



Policy Advisory Committee

12 June 2018

Annual reports of the Policy Advisory Committee 2017-18

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	The Annual Report of the Policy Advisory Committee which will be presented to Council at its meeting on 17 July 2018.
Recommendation	To agree the Annual Report to Council for 2017-18.
Financial and resourcing implications	An estimate of the cost of the committee and its work is included in the paper.
Equality and diversity implications	None
Communications implications	None
Annexes	None
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Annual Report of the Policy Advisory Committee 2017-18

Introduction

1. The role of the Policy Advisory Committee is to contribute to the development of Council policy across the breadth of its work including in education, professional standards, registration and fitness to practise.
2. The Committee performs the role of the statutory Education Committee under the Osteopaths Act 1993. The Committee has a 'general duty of promoting high standards of education and training in osteopathy and keeping provision made for that training under review'. It also has a key role to give advice to the Council about educational matters including the recognition and withdrawal of 'recognised qualifications' (see Sections 11 to 16 of the Osteopaths Act 1993).
3. The terms of reference of the Committee can be found at the end of the report.

Membership

4. The Committee consists of five members of Council and four external appointed members. The members of the Committee are listed at paragraph 43 below.
5. In addition, the member organisations of the Osteopathic Development Group are invited to send an observer with speaking rights to each meeting. Observers may not take part in any part of the meeting where the business is that reserved to the Statutory Education Committee.
6. The Policy Advisory Committee met three times during the period under review – in June 2017, October 2017, and March 2018. This report summarises the work of the Committee. Full minutes of all the meetings have already been reported to Council.

Quality assurance of 'recognised qualifications'

7. During the course of the year, as part of our active approach to advising the Council about the recognition of qualifications, qualification change notifications and ensuring standards, the Committee considered, in relation to all osteopathic educational institutions (OEIs) the following:

Activity	June 2017	October 2017	March 2018
Agreement to RQ specifications (including new RQs, renewal of RQs and monitoring visits)		Two OEIs	One OEI

Activity	June 2017	October 2017	March 2018
Consideration of Education Visitor RQ report (including new RQs, renewal of RQs and monitoring visits)		One OEI	One OEI
RQ change notifications and consideration of reports and evidence submitted in relation to general and specific conditions		Seven OEIs	One OEI
Consideration of annual report analysis (including external examiner reports and internal annual monitoring reports and information about student fitness to practise.)	Seven OEIs		Nine OEIs
Course closure reports		One OEI	

Course closure

8. The Committee noted the final report on the course closure for Leeds Beckett University at the meeting in October 2017. It was reported that all remaining students had progressed and completed requirements for their graduation and it was confirmed that fourteen students had graduated successfully. There were no further issues to report and the course is now closed.
9. The Committee's appreciation for the work done by the team at Leeds Beckett University was noted.

Change of Name

10. The Committee were informed of two name changes to institutions at the meeting in October:
 - a. The British School of Osteopathy had achieved university status and would be known as the University College of Osteopathy.
 - b. The Surrey Institute of Osteopathic Medicine (SIOM) would be known as NESCOL.

Quality Assurance Review

11. Detailed discussions on the review of quality assurance took place in October 2017 and March 2018. It was recognised that the quality assurance system had reached a more mature level supporting the growth of the quality management systems of the education institutions.
12. Key changes presented to the Committee were:
 - the removal of expiry dates from Recognised Qualifications to allow more flexibility when scheduling Visit dates
 - the publication of conditions or requirements
 - exploring a closer relationship between the annual reporting process and the five yearly visit
 - the management of concerns policy
 - exploring good practice
 - A more risk based approach to quality assurance
13. It was agreed that taking an innovative approach to quality assurance would require further consideration but this would not be within the timescale of the current QA contract and also not until the challenges of the external quality assurance environment had settled.
14. The QA consultation outcomes would clarify the position for making the proposed changes to the way quality assurance is conducted.
15. The QA procurement process and the indicative timetable would be further considered before a proposal was put before Council.

Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS) Review

16. The Committee was given detailed reports in June, October 2017 and March 2018, on the progress of the revisions to the current OPS published in 2012.
17. Following the consultation process which took place between August and October 2017 the final draft of the OPS was submitted to the PAC at its March meeting and it was agreed that the updated document should be recommended to Council for final approval. The timetable for publication of the OPS remains on track for September 2018 with implementation in September 2019.
18. It was noted that the work of the Stakeholders Reference Group (SRG) had been invaluable in ensuring that the work undertaken in updating the Standards had been a collaborative process which, in particular, is reflected in the consensus reached in relation to standards B1 – Philosophy and principles, and C6 – Promotion of Public Health.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

19. The Committee was given detailed progress reports on the new CPD scheme at the meetings in June, October 2017 and March 2018. The scheme, designed to focus on themes of engagement, support and community, with significant importance placed on peer review, continues to be on track and is scheduled to come into effect in the autumn of 2018.
20. A presentation on the CPD evaluation survey and the communication implications was given at the meeting in March. The survey analysis demonstrated a raised awareness of the scheme amongst respondents although the level of preparedness amongst registrants varied.
21. During in-depth discussions the Committee concerns were addressed about registrants who may not be engaging with or be fully aware of the new CPD scheme. Concerns were also addressed about the impact of both the CPD Scheme and the publication of the updated OPS being launched at the same time and the communications implications. It was agreed that for the presentation of the CPD update at the meeting of Council there should be more detail on the communications aspect of the report.

Amendments to the CPD Rules

22. The Committee received updates on the progress of changes to the legislation required for the new CPD scheme to be implemented. The changes would require approval by Privy Council and be laid before Parliament.

Professional Standards Projects: The Literature Review and Values Standards and regulation in context

23. At the meeting in October 2017 the Committee received updates on the boundaries and the values projects.
24. The Committee was pleased that the research into boundaries and the literature review were underway but raised questions about the values project, its governance, direction and purpose. It was agreed that there had been positive outcomes from the project such as its input to the revised OPS but it was agreed it would be useful for Council to review the project at its meeting in January 2018.
25. It was also agreed that the full costs of the GOsC's contribution and partner contributions to the projects be made clear for future reference.

Registration assessment review

26. The Committee received updates on the registration assessment review in October 2017 and March 2018.

Registration Assessment review: Consultation on changes to fees charged to international applicants and mutual recognition

27. The Committee noted the report and acknowledged that qualifications obtained by international applicants had not been quality assured by GOsC and that it was therefore necessary to test an applicant's competency before admission to the Register. It was noted that the cost of processing international applications did not reflect the work involved and, although the purpose of the change to the fees was to recoup this cost, it was the statutory duty of the GOsC to consult with its constituents, including stakeholders and the PSA, on this issue.

Mutual Recognition

28. The Committee were asked to consider the following questions in the discussion on mutual recognition and the registration assessment process.

- Were there any gaps in the background research so far?
- Were there any examples of mutual or registration assessment in other sectors that should be considered?
- What questions should be addressed in order to create a more efficient and effective registration assessment process?

29. The review would test whether the system in place was the correct approach and to streamline the registration process. The developments for training and supporting registration assessors would include e-learning tools and face to face meeting which would have a positive impact on the assessor team.

30. The importance of mutual recognition was recognised and a move for stronger collaboration with non-UK organisations was supported but the importance of English language proficiency was also stressed. It was also recognised that mutual recognition was especially beneficial to those countries which have robust education and registration systems.

31. It was also noted that the introduction of the revised OPS in 2019 and the potential implications of leaving the European Union were areas which would require consideration when reviewing registration assessments.

National Council of Osteopathic Research (NCOR) Complaints Data analysis 2016-17

32. The Committee considered the independent analysis of data collected annually between 2013 and 2016 by the GOsC and providers of professional indemnity insurance.

33. Issues highlighted from the data collected were:

- the decrease in complaints about sexual impropriety
- the rise in number of osteopaths failing to maintain professional indemnity insurance
- the continuing dominance of issues relating to communication and consent.

34. It was noted that the data from the NCOR report would be disseminated to the wider osteopathic community and that the data would also be a valuable tool in the development of presentations and resources for the introduction of the new CPD scheme.

Hearings and Sanctions Guidance

35. The Committee considered the draft Hearings and Sanctions Guidance at its meeting in June 2017 for recommendation to Council for consultation. The guidance booklets had been written specifically for registrants about the complaints and hearings process and the changes proposed would enhance transparency and consistency in the decision making of the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) whilst ensuring sanctions by the Committee was both targeted and proportionate.
36. The pre-consultation engagement included input from the GOsC Fitness to Practise Forum which includes PCC Chairs and members, and the GOsC Legal Assessors. Feedback from the pre-consultation was used to inform the guidance.
37. The Committee welcomed the guidance commenting on its transparency and accessibility.

Draft Standard Case Management Directions

38. The Committee considered the draft Standard Case Management Directions which was proposed at the meeting in October 2017 and would have a significant impact on the management and progress of fitness to practise cases if implemented by:
- Engendering confidence that the regulator is acting fairly and fulfilling its disclosure obligations
 - Ensuring fairness by ensuring that unusual points of law or fact are identified in good time so that full and considered argument can be advanced
 - Assisting in the decision making of panels by identifying issues to reduce the considerable stress of litigation upon all the participants (respondents, witnesses, lawyers and panellists)
 - Avoiding the calling of witnesses whose evidence is not challenged
 - Reducing the risk of last minute adjournments arising out of the late disclosure of evidence
 - Reducing the risk of wasting costs by listing cases for longer than is needed
 - Reducing the risk of cases going part heard.
39. Discussions had taken place with the defence organisations to ensure external input from interested parties and help to achieve greater compliance to shape the practice note and also encourage buy-in to the initiative.

40. The Committee welcomed the introduction of the Standard Case Management Directions and it was confirmed that all interested parties would be expected to follow the guidance and would be held to account if they did not.

Investigating Committee (IC) Guidance

41. At the meeting in October 2017, the Committee was invited to consider the draft Investigating Committee Decision Making Guidance which had been updated and modified to enable the IC to make consistent, fair and proportionate decisions.
42. The key changes included:
- Providing detailed guidance on the IC's role and function (including conflicts of interest)
 - Being clearer about the process for reaching decisions
 - Detailed guidance on issuing advice
 - Providing reasons
 - Incorporating the threshold criteria within the draft guidance document
 - Executive recommendations.

Membership

43. During the period April 2017 to March 2018 the Policy Advisory Committee membership comprised:

Name	Member details	Meetings attended
Dr Marvelle Brown	External lay member	3/3
John Chaffey	Council registrant member	3/3
Bob Davies	External lay member	3/3
Elizabeth Elander	Council registrant member	2/3
Dr Bill Gunnyeon (Chair)	Council lay member	3/3
Dr Joan Martin	Council lay member	3/3
Professor Raymond Playford	External lay member	3/3
Alison White	Council lay member	3/3
Nick Woodhead	External lay member	2/3

44. Five new members were welcomed to the Committee whose terms began on 1 April 2017 – Dr Marvelle Brown, Bob Davies, Elizabeth Elander, Professor Raymond Playford and Nick Woodhead.
45. Members' allowances and expenses for the Committee in 2017-18 were £9,888.

Terms of reference and membership of the Policy Advisory Committee

The role of the Policy Advisory Committee is to contribute to the development of Council policy. To do this it will:

- a. Advise Council on all matters of policy including:
 - i. The standards required for initial registration and appropriate means for assessing those standards.
 - ii. On all matters relating to pre-registration education and training of osteopaths, including the standards of osteopathic practice required for registration.
 - iii. Post-registration education and training, including the requirements for ensuring osteopaths remain fit to practise.
 - iv. The management, investigation and adjudication of concerns about the fitness to practise of registrants.
 - v. Matters relating to the exercise of powers under section 32 of the act (protection of title).
 - vi. The development of the osteopathic profession.
 - vii. Measures to encourage research and research dissemination within the osteopathic profession.
 - viii. Any research needs to support the GOsC's work.
- b. Take into account the decisions of fitness to practise committees, information from the PSA and other relevant sources, and external legal or other requirements.
- c. Ensure that policy development has been informed by effective engagement with the full range of the GOsC's stakeholders.
- d. Make an annual report for Council on the work of the Committee.

The Committee will also undertake the statutory functions that are reserved to the Education Committee, which are to:

- a. Advise Council on the recognition of qualifications in accordance with section 14(6) of the Act.
- b. Appoint and manage the performance of visitors to conduct the evaluation of courses under section 12 of the Act.
- c. Advise Council on matters relating to the withdrawal of recognition of a qualification in accordance with sections 16(1) and 18(5) of the Act.

- d. Exercise powers to require information from osteopathic educational institutions in connection with its statutory functions in accordance with Section 18 of the Act.