



Policy and Education Committee

15 June 2021

London College of Osteopathic Medicine – RQ expiry date extension (reserved)

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	Recommendation to request an extension of the current LCOM RQ expiry date from 16 July 2022 to 16 July 2023.
Recommendation	To agree to recommend to Council that it should extend the expiry date of the RQ LCOM programme from 16 July 2022 to 16 July 2023 and seek the approval of the Privy Council.
Financial and resourcing implications	The costs of the review will be budgeted for within the 2021-22 financial year are incorporated into our current contract with Mott MacDonald at a cost of £14,305.185. It may be that the expense is carried over until 2022-23, depending on when the review takes place.
Equality and diversity implications	Equality and diversity issues are explored as part of the RQ renewal process and are explicitly referenced as part of the review criteria set out in the Interim Quality Assurance Handbook .
Communications implications	Any change in expiry date would be communicated via the ‘training courses’ section on our website.
Annex	None
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Key messages from the paper

- This paper sets out a proposal for addressing the fact that LCOM has no current cohort of students and the impact of this on the planned Recognised Qualification review visit by agreeing to recommend that the current RQ expiry date of 16 July 2022 be extended by one year to 16 July 2023.

Background

1. The London College of Osteopathic Medicine currently provides the Member of LCOM qualification which is due to expire on 16 July 2022.
2. The last RQ Visit took place in December 2018 and the Education Committee agreed to recommend renewal the RQ for shorter period of three years with specific Conditions to Council at its meeting on the 12 June 2019. This recommendation was agreed by Council at its meeting on 17 July 2020 and Member of LCOM programme received Privy Council approval on 29 October 2019.
3. In order to renew the recognition of the qualification before it expires, a GOsC RQ Review should commence in by July 2021, and had been planned in accordance with this timetable. The RQ specification was agreed by the Committee at a meeting on 7 December 2020.
4. This paper updates the Committee on the planned RQ visit, and the options in this respect, and explains the rationale regarding the extension of the RQ expiry date.

Discussion

5. An RQ renewal visit had been arranged for July 2021, however, LCOM have faced issues with recruitment due to the coronavirus pandemic, and its Trustees have now agreed to delay the commencement of a new cohort until at least September 2021. We now need to consider options for managing the review process. A visit is not going to meet the RQ specification agreed by the Committee unless there are students in place.
6. With the current expiry date, an RQ visitors report would need to be considered by the March 2022 Committee, in order (assuming a recommendation is made to renew) for this to be agreed by the May 2022 Council meeting, and for Privy Council to approve the recognition of the renewal at its July meeting, meaning there is no hiatus in the RQ status.
7. If a student cohort commences in September 2021, it would be technically possible to undertake a review visit in October/early November 2021, and still meet the March PEC and May Council deadlines. However, the first part of the programme is distance learning, which would still provide issues in terms of classroom and clinic observation, even if there was a September cohort.

8. An alternative option might be to conduct a visit without students, based on the submitted documentation. The Committee may not consider this to be a suitable proposal in this case.
9. Another possibility is that students commence after November 2021 and the visit would need to be scheduled from January 2022 onwards. This option would mean that the RQ would expire in July 2022 as the visit report and process would not be concluded before the end of the expiry date. This has an impact for the qualification and the institution.
10. As a contingency for such a scenario, we have explored the possibility of asking Privy Council to extend the current RQ expiry date by a year, from 16 July 2022 to 16 July 2023. This option has never undertaken before, but is not, it seems, prohibited under the terms of The Osteopaths Act. An extension is not specifically referenced in the Act, but nor is it excluded.
11. We raised this option with the Department of Health and Social Care, and it has been indicated that a request to delay the expiry date is possible and there are no immediate concerns with this suggestion.
12. It seems therefore that extending the expiry date of the RQ by a year would offer a pragmatic solution which enables LCOM some extra leeway in recruiting a new cohort, and enables an RQ visit to be delayed until the cohort has started and is undergoing face to face teaching and clinical work, thus ensuring that the RQ specification can be effectively fulfilled.
13. It is further proposed that as LCOM have not had a cohort during the 2020-2021 academic period, then an annual report from LCOM will not be required for this period, pending the RQ visit.

Recommendation: To agree to recommend to Council that it should extend the expiry date of the RQ LCOM programme from 16 July 2022 to 16 July 2023 and seek the approval of the Privy Council.