate, in partnership with the patient.
- Maintain and improve their interpretive skills across an increasing range of investigations and clinical outcomes.
- Competently perform and, when sanctioned by a supervisor, demonstrate to and support the learning of other osteopathic students using appropriate approaches or techniques, under supervision, either in the clinic or on simulated patients.
- Maintain and improve skills in the key areas.

- Demonstrate an extension of the range of procedures, techniques and treatments that they can perform
- Explain to patients, when relevant, the possible effects of lifestyle, including the effects of diet, nutrition, smoking, alcohol and drugs (separately and in combination)
- Recognise and use opportunities to prevent diseases and promote health.
- Demonstrate continuously high standard of practice in infection control techniques.
- Take all steps to avoid the transmission of communicable disease
- Maintain accurate, contemporaneous patient notes in accordance with GOsC Guidance (recognising that notes belong to patients and can be seen by the patient upon request)
- Formulate accurate and succinct clinic letters and discharge summaries to other health professionals and to patients.
- Demonstrate high quality interpersonal skills with patients and colleagues.
- Participate in the process of referral from primary to secondary and/or tertiary care and vice versa with an ability to make referrals across boundaries and through networks of care, as appropriate.
- Find and interpret evidence relating to clinical questions.
- Demonstrate reflection based on literature, guidelines and experience in the development of clinical skills over the previous year.
- Deliver and justify high-quality reliable and informed care.
- Recognise and work within limits of competence requesting appropriate guidance or referring where appropriate to ensure patient safety and effective care.
- Recognise when patient safety is at risk and institute changes to reduce risk.

Safety and quality in practice

Osteopaths must deliver high quality, safe, ethical and effective healthcare through evaluation and considered treatment approaches, which are clearly explained to the patient and respect patient dignity. Osteopaths must be committed to maintaining and enhancing their practice to continuously deliver high-quality patient care.

The graduate will be able to:

- Understand the obligation and need to maintain their own fitness to practise.
- Recognise that fatigue and health problems in healthcare workers (including themselves) can compromise patient care and, where appropriate, and seek advice and take appropriate action including seeking guidance from others, where appropriate, to reduce this.
- Deliver high quality care in accordance with the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* and relevant guidelines.
- Gather and analyse data accurately and appropriately.
- Manage, analyse and present at least one quality improvement project and use the results to enhance patient care before graduation.
- Use appropriate methods of clinical governance to enhance practice including:
 - Complaints mechanisms
 - Patient and colleague feedback
 - Clinical audit
 - Structured reflection
 - Structured case based discussion
 - Structured case presentation.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and be able to implement appropriate ways of setting up a successful new practice including:
 - Knowledge of and ability to comply with relevant legislation (in intended country of practice) including health and safety, data protection and equality legislation¹ and financial and accounting requirements.
 - Appropriate and legal methods of marketing and advertising.
 - Knowledge and understanding of the regulatory requirements in the intended area of practice including the roles of the relevant Local Authority, Care Quality Commission, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales.

¹ This would include anticipating the needs of those with protected characteristics including gender, ethnicity, disability, culture, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, social status or language

- Appropriate methods of clinical governance to ensure the quality of practice (including complaints mechanisms, patient and colleague feedback and clinical audit).
- Appropriate patient information leaflets or other mechanisms to provide patient information in advance of an appointment.

Professionalism

Osteopaths must deliver safe and ethical healthcare by interacting with professional colleagues and patients in a respectful and timely manner.

The graduate will be able to:

- Practise in accordance with the principles and standards set out in the *Osteopathic Practice Standards* (2012) and associated guidance published from time to time.
- Take personal responsibility for and be able to justify decisions and actions.
- Understand the role of organisations and bodies involved in osteopathic education and regulation and the wider healthcare environment.
- Understand their duty as a health professional to take appropriate action about the practice of colleagues to ensure patient safety. This may include seeking advice, speaking to the colleague in question and/or the reporting of those concerns to an appropriate authority if patient safety is at risk.
- Reflect on feedback from patients, colleagues and others to improve skills.
- Participate in providing feedback to others.
- Act with professionalism in the workplace and in interactions with patients and colleagues.
- Participate in peer learning and support activities.
- Maintain a personal development portfolio by recording learning needs and personal reflection including career development and planning.
- Recognise personal learning needs, address these proactively and set specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) goals.
- Acts as a role model and where appropriate a leader, and assist and educate others where appropriate.
- Ensure punctuality and organisation in their practice.

Core presentations that all osteopaths should be familiar with upon graduation:

Graduates must see a sufficient depth and breadth of patients to enable them to deliver these outcomes and to demonstrate that they practise in accordance with the Osteopathic Practice Standards. This section outlines a description of the approximate length of time, the depth and breadth of patients and techniques required to demonstrate the outcomes.

Graduates must also have the opportunity to consolidate their clinical skills before graduation. In order to support this, graduates should undertake a minimum of 1000 hours of clinical practice. Graduates should aim to see around 50 new patients to include the presentations set out below. Graduates should also ensure that they have seen patients on repeated occasions to enable them to explore the presentations set out below.

Some of the presentations below may also be demonstrated in other ways, for example, through role play and through the use of simulated patients.

Core components of consultations

The graduate must be able to demonstrate the following in a range of different patient presentations or scenarios:

- Take an appropriate case history including:
 - patient profile
 - presenting complaint
 - relevant medical, family and social history
 - response to previous treatment.
- Make an appropriate assessment of the patient's general health from the case history and the appearance and demeanour of the patient.
- Assess and explain the contribution of any physiological, psychological and social factors that they thought were relevant to the presenting complaint and the feasibility of this.
- Make an appropriate examination and osteopathic assessment of the patient's biomechanics and musculoskeletal system. This should involve:
 - Observation of gait and posture

- Osteopathic examination of static and dynamic active and passive findings by observation and palpation in standing and/or sitting and recumbent positions.
- Examination of the relevant body system and/or explanation of whether this was appropriate given the context of the presenting complaint. For example, where appropriate, make an appropriate assessment of the nervous system.
- Explain clinical findings accurately and clearly.
- Drawing on a well developed clinical reasoning, explain:
 - The significance of presenting signs and symptoms and whether this is plausible
 - The differential diagnosis hypotheses and the diagnostic conclusion that they reached to explain the patient's presenting symptoms (including, where relevant an explanation about how they considered that the symptoms were in fact visceral (non-musculoskeletal) in origin
 - If and if so how they concluded that the case was suitable for osteopathic treatment, and/or required ongoing referral to a more appropriate health professional
 - The treatment and management plan based on consideration of the differential diagnosis, the patient and the likely effect of osteopathic treatment (where relevant, this should include how they concluded that a particular technique was contra-indicated).
- Demonstrate how the patient was able to make an informed decision about their ongoing care including:
 - How material or significant risks associated with their proposed treatment or management plan were explained to the patient
 - How the benefits of the various options offered were explained to the patient
 - How they responded to questions the patient had
 - How they helped the patient to make a decision.
- Confirm the initial prognosis of the effectiveness of treatment.
- Undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of treatment at the end of the course of treatment.

- Reflect on a case where the expectations of the effectiveness of treatment were not met and the actions taken to communicate this to the patient and to seek further advice and/or refer.
- In the case of a referral:
 - How they involved the patient in concluding that the presenting complaint was not suitable for osteopathic treatment
 - The course of action taken to support the patient in finding a more appropriate health care professional to manage the presenting complaint
 - The mechanism of the referral undertaken, for example, the proposed referral letter.
- In the case of a referral, the outcome of the referral including any ensuing modification of their treatment and management plan.

Core range of clinical presentations

The range of clinical presentations should include the following:

- Neuromusculoskeletal case presentation
- Non-neuromusculoskeletal case presentation
- Case presentation presenting communication challenges
- A range of patients displaying characteristics which might include: gender, ethnicity, disability, culture, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, social status or language
- A patient receiving a full course of treatment. The student should continue to see the patient from initial case history taking to discharge from treatment and should also deal with follow up.
- Case presentation requiring referral to another healthcare professional
- Case presentation in which the patient was considered unsuitable for osteopathic treatment
- Case presentation in which use of certain techniques were concluded as unsuitable (contra-indicated).

- Awareness of areas of osteopathic special interest, including obstetric, paediatric, visceral, sports injuries and geriatric patients, knowing the limits of ones competence and when to refer to another qualified practitioner.

Core range of techniques and treatments

The graduate must be able to demonstrate appropriate understanding and application of a range of techniques to treat patients safely, appropriately and effectively. (This includes knowledge and application of contra-indications to use of such techniques in practice to particular patients, taking into account presenting complaints and history).

These techniques should include:

- Diagnostic palpation (a clinical examination)
- Articular techniques
- Osteopathic thrust techniques
- Soft tissue techniques
- Indirect techniques

Standards for Osteopathic Education and Training

Osteopathic Educational Institutions are expected to comply with the Quality Assurance Agency's Quality Code to ensure appropriate delivery and assessment of these outcomes and the intended curriculum.

In particular part B which deals with the following:

- Programme design and approval
- Admissions
- Learning and teaching
- Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance
- Student engagement
- Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning
- External examining
- Programme monitoring and review

- Complaints and appeals
- Management of collaborative arrangements
- Research degrees

Acknowledgements

This text is drawn from Guidance provided by the General Medical Council (2012), the Foundation Office and the medical Foundation Curriculum (2012) and the Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Proficiency (2012), the QAA Benchmark for Osteopathy (2007) and the GOsC Further Evidence of Practice and ACP Guidelines (2012).