



**Policy Advisory Committee**

**12 June 2019**

**Quality assurance and registration assessment: update, training and appraisal**

<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Purpose</b>	For decision
<b>Issue</b>	Quality Assurance update and training and appraisal of Education Visitors and Registration Assessors.
<b>Recommendation</b>	To note the update on quality assurance and registration assessment and the update on the training and appraisal of education visitors and registration assessors.
<b>Financial and resourcing implications</b>	<p>The QAA Evaluation Report forms part of our contract with the QAA and this Evaluation Report was delivered on time and within budget.</p> <p>Education visitors are appointed, trained and appraised as part of our contract with the QAA.</p> <p>The GOSc train and appraise registration assessors and these costs are incorporated within our Registration and Resources budgets.</p>
<b>Equality and diversity implications</b>	Equality and diversity is an integral part of our contract with the QAA and our training of Education Visitors and Registration Assessors.
<b>Communications implications</b>	None arising from this paper
<b>Annex</b>	Annex – QAA Contract evaluation report to the General Osteopathic Council
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## Background

1. The Policy Advisory Committee terms of reference include the following: '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.
  
2. In relation to initial registration, the terms of reference of the Committee include the following:
  - 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.
  
3. This paper provides an update on quality assurance with an evaluation report from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), an update from feedback about the quality assurance processes and feedback from registration assessors and an outline of the plans for training Visitors and Registration Assessors in autumn 2019.

## Discussion

### *Quality assurance*

4. As part of our contract with the QAA, they provide us with an Evaluation Report periodically during the contract. This report is also supplemented by regular contract management meetings between staff at GOsC and QAA to ensure the proper performance of contractual obligations.
  
5. The Evaluation Report is attached at Annex A with associated annexes to that report. The report is structured as follows:
  - a main summary of activities
  - a detailed report of activities undertaken against the deliverables
  - an evaluation of review activity from the analysis of evaluation questionnaires (Annex A to the QAA Report at Annex A)

- a summary of the feedback from visitors' appraisals (Annex B to the QAA Report at Annex A)
  - an action plan arising from the contract evaluation and incorporating feedback from review evaluations, visitor appraisals and stakeholder consultation (Annex C to the QAA Report at Annex A).
6. It can be seen that this has been a period of intense quality assurance activity and the QAA and the GOsC have worked closely together to deliver the requirements.
  7. Unplanned activity has been included in this report. An example of this has been the establishment of the Office for Students (OfS).
  8. Since its establishment, the OfS raised questions about whether the QAA / GOsC method of quality assurance suffices as a higher education review for the purposes of initial registration with the Office for Students. QAA provided a view about equivalence and following further discussion with the GOsC, we were able to secure agreement with the Office for Students that the QAA / GOsC review would suffice to support initial registration of osteopathic educational institutions, subject to the possibility of a further review in due course.
  9. On this point, we have also been in discussion with other regulators and the Office for Students about the importance of delivering our respective and different statutory responsibilities, the challenge of understanding how our respective statutory responsibilities fitted together and the implications of burden, proportionality and streamlining both for ourselves and the providers and our commitment to further discussion on this. We also considered with the OfS, the implications of potential duplication for working together once a provider is registered in terms of the application of conditions or perhaps withdrawal of registration. We recognised that these issues may impact on many of the nine statutory health professional regulators and we thought that a discussion with all the regulators may be helpful to consider how to develop our thinking. It is hoped that a discussion will take place at the next Education Inter-regulatory group meeting on 1 July 2019, chaired by the GOsC.
  10. The report also outlines feedback from the providers, visitors and review coordinators on their experiences of the Quality Assurance visits during the period 2017 to 2019. Positive feedback is outlined in relation to the guidance and support. Some improvements in terms of additional guidance for the self-evaluation document and perhaps more flexibility in terms of the structure of the visit itself have been suggested and these points have been addressed in the proposed Action Plan at Annex C of the Report at Annex A.
  11. The report also outlines generic feedback from visitor appraisals and the following training needs were identified:
    - a. Understanding and evaluating risk in the context of GOsC's risk based approach.

- b. The new Quality Code (or standards for education and training in due course)
  - c. New QAA / GOsC Handbook (2019)
  - d. 'Things I wish I'd known before I started' or 'If I knew then what I know now'. This could be facilitated by two or three experienced reviewers who would enable a general discussion about best practice and swapping hints and tips for more efficient and effective working.
  - e. Determining financial health and the critical analysis of external financial reports. In particular, interpreting financial annual reports and audit reports with specific reference to resolving conflicting external audit reports and interpretations made by GOsC.
  - f. Difficulties or problems arising during visits and how these can be resolved. This could be delivered as a series of scenarios that visitors could explore in groups, using the new Handbook, and feedback in a plenary session.
  - g. Drafting wording for conditions, areas for development, strengths and good practice and ensuring that text supports each of these.
  - h. The expectations of visitors post-visit; particularly with regard to the action plan (e.g. format, comments, re-submissions). It was felt that this should be a joint session with QAA and GOsC.
  - i. Analysing a mock self-evaluation document (SED) and assessing what additional evidence would be needed. In addition, visitors could write a section of text using as resources the SED, mock meeting notes and mock evidence.
  - j. A specific lay visitors' session whereby all the lay visitors could get together and talk about issues relevant to them. An osteopathic visitors' session could be facilitated at the same time.
  - k. A session on focusing on key words and triangulation along with a facilitated discussion around this.
  - l. Strategies and tactics for getting as much from meetings as possible within a short period of time i.e. one hour.
  - m. An interactive session using the Extranet. Newer and more experienced visitors identified issues with the Extranet in terms of access, efficient and effective usage, filing and setting up alerts.
12. We are working with the QAA to design the content of our interactive annual training which will take place on 24 and 25 September 2019.
13. We are also working with the QAA to discuss the Action Plan at Annex C and to agree the work plan for the forthcoming year.

#### *Registration assessment*

14. Our registration assessors are responsible for undertaking and reporting on assessments of internationally qualified applicants and also for undertaking return to practise assessments. Further information about these processes can

be found at: <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/training-and-registering/how-to-register-with-the-gosc/>. The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that applicants satisfy the registrar that they have met the Osteopathic Practice Standards.

15. In February 2019, Council agreed a consultation on the amendment to the registration assessments for internationally qualified applicants. This consultation is available at: <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/about-us/our-work/consultations-and-events/registration-assessment-process-and-documentation/>. The consultation concludes on 6 June 2019 and the findings will be presented to Council in July 2019.
16. A registration report outlining registration activity is presented periodically to Council. The most recent registration report is available at: <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/about-the-gosc/council-may-2019-item-12-registration-report-to-31-march-2019/?preview=true>.
17. Registration assessors have been involved in a range of GOsC related training activities over the last year:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of Activity</b>	<b>Content</b>
17.05.18	Webinar	PRACTICE solutions making the registration assessments work for assessors (Assessment of Qualification)
05.06.18	Webinar	PRACTICE solutions making the registration assessments work for assessors (Further Evidence of Practice Questionnaire)
13.09.18	Webinar	PRACTICE solutions making the registration assessments work for assessors (Assessment of Clinical Practice)
02.10.18	Face-to-Face	Revision of registration assessments and Osteopathic Practice Standards training
04.10.18	Face-to-Face	Revision of registration assessments and Osteopathic Practice Standards training
06.11.18	Webinar	Registration assessment: an opportunity to reflect
15.11.18	Webinar	Registration assessment: an opportunity to reflect
21.01.19	Webinar	How do you make assessment decisions?
29.01.19	Webinar	How do you make assessment decisions?

18. Each year GOsC shapes their registration assessor training programme around the feedback received from assessors during their annual appraisals.
19. This year appraisals with the registration assessors started on Saturday 20 April 2019, with the last appraisal scheduled to take place on 24 June 2019.
20. The schedule for the completion of registration assessor appraisals over a 3-month period are as follows:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Number of assessor appraisals scheduled</b>
April 2019	4
May 2019	8
June 2019	3

21. All appraisals are being conducted by Dr Jane Fox. A total of 11 appraisal forms have been completed and returned to GOsC as of 24 May 2019.
22. Assessors reported that the following had worked well this year:
- GOsC was listening, taking account of and acted upon previous assessor feedback.
  - The support and help given by GOsC staff and administration was valued
  - Events and webinars facilitated by GOsC provided a great platform to share opinions and suggestions.
  - Working with co-assessors was valued highly.
  - A general sense that the assessment processes are robust, appropriate and running at peak efficiency and thus providing a true insight into a candidate's competence.
  - Access to an increasing amount of good quality learning materials (including videos) helped the assessors signpost to applicants.

23. Assessors reported the following areas required further development:

*Pool of Assessors:*

- There was some concern that the pool of assessors was largely London based, and greater diversity needed to be considered.
- There was some concern that an increased pool of assessors reduced the opportunities for engagement for each individual assessor.
- Those new to their role would welcome one to one shadow opportunities.

*Candidate Specific Resources:*

- Candidates' applications were less strong in terms of demonstrating understanding of UK expectations regarding informed consent. Development of a short online video for applicants outlining key aspects of the requirements for informed consent was suggested by assessors. It was thought that an online video resource might provide applicants with both audio and visual cues to enable a more practice-oriented understanding of the consent process in UK practice.
- There was a general consensus, that applicants need to be overtly directed to use GOsC and other website materials in developing their application

*Assessment Specific Suggestions or Observations:*

- Assessment of Clinical Practice suggestions included rotating assessment days, so they are not always on a Thursday, providing the opportunity for assessors to commit to half day sessions by introducing two assessment teams against two sessions in a single day and creating two separate groups of assessors and moderators
  - Further Evidence of Practice Questionnaire documentation were reported as being repetitive and complex, but the current consultation was acknowledged in most cases which in part is attempting to address this issue.
  - It was felt Return to Practice applicants were generally unaware of the support materials available to them from GOsC and other websites.
  - Return to Practice applicants would benefit from further guidance on the approach to document completion, so as to ensure that applicants provide sufficient detail for the assessments to take place.
  - Return to Practice applicants might benefit from an introduction of a 'threshold screening' process to allow applications to be returned to applicants for further completion, if insufficient detail or no details have been provided, before applicants can go on to a formal assessment review with the assessors.
  - Request for Return to Practice CPD forms to be made digital rather than handwritten, as these often prove hard to read for the assessors.
  - More generally, assessors would welcome formal and structured feedback mechanisms being introduced for assessors e.g. a prompt/question at the conclusion of each teleconference discussion.
24. The assessors had some suggestions about areas they would like their future training to focus on:
- Inclusion of guidance/preparation for engagement within the appeals process.
  - Review and revisit assessment forms (post-consultation).

- GOsC expectations of communication and consent from a legal perspective, both the expectations of what is verbally provided to patients but also what is legally required for transcription on case notes.
- Inclusion of discussion around the mapping of the new standards to ACP assessment criteria.
- Inclusion of a discussion around what constitutes acceptable standards in terms of presenting evidence.
- Training in report writing including the use of appropriate language in providing feedback.
- Formal approaches to obtaining feedback from other assessors and colleagues.
- Maintain face to face as well as webinar provision, both types of engagement are appreciated by assessors. Both mechanisms give assessors the opportunity to share experiences and discuss areas of best practice. Webinars provide assessors with greater flexibility for participation and face to face events provide networking opportunities.

25. The staff team will reflect on this feedback and feed these aspects into the registration assessment training which is due to take place in October 2019.

**Recommendation:** to note the update on quality assurance and registration assessment and the update on the training and appraisal of education visitors and registration assessors.