



Policy and Education Committee

15 June 2023

Annual report of the Policy and Education Committee 2022-23

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	The Annual Report of the Policy and Education Committee which will be presented to Council in July 2023.
Recommendation	To agree the Policy and Education Committee Annual Report to Council for 2022-23
Financial and resourcing implications	The cost of the Committee is included in the budgets approved by Council.
Equality and diversity implications	The Committee considers equality and diversity implications in relation to the workstreams presented before it at each meeting.
Communications implications	This report is made to Council to summarise the work of the Committee from April 2022 to March 2023.
Annex	Policy and Education Committee Terms of Reference
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Annual Report of the Policy and Education Committee 2022-23

Introduction

1. The role of the Policy and Education 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 in giving 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 at the annex.

Membership

4. The Committee consists of five members of Council and four appointed external members. In addition, the key osteopathic sector organisations 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.
5. These observer with speaking rights members are:
 - the Council of Osteopathic Education Institutions (COEI)
 - the Institute of Osteopathy (iO)
 - the National Council for Osteopathic Research (NCOR)
 - the Osteopathic Alliance (OA)
6. Whilst specifications for visits and visit reports are considered in public, other matters related to educational institutions are considered in private due to the commercial nature of the osteopathic educational institutions.

Quality assurance of 'recognised qualifications'

7. During the year, as part of offering advice to Council about the recognition of qualifications, qualification change notifications and ensuring standards, the Committee considered the following:

Activity	2022-2023
Consideration of Education Visitor RQ reports (including new RQs, renewal of RQs and monitoring visits)	Three OEIs
RQ change notifications and consideration of reports and evidence submitted in relation to general and specific conditions.	Four OEIs

Activity	2022-2023
Consideration of annual report analyses (including external examiner and internal annual monitoring reports, and information about student fitness to practise.)	Seven OEIs
Recommendation of withdrawal of RQ	One OEI

Graduate Outcomes and Standards for Education and Training

8. The Committee considered the consultation analysis and updated Graduate Outcomes for Osteopathic Pre-Registration Education and Standards for Education and Training following the work which had been undertaken in the previous business year.
9. The Graduate Outcomes and Standards for Education and Training were recommended to Council for publication and subsequent implementation from 1 September 2022.

Quality Assurance – update to Interim Quality Assurance Handbook

10. Following the implementation of specific Standards for Education and Training (SET) in relation to osteopathic education, OEIs were required to demonstrate how they meet the SET.
11. To facilitate this in relation to the forthcoming RQ visits, the Interim Quality Assurance Handbook was updated to reflect the SET, alongside a revised mapping tool.
12. The Committee approved the requisite changes.

Quality Assurance – Annual Report template 2021-22

13. The Committee considered an updated version of the annual report template for 2021-22. The template enabled OEIs to update the previous year's response as appropriate, and included a new section aimed at encouraging a more reflective response in relation to good practice, challenges, and risk management.

Quality Assurance – development of a risk-based approach

14. The Committee received and discussed a report about developments to the risk-based quality assurance approach. The paper explored the impact of introducing specific Standards for Education and Training, and enhancing consistency between annual reporting and Recognised Qualification review visits, with a framework to inform risk-focused decision-making.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

15. During 2022-23, the CPD evaluation focussed on analyses of data from registration renewal, assurance and verification.

Fitness to Practise: Osteopathic Practice Standards and Adjunctive Therapies

16. The Committee received the results of the consultation in relation to the draft '*Guidance on the application of the Osteopathic Practice Standards in relation to adjunctive therapies, non-osteopathic treatments or other work undertaken by osteopaths*' and considered changes made as a result. Additionally the Committee considered the Equality Impact Assessment.
17. The guidance was considered and recommended to Council for publication.

Fitness to Practise (FtP): Draft Interim Order Guidance and Draft Practice Note on Undertakings

18. The Committee was asked to consider the revised *Guidance on Interim Orders* and the *Practice Note on Undertakings*.
19. Revisions to the documents followed an external audit (undertaken in August and September 2021) of all Investigating Committee and Professional Conduct Committee applications for an interim order during the period between January 2020 - March 2021.
20. While no concerns regarding patient safety were identified within the audit report, the recommendations included refreshing GOsC's guidance on imposing interim orders and the practice note on undertakings in relation to risk assessment and proportionality. It also recommended making the procedure for undertakings clearer.
21. The Committee recommended the revised documentation to Council.

Transition into practice

22. A paper was presented to the Committee exploring how to support new graduates making the transition into practice, with the aim being to build communities of practice for new graduates.
23. The paper proposed a schedule of research activities to inform our understanding, and a timeline for recommendations and communications arising from the research. Further reports will follow to the Committee.

Whistleblowing Policy

24. The GOsC Whistleblowing Policy, which had been in place since 2014, was reviewed and presented to the Committee. Practical changes were made to the policy to improve accessibility. Specific amendments include:
 - setting out the criteria that must be met for a concern to amount to a qualifying disclosure;
 - Addition of a section describing the help available for whistleblowers;

- Broader changes, for example, the addition of the requirement that GOsC, is required to publish an annual report on the whistleblowing disclosures.

25. As the amendments to the policy predominantly focussed on restructuring existing information, a consultation was not considered by the Committee to be required.

Patients

26. The Committee received an update on the Values project, developed in partnership by osteopaths and patients, the General Dental Council and the Collaborating Centre for Values Based Practice.

27. The Committee noted the project had developed six resources: four aimed specifically at patients and two at osteopaths. There is a plan for evaluation of those resources by a researcher.

28. An event was held at St Catherine's College, Oxford, to launch the resources.

29. In October 2022, the Committee also noted an update on our patient engagement activity and considered a proposal for a Patient Council Associate Programme. Work continues on these activities with the Committee due to receive regular updates.

National Council of Osteopathic Research Report: Types of concerns and complaints raised against osteopaths

30. In October 2022, the Committee considered the National Council of Osteopathic Research (NCOR) Report, Types of concerns and complaints raised about osteopaths and osteopathic services in 2013 to 2021, ahead of the report being presented to Council.

Data collection and insight and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

31. The Committee received the results of our EDI Pilot, following the initial focus groups. The target response rate of 50 was slightly exceeded. The sample was broadly representative of the UK population and informed our understanding of osteopaths with protected characteristics.

32. The EDI pilot told us that:

- The majority of respondents did not feel that people with protected characteristics had equitable opportunities to advance their careers within osteopathy.
- Osteopaths tended to report a slightly higher proportion of unwelcome comments or conduct in training (43%) than in their last 12 months of practice (23.5%).

- Some osteopaths report anxiety about what GOSc will do with the data and question what happens if registrants disclose a disability. This point illustrates that there are barriers which make the collection of EDI data difficult and some of those barriers are within the regulatory framework/legislation e.g. references to 'good health'.

Registrant and Stakeholder Perception Survey

33. The Committee received a report on the proposed approach to registrant and stakeholder perceptions research. The aims are to provide evidence and insight about the Communications and Engagement Strategy and to inform about areas we may need to focus on to support its delivery.

The Committee considered, and provided feedback on, the scope, specification and approach to commissioning the survey.

34. An update was provided to the Committee in March 2023 and a recommendation was made to Council to approve the Invitation to Tender.

Boundaries Project

35. The Committee received a report which outlined the boundaries communication project plan which set out the activities undertaken and planned to support professional practice.
36. The project plan aims to raise awareness, helping osteopaths and education providers understand the issues and to demonstrate the importance of professional judgement, including support to navigate the challenges of judgement and decision-making.

Membership

37. During the period April 2022 to March 2023 the Policy and Education Committee membership comprised:

Name	Member details	Meetings attended
Daniel Bailey	Council registrant member	4 / 4
Sarah Botterill	Council lay member	3 / 4
Professor Deborah Bowman (Chair)	Council lay member	3 / 4
Dr Marvelle Brown	External lay member	2 / 4
Bob Davies	External registrant member	4 / 4
Elizabeth Elander	Council registrant member	4 / 4

Name	Member details	Meetings attended
Professor Patricia McClure	Council lay member (from 1 July 2022)	2 / 4
Professor Raymond Playford	External lay member	4 / 4
Nick Woodhead	External registrant member	4 / 4

38. Observers with speaking rights attended public meetings:

Name	Meetings attended
The Council for Osteopathic Education Institutions	4
The Institute of Osteopathy	4
The National Council for Osteopathic Research	4
The Osteopathic Alliance	4

Recommendation: to agree the Policy Advisory Committee Annual Report to Council for 2022-23

Terms of reference and membership of the Policy and Education Committee

The role of the Policy and Education 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.

Annex to 10

- 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.

Meeting Frequency

Three times yearly or more frequently if required. Some business may be conducted out of committee where required.

Membership

Ordinary members

- Five members of Council, of whom two shall be osteopaths and three shall be lay members. One of the lay members shall be appointed by Council to be Chair of the Committee.
- Four members who are not members of Council.

Co-opted members

The Committee may co-opt up to five members in accordance with Rule 3 of the Statutory Committee Rules.

Observers with speaking rights

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 Education Committee.

Quorum

Five, of which:

- at least one must be a lay person and one must be an osteopath.
- at least two must be members of Council and two must be members who are not members of Council.