



Policy and Education Committee

10 June 2020

Annual report of the Policy Advisory Committee 2019-20

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	The Annual Report of the Policy Advisory Committee which will be presented to Council at its meeting on 9 July 2020.
Recommendation	To agree the Policy Advisory Committee Annual Report to Council for 2019-20.
Financial and resourcing implications	An estimate of the cost of the committee and its work is included in the paper.
Equality and diversity implications	The General Osteopathic Council has duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This year the Committee considered equality and diversity implications in relation to a range of projects as outlined in the report below.
Communications implications	This report is made to Council to summarise the work of the Committee from April 2019 to March 2020.
Annex	Policy Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
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Annual Report of the Policy Advisory Committee 2019-20

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 27 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 members of the Osteopathic Development Group are:
 - the Council of Osteopathic Education Institutions (COEI)
 - the Institute of Osteopathy (iO)
 - the National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR)
 - the Osteopathic Alliance (OA)
7. The Policy Advisory Committee met four times during the period under review – in May 2019 (in private session only), June 2019, October 2019, and March 2020. 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'

8. 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	May 2019	June 2019	October 2019	March 2020
Agreement to RQ specifications (including new RQs, renewal of RQs and monitoring visits) / appointment of Education Visitors		One OEI		
Consideration of Education Visitor RQ report (including new RQs, renewal of RQs and monitoring visits)	One OEI (also deferred to June Committee)	Two OEIs		
RQ change notifications and consideration of reports and evidence submitted in relation to general and specific conditions		Seven OEIs	Eight OEIs	
Consideration of annual report analysis (including external examiner reports and internal annual monitoring reports and information about student fitness to practise.)				Nine OEIs
Recommendation of removal of RQ expiry dates to Council			Two OEIs	
Agreement to updated Annual Report specification			Updated Annual Report template agreed	

Quality Assurance - Procurement

- The Committee agreed the selection panel, the tender specification and the timetable for the planned procurement to undertake on our behalf, specific aspects of quality assurance activity to inform our statutory decisions.

Quality Assurance – Annual Report template 2019-20

- The Committee agreed the annual report template to be completed by the osteopathic educational institutions for the 2018/19 academic year and due for submission in December 2019 which forms part of the quality assurance picture for each osteopathic educational institution.
- In addition to the existing areas covered which cover a range of areas and require the submission of third party data and feedback, due to its consideration of the quality assurance of institutions and learning across the sector this year, the Committee requested additional information in relation to the following areas:

- a. Governance and management and the traction between governance and assurance about academic standards.
- b. Areas for development
- c. The implementation of the Osteopathic Practice Standards
- d. Equality and diversity
- e. Educator data
- f. Student protection plan

12. An overarching analysis of this data was considered by the Committee in March 2020 and demonstrated key areas for the Committee to consider further as it takes forward its risk based approach to quality assurance and the review of the Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education and Standards for Training.

Quality Assurance levels of assurance and risk

13. The Committee continued to give detailed consideration and scrutiny to its role in quality assurance throughout 2019 and 2020.

14. In June 2019, the Committee considered the approach to strengthening our quality assurance process, scrutinising the levels of assurance that our current method provides and striving for additional assurance. This consideration focussed particularly on mechanisms for enhanced monitoring, dissemination of good practice and external mechanisms of assurance. It also included consideration of the approach to removal of RQ expiry dates and publication of conditions and action plans to enable increased transparency and more flexibility for aligning visits, specific thematic reviews, mechanisms for education and training of visitors, ongoing mechanisms for embedding the OPS, the approach to review of the Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education and Standards for Training.

15. In March 2020, the Committee considered an approach which made more explicit the criteria feeding into a proposed risk profile and explained how this work could translate into a risk level. They also considered illustrative examples of risk profiles to demonstrate how the model could work. The Committee provided feedback and this work will continue to be developed into 2020/21.

The review of the Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education and Training

16. In October 2019, the Committee agreed the approach and the strategy for the review of the Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education and Training including the development of more specific Standards for Education and Training. The approach included the terms of reference and timeline for development of this work and developing analysis of the standards of education and training in place in other regulators.

Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS) Implementation and evaluation

17. At its meeting in October 2019, the Committee received an update on the mechanisms for implementation of the Osteopathic Practice Standards which came into force in September 2019. This included an update about the communications activities in the run up to implementation for all our stakeholders, updates to our own registration assessment guidance and our hearings and sanctions guidance for fitness to practise panels, training activities for Education Visitors, Registration Assessors and fitness to practise panellists as well as a range of mechanisms to inform ongoing evaluation including follow up research undertaken by Professor Gerry McGivern, Professor Tina Kiefer and team at Warwick Business School.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

18. At its meeting in October 2019, the Committee considered the findings from the 2019 CPD Evaluation Survey as part of the approach to providing assurance about the implementation of the CPD scheme.

19. Key findings showed:

- Increased understanding of the new scheme and its four key elements (up 12%)
- Increased use of the four themes of the OPS to identify CPD needs (up 8%) and linking or mapping CPD content to the OPS (up 4%)
- Increased CPD in the area of communication and/or consent (up 5%) with an increase in undertaking dedicated courses (up 15.5%) and non-course activities to meet this requirement (up 18%)
- Reported barriers to reflective practice reduced (down 6%)
- A slight decrease in undertaking objective feedback as part of CPD (down 2%) (but those who tried one activity were likely to try out another objective activity suggesting that there was some use to undertaking objective activities)
- Increased levels of feedback collected from patients (up 8%)
- High levels of case-based discussion activity (59% of respondents)
- A slight decrease in numbers of people reporting that they have a colleague who they can discuss their CPD with (down 1%)
- Increase in people reporting that they have a trusted colleague that they can discuss concerns with (up 2%)
- Increase in the use of GOsC resources to plan CPD e.g. CPD guidelines (up 18%), The Osteopath magazine (up 2%), and the ebulletin (up 8%)

20. The Committee also considered findings cross-tabulated against particular protected characteristics to inform the equality impact assessment of the scheme. Whilst the findings themselves largely confirm no particular impact on people because of a protected characteristic, when cross-tabulating responses on particular questions, we could see potential differences in responses from different groups (although numbers are too small to be definitive at this stage). These differences may need to be explored further over the course of the implementation of the scheme.

21. The Committee considered the findings and our response to these findings as well as the wider evaluation an assurance strategy which was subsequently considered by Council in November 2019.

Fitness to practise: Draft Practice Note on questioning witnesses

22. In March 2020, the Committee considered the draft Practice Note on Questioning witnesses in fitness to practise hearings ahead of consultation.

Fitness to practise: Draft Practice Note on Professional Indemnity Insurance and Public Liability Insurance

23. In June 2019 and October 2019, the Committee considered the draft Practice Note on Professional Indemnity Insurance and Public Liability Insurance ahead of consideration by Council.

Fitness to practise: Approach to expert evidence

24. In October 2019, the Committee considered the Williams review and our sector approach to expert evidence. In March 2020, the Committee agreed the terms of reference for an expert witness group to progress this work.

Approach to adjunctive therapies

25. In October 2019, the Committee considered the application of the Osteopathic Practice Standards in a range of scenarios to explore some of the complex challenges of practice including scenarios exploring the very edges of the depth and breadth of 'osteopathic practice' and being an osteopath.
26. In March 2020, the Committee considered an early draft guidance note and plans for engagement with stakeholders to further develop thinking.

Membership

27. During the period April 2019 to March 2020 the Policy Advisory Committee membership comprised:

Name	Member details	Meetings attended
Sarah Botterill	Council lay member	1/1
Dr Marvelle Brown	External lay member	3/3
John Chaffey	Council registrant member	3/3
Bob Davies	External registrant member	3/3
Elizabeth Elander	Council registrant member	3/3
Dr Bill Gunnyeon (Chair)	Council lay member	3/3
Dr Joan Martin	Council lay member	0/2

Professor Raymond Playford	External lay member	3/3
Alison White	Council lay member	3/3
Nick Woodhead	External registrant member	2/3

28. Members' allowances and expenses for the Committee in 2019-20 were £10,408. In 2018-19 members' allowances and expenses were £14,250. The decrease is due to external venue costs incurred in the prior year.

29. Observers with speaking rights attended:

Name	Meetings attended
The Council for Osteopathic Education Institutions	2
The Institute of Osteopathy	2
The National Council for Osteopathic Research	3
The Osteopathic Alliance	1

Recommendation: to agree the Policy Advisory Committee Annual Report to Council for 2019-2020.

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.

Annex to 11

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