



Policy Advisory Committee
15 March 2018
Quality Assurance update

| | |
|--|---|
| Classification | Public |
| Purpose | For noting |
| Issue | To provide an update about the feedback from the quality assurance process from stakeholders involved in the process and the implications for Visitor training. |
| Recommendation | To note the quality assurance update. |
| Financial and resourcing implications | Evaluation and feedback are incorporated as part of our contract with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and costs are incorporated into the 2017-18 budget. |
| Equality and diversity implications | Equality and diversity forms an integral part of training for Education Visitors. |
| Communications implications | None arising from this paper |
| Annex | Overview of responses – Quality assurance evaluation questionnaire |
| Author | Fiona Browne |

Background

1. The Policy Advisory Committee terms of reference include 'appoint and manage the performance of visitors to conduct the evaluation of courses under section 12 of the Act.'
2. This paper provides the Committee with stakeholder feedback (from osteopathic educational institutions subject to review, Visitors and review co-ordinators) about the last three 'recognised qualification' (RQ0 reviews undertaken on behalf of the Committee through the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The paper also provides an overview of the training planned during 2018 for Visitors to provide assurance about the performance and continued performance of the Visitors to conduct the evaluation of courses.
3. The Business Plan 2018-19 provides that we will 'continue to monitor and enhance the quality of osteopathic education by: ensuring appraisal and training of Education Visitors'

Discussion

4. The QAA has provided an analysis report of the feedback from stakeholders involved in the previous three RQ visits.
5. The report aims to provide assurance to the Committee about feedback from stakeholders about the current method, but also identifies areas for improvements. The report indicates that the respondents felt that the method mostly met its intended purpose and was 'a thorough process based on sound analysis of evidence.' Also 'In terms of the use of reference points, all visitors and review coordinators responded that they completely agreed that the OPS were used appropriately.'
6. 'In considering how the visit could be enhanced, respondents highlighted:
 - the value of sharing chairing/questioning duties to allow for thinking time within the session
 - the challenge for the osteopathic visitors who have to fit in classroom / clinic observations and the examination of student work which leaves less thinking time during the visit
 - tightly timetabled visits which can lead to a limited opportunity to observe a wider spectrum of teaching and learning. A slightly longer visit span might allow the opportunity to explore this aspect in greater depth and an opportunity to triangulate what has been observed against module documentation with greater time
 - the broad scope and whether a narrower focus may be more effective
 - an observation relating to overlap in each of the sections of the review and ambiguity about what should ideally be covered in each section. It is noted that this may cause confusion from the beginning (making it difficult for the providers to produce succinct self-evaluation documents) and for reviewers writing up their sections which may cause more work for the coordinator.'

7. In considering areas that would benefit from a focus in training, the respondents highlighted:
 - Analysis of evidence
 - the approach to writing conditions could be considered in terms of how specific and SMART or general they are – with an implicit preference for them to be specific/SMART
 - Report writing
8. Areas to focus on as part of the training for Visitors during 2018/19 will include:
 - Key substantive changes to guidance including the updated *Osteopathic Practice Standards*
 - The revised quality assurance mechanisms (currently out for consultation) (with potential implications for the wording of conditions)
 - Arrangements for the visit
 - Management and analysis of evidence – supporting Visitors to streamline their approach to the synthesis and analysis of large amounts of documentation and evidence in a limited time
 - Report writing – including development of resources to support report writing and conditions

QA Review

9. We are currently consulting on limited changes to the quality assurance process following discussion at the last Committee in October 2017. The consultation documents are available at: <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/about-us/our-work/consultations-and-events/quality-assurance-of-osteopathic-education/>. The Quality Assurance consultation was published for consultation w/c 5 March 2018. The consultation will conclude in w/c 30 April 2018. The Committee will consider the responses to the consultation at its meeting in June 2018.
10. However, the Committee has indicated that they would like to consider further an innovative approach to quality assurance in due course. As noted at Council on 31 January 2018, it is fair to say that the external higher education environment is experiencing the greatest level of change in 25 years and that this is probably not the right time to publish innovative proposals for change in our own quality assurance methods without some stability in the higher education sector first (further information about the changes to the higher education sector and regulatory structure are outlined in the Council paper available at: <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/about-the-gosc/council-january-2018-item-15-quality-assurance-review?preview=true>). For example, it is unclear how far the Office for Student (OfS) changes will impact on different osteopathic educational institutions at this stage, and whether institutions will decide to register with the OfS and if so, at what levels. These impacts would need to be clear so that we can continue to meet our own statutory objectives, proportionately and seamlessly within the external environment.

11. Nevertheless, the QA consultation explores ideas about quality assurance with a view to informing more detailed innovative proposals as the external environment begins to stabilise and the impact is clearer.
12. The Committee will also know that the timetable for the tender for our quality assurance contract is due to begin shortly. This means that there will not be an innovative or different quality assurance process in place at the point that we being the process for tendering for our new contract. However, the Committee can be assured that the tender process will not preclude the development of an innovative and different quality assurance process at the right time.

Next steps

13. The proposed timeline for the development of our quality assurance mechanisms is as follows:

| Date | Activity |
|-------------------------|---|
| June 2018 | <p>Review of Quality Assurance Review for consultation findings and decisions about review of RQ Expiry dates, publication of conditions and agreement of concerns policy.</p> <p>Feedback from Committee about how to enhance existing quality assurance mechanisms – discussion about QA Policy paper.</p> <p>Plans for recruitment of new Visitors</p> |
| July 2018 | Council asked to delegate quality assurance procurement to the Committee. |
| September 2018 | Training for Visitors |
| October 2018 | <p>Agreement of tender of quality assurance contract including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procurement strategy - OJEU advertisement - PQQ document (including scoring mechanism) - Tender document (including scoring mechanism) - Draft contract terms <p>Documentation to provide for innovative approach to quality assurance.</p> |
| November/ December 2018 | <p>OJEU advert placed and documents available on GOsc website</p> <p>Closing date for PQQ submissions (30 days)</p> <p>PQQ assessment completed and draft invitation to tender issued</p> |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| | Briefing session for bidders Invitation to tender issued |
| January 2019 | Invitation to tender issued |
| February 2019 | Tender closed |
| March 2019 | Shortlisting and interviews |
| April 2019 | Standstill period concludes |

Recommendation: to note the quality assurance update.



Overview of responses - evaluation questionnaire General Osteopathic Council

Introduction

This report is based on the feedback following two renewal visits undertaken during term one of the 2017-18 academic year. The report summarises the post-review evaluation feedback gathered through the completion of questionnaires by all parties. The focus of the questionnaire continues to be on the review method, in addition to the performance of the visitors and the coordinator. Following feedback from visitor appraisals and provider focus groups on the challenges of conducting teaching and learning observations, for the past two years the questionnaires have included a question on the conduct of these elements.

Completed questionnaires are reviewed by the QAA Method Coordinator in order to monitor the effectiveness of the process. This feedback also contributes to the appraisal and contract management of key personnel and informs QAA training events through the identification of any continued professional development needs.

Response rates to the questionnaire survey by respondent groups

| Questionnaire group | Number sent | Number completed |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Contract Reviewers (CR) | 2 | 2 |
| Visitors | 6 | 6 |
| Providers | 3 | 3 |
| Totals | 11 | 11 |

Outcomes from the questionnaires

Although the survey questionnaire response rates are 100 per cent, it should be noted that the following analysis is based on a very small target population.

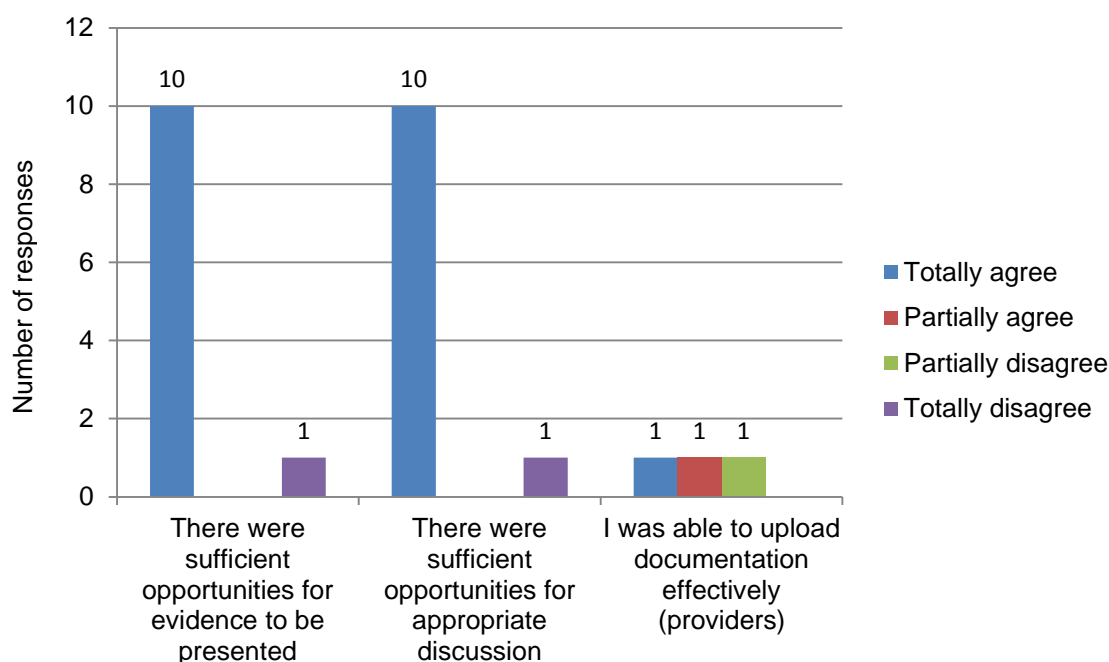
Feedback on the process: the method

Ten respondents indicated that the method 'completely' met the intended purposes, with one respondent indicating that it did 'to a large extent'. The feedback is very positive in acknowledging that the method works and that it is a thorough process based on sound analysis of evidence.

In considering how the visit could be enhanced, respondents highlighted:

- the value of sharing chairing / questioning duties to allow for thinking time within the session
- the challenge for the osteopathic visitors who have to fit in classroom / clinic observations and the examination of student work which leaves less thinking time during the visit
- tightly timetabled visits which can lead to a limited opportunity to observe a wider spectrum of teaching and learning. A slightly longer visit span might allow the opportunity to explore this aspect in greater depth and an opportunity to triangulate what has been observed against module documentation with greater time
- the broad scope and whether a narrower focus may be more effective
- an observation relating to overlap in each of the sections of the review and ambiguity about what should ideally be covered in each section. It is noted that this may cause confusion from the beginning (making it difficult for the providers to produce succinct self-evaluation documents) and for reviewers writing up their sections which may cause more work for the coordinator.

Feedback on the process: the visit



In terms of the use of reference points, all visitors and review coordinators responded that they completely agreed that the OPS were used appropriately. Six of these respondents also completely agreed other reference points were used appropriately while two respondents agreed to a large extent.

When asked for any comments about the conduct of teaching and learning observations, the osteopathic visitors that had completed observations noted:

'Due to the time pressures during the visit, it's difficult to find time and opportunity to give a 1:1 feedback direct to the lecturer or clinical tutor immediately following the observation session. Typically timings don't permit one to be present at the start or at the end of a taught

session. In these cases, I gave feedback at a later time via the Head of Osteopathy. This was fine in my cases as I had positive feedback and nothing sensitive and also the lecturer concerned had left.'

'I was made welcome to observe a choice of teaching and learning opportunities and made good use of this in both the classroom and clinical settings. The standard of teaching was good with a variety of teaching methods observed.'

'These observations are incredibly useful to substantiate claims made in documents such as the SED.'

When commenting on the use of reference points, visitors and coordinators noted:

'Extremely useful reference points to guide and inform the deliberative processes.'

'Although reference points other than OPS were largely built in to University procedures, it was clear that reference points were familiar to staff at College and Dept level. Other than OPS or the subject benchmark, though, more generally, reliance may simply be placed on University procedures which (should) incorporate the Code etc'

'Reference to the OPS was paramount in the minds of the review visitors.'

'The curricula were well mapped to external reference points which were implicit within learning objectives and outcomes alongside being overtly referenced in Module Guides.'

'As always with these reviews there is less explicit emphasis on the use of the Quality Code but the process of validation and other activities ensure this is well evidenced in documentation and practice. OPS and to a lesser extent GOPRE are a fundamental focus of the activity.'

When providing comments for QAA to consider about the method, respondents noted:

- the approach to writing conditions could be considered in terms of how specific and SMART or general they are – with an implicit preference for them to be specific / SMART
- the benefit of evidence being available in advance, which facilitates the questioning in meetings and requests for any additional documentation
- the desirability of an indicative word length for report sections
- acknowledgement that the method can be a time consuming process
- an observation that a slightly increased timeframe would allow more in-depth exploration of the evidence on-site
- a request for further clarification regarding who chairs the meetings and whether members of the governing body should be seen during the visit (this could be clarified in the handbook)
- further support for the provider in relation to writing the self-evaluation document

Areas for further clarification / training

Arrangements for the visit:

- more information re: the organisation of the process and the associated expectations at an earlier point for new visitors
- more focus on organising of meetings and the allocation of questions
- tips for managing the practicalities of obtaining a relevant sample of scripts and opportunities for the observation of students and their facilitators

Management and analysis of evidence:

- advice for new visitors in relation to areas such as how to manage a substantial amount of information – focus on the key points and identify the most objective sources of evidence
- focus on decision making and identifying lines of enquiry
- the need to reference documentation carefully during the analysis stage to facilitate triangulation

Report writing:

- guidance on report writing including the construction of reports and referencing with opportunities to share experiences with other visitors re: analysing evidence / identifying questions
- guidance re: the expected word length for sections of the report
- drafting of conditions (and a request for feedback from the PAC and training in the monitoring of conditions)

Sharing of good practice:

- the benefit of completing a draft commentary prior to the visit (with references), maintaining communication with the coordinator and reviewing previous PAC minutes/issues arising from the interim visit
- citing of evidence throughout the report and the use of the self-evaluation document to provide context
- approaching the review with the report in mind in terms of the preparatory notes
- more experienced visitors could share their methods for analysing data / evidence (including the prioritising of documents) and report writing

Summary

Responses to the questionnaire were very positive overall, with support for the effective implementation of the method. Positive feedback was provided in relation to the teaching and learning observations and for the use of reference points. There were observations regarding the time available during visits and also in terms of the support for new visitors and the sharing of expertise from those with more experience.

Action plan

| Issue | Action | Who/when |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| Arrangements for the visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - clarification on chairing meetings and meeting governors | To be clarified at visitor training and documented in the revised handbook | QAA/GOsC September 2018 |
| Management and analysis of evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advice and guidance on analysis of evidence | To be covered in sessions during the next scheduled visitor training | QAA/GOsC September 2018 |
| Report writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - overlap of report sections - report writing - wording of conditions | To be covered in sessions during the next scheduled visitor training and to include <i>Review guidance 'Writing guide'</i> | QAA/GOsC September 2018 |
| Sharing of good practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - methods of analysis, organisation of notes and evidence | To be covered in sessions during the next scheduled visitor training | QAA/GOsC September 2018 |