



**Policy and Education Committee**

**07 December 2020**

**Interim Quality Assurance Handbook for forthcoming recognised qualification (RQ) visits**

<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Purpose</b>	For decision
<b>Issue</b>	To approve the interim Quality Assurance Handbook, to be used in relation to RQ renewal visits in 2021 for College of Osteopaths and London College of Osteopathic Medicine
<b>Recommendation</b>	To agree the Interim Quality Assurance Handbook for use in conjunction with the RQ Renewal visits for the College of Osteopaths and the London College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2021.
<b>Financial and resourcing implications</b>	This is agreed under the contract provision.
<b>Equality and diversity implications</b>	There will be equality, diversity and inclusion implications in relation to the quality assurance and RQ review process. Promoting equality and valuing diversity is a key component of our quality assurance policy. This is implemented through the criteria against which the RQ process takes place.
<b>Communications implications</b>	None in relation to this paper
<b>Annex</b>	Annex A - Draft Interim Quality Assurance Handbook Annex B – Mapping Tool Template Annex C – Report template
<b>Author</b>	Steven Bettles

## Background

1. At the Committee's October 2020 meeting, an update of the transition to Mott MacDonald as Quality Assurance provider was given. It was reported that a revised Quality Assurance Handbook was being developed, but that an interim Quality Assurance Handbook would be required to be used in RQ review visits scheduled to take place in 2021 for the College of Osteopaths and the London College of Osteopathic Medicine.
2. This paper presents the interim draft Quality Assurance Handbook for Committee consideration and agreement.

## Discussion

3. The draft Interim Handbook is included as Annex A to this paper, along with the mapping tool template (Annex B) and Report template (Annex C). In the October Committee paper, we highlighted some of the changes being considered for the interim handbook. As can be seen from the draft, these include:
  - **Review coordinator:** A key change that Mott MacDonald propose making to the QA process, is the removal of the review coordinator. The aim of removing the review coordinator from the QA process is to offer greater ownership to the visiting team, and offer direct liaison with the with OEIs, instead of correspondence being directed through the review coordinator. The aim is to build stronger foundations between the OEI and visiting team for the review to take place. The project team will support the visitors during this process and will deal with more operational matters.
  - **Review criteria:** The development of the review criteria aims to provide efficiencies in the review process. Part of this will be seen in the reduction of the visit duration, as more of the work is done upfront through the review of the pre-work and engagement prior to the visit taking place. The purpose of the visit is to triangulate the evidence provided and review any gaps.
  - **Mapping tool:** The mapping tool set out in the interim handbook will replace the self-evaluation document previously used for the pre-visit work. The mapping tool incorporates the review criteria, and provides space for narrative to be given by OEIs, closely aligned to specific evidence.
  - **Visitors' Report:** The report format has been reviewed with the aim of producing a succinct summation of the visitor's findings and recommendations, to include any recommended conditions, as well as strengths and areas for development.

### *Engagement and feedback*

4. One to one discussions have been held between Mott MacDonald and the various visitors and with each education provider. These have included broad outlines as to the thinking around some of the changes to be carried forward into a revised Quality Assurance Handbook. In relation to the current draft Interim Handbook, this has been shared with both the College of Osteopaths and the London College of Osteopathic Medicine in the light of the forthcoming visits.
5. Largely, though, the review process outlined in the interim draft handbook, will feel familiar to the OEIs. It will involve a pre-visit phase with the collation of evidence for review, pre-visit analysis and requests for further clarification (if required) and a visit in which the team will engage with various institutional stakeholders, including teaching and clinical observation to triangulate the evidence provided. The timings of report production and opportunity for the institution to comment on this are unchanged. In the event of conditions being recommended, the institution will be supported in developing an action plan which will be presented to the Committee alongside the visitor's report.
6. As was reported to the Committee in October, the possibility of a more blended approach to visits, with, where appropriate, some aspects being conducted remotely, is being considered. As was mentioned, this will aid with visits where there are multiple sites, and, in the current coronavirus pandemic, enable an agile and flexible response to be made where OEIs may be under particular restrictions, ensuring that RQ reviews can proceed. The visits scheduled with College of Osteopaths and London College of Osteopathic Medicine may incorporate remote elements to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the circumstances at the time, but they need to take place and however this occurs, the Interim Handbook will be followed. Mott MacDonald have experience in running remote QA reviews using MS Teams as a platform for group discussions and meetings, ensuring that outcomes of remote visits are the same as for face to face visits.
7. Following the approval of the interim QA Handbook, further work and consultation with stakeholders will take place to produce a final version for reporting to the Committee for approval at its March 2021 meeting. The College of Osteopaths and LCOM visits will continue to take place against the interim handbook, however, as the process will be underway by the time the Committee meets.

### **Recommendation:**

To agree the Interim Quality Assurance Handbook for use in conjunction with the RQ Renewal visits for the College of Osteopaths and the London College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2021.