



Policy and Education Committee

6 June 2024

The University College of Osteopathy – RQ Specification for review of delivery of existing programmes at additional location

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	Approval of the Review Specification for the change of delivery to existing RQ programmes
Recommendation	To agree the draft review specification for the UCO proposed RQ programmes at Bournemouth.
Financial and resourcing implications	The costs of the review will be budgeted for within the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years. We are liaising with Mott MacDonald as to the timing of the review within the existing contract provision. Other reviews are costed at c£22,083.93, and this should be a similar amount.
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 Graduate Outcomes and Standards for Education and Training (2022) and in the review criteria set out in the Mott MacDonald Interim Quality Assurance Handbook .
Communications implications	The review specification is shared with UCO, Mott MacDonald and will be shared with the Visiting Team when they are appointed, and it is publicly available.
Annex	Draft review specification for the UCO School of Osteopathy initial recognition review.
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Key Points

- UCO are in the process of merging with AECC University College, with the intention that this be completed on 1 August 2024. It is intended that the UCO's existing RQ programmes will be offered for delivery from The AECC Campus in Bournemouth from September 2025 as well as continuing to be delivered at its London sites.
- Although the programmes already have RQ status, delivering these from an additional location is a significant change, and the Committee will wish to seek assurance that the Standards for Education and Training continue to be met in all locations.
- This paper asks the Committee to approve the review specification for the review of changes to delivery of existing UCO Recognised Qualification (RQ) programmes.
- Visitors will be appointed in due course.

Background

1. Before the review is scheduled, the Committee will be asked to approve a team of appropriately qualified Visitors under s12 of the Osteopaths Act 1993, taking into account the review specification at the Annex.
2. This paper asks the Committee to agree the review specification following receipt of a notification of change of delivery from UCO.

Discussion

3. UCO currently deliver the following Recognised Qualifications:
 - Bachelor of Osteopathy (BOst)
 - Integrated Masters of Osteopathy (MOst) (Full time and part time delivery)
 - MSc Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) (MScPR)
4. These are recognised without an expiry date, and an RQ review of these was last conducted in 2023.
5. UCO is in the process of merging with the AECC University College. Its existing RQ programmes above will continue to be taught at the existing UCO sites in London following the merger (planned to complete on from 1 August 2024). The awarding body will be AECC University College after the merger.

6. Privy Council has confirmed that no administrative changes are required to the Privy Council's RQ approval as the approval attaches to the existing qualifications rather than to the awarding body.
7. UCO has now notified us that it is intended to offer its existing RQ programmes for delivery at the [AECC University College](#) Campus in Bournemouth (M.Ost Full time and Part Time from Sep 2025 with MSc Pre-Reg following in either Jan 2026 or Sep 2026). The intention is that the programmes will be delivered consistently across both campuses, but there will be an increase in online delivery of basic science modules for all students. This is to facilitate a more flexible delivery for all students, and to join students from both campuses together online for some teaching.
8. The rationale for the changes cited by UCO includes:
 - 'Provide an alternative location for students to study Osteopathy. This will enable students not wishing to study in Central London with its associated higher living and commuter costs, to study Osteopathy at a well-established campus that delivers a wide range of other regulated healthcare courses; feedback from applicants and existing students have indicated that costs associated with studying a course in London can be prohibitive (HEPI, 2024).
 - Promote the study and profession of Osteopathy further by expanding delivery of high-quality and well-established RQ courses and osteopathic healthcare in the Southwest.
 - Develop osteopathic provision and services in the Southwest, building on the AECC UC's diverse AHP and NHS contacts and portfolio, to broaden and offer greater high-quality healthcare provision at the well-established AECC UC clinic (AECC University College, 2024).
 - Develop and strengthen interprofessional learning of RQ courses at both London and Bournemouth campuses, working with students and Course Teams of other healthcare courses delivered by the merged institution.
 - Respond appropriately to student feedback to increase the level of online delivery using both synchronous and asynchronous learning to provide students with a better study-life balance and cost savings of commuting, especially where today's economic climate means that the majority of students are now having to manage working, family and caring responsibilities whilst studying (Office for Students, 2023;HEPI, 2024).
 - These changes will improve the student experience, by increasing student accessibility and flexibility to study on a high-quality osteopathy course enabling them to become successful osteopaths whilst also bringing affordable osteopathic healthcare to a new geographical area.'
9. In relation to the shift to more online teaching, UCO has provided a detailed narrative, including:

'By Sep 2025, we plan to deliver aspects of the course online (synchronously and asynchronously) to support flexible learning for students. This would form part

of a teaching and learning strategy that introduces a novel Hy-flex delivery mode with online sessions, face-to-face discursive sessions, clinical and practical work. During and subsequent to the pandemic, we have developed a wealth of experience including effective equipment, staff skills and online learning approaches to ensure this works best for student learning and staff demand.

We aim to introduce a Hy-Flex model initially through the delivery of the Functioning Human unit, Research, and Professionalism units. Theoretical and preparatory content will be delivered through high-quality videos, quizzes, curated digital resources, and other asynchronous methods. This will be supported by a shift from some traditional long lectures to online small group tutorials and seminars, incorporating both tutor and student-led sessions. These sessions will be guided by clear learning outcomes mapped to active learning within the small group settings and completion and achievement using asynchronous resources and ongoing formative assessment.'

10. A detailed plan of student and staff training and support has been provided, as well as ongoing monitoring of student engagement via the existing Engagement and Monitoring Group (EMG) that monitors data in relation to a student's attendance, reasonable adjustments that are needed, along with any other concerns that have been raised.
11. During the academic year 2024-2025, UCO report that there will be a pilot of selected sessions delivered online, both synchronously and asynchronously. Online materials and sessions will be developed in consultation with students and teaching staff to inform the formal implementation approach in September 2025. Both full-time and part-time students will be involved in the pilot to address the specific requirements of these different groups.
12. In relation to clinical teaching, AECC UC has had a chiropractic [teaching clinic](#) on site for many decades. This has now expanded into a multidisciplinary facility with chiropractic, physiotherapy, sports rehabilitators, first contact practitioners, radiographers and sports scientists, and will develop its osteopathy provision as the programmes roll out.
13. A copy of notification of the changes and process form supporting narrative and documentation is available to PEC members on request from Banye Kanon (bkanon@osteopathy.org.uk).
14. If the move to more online teaching were the only change to be made in relation to the existing programmes delivered already by UCO, particularly with the strength of narrative and evidence supplied in support of this, a further RQ review may not have been the inevitable outcome. It's the move to teaching the existing RQ programmes in a completely different location, and the logistical and resource issues that this raises which will necessitate a formal but focused review to provide assurance to the Committee as to how outcomes and standards will continue to be met.

Review specification

15. The review will be conducted based on the review specification. A draft review specification is presented at the Annex for the Committee to approve. This takes into account the fact that the programmes are already recognised for delivery without an expiry date (last reviewed in May 2023).

Timing of the visit

16. The timing is yet to be determined in discussion with UCO and Mott MacDonald, but will be scheduled to take part within the 2024-2025 academic year.
17. The review specification may be subject to change due to changing circumstances prior to the review. Any substantive changes to the specification will be notified to the Committee for agreement.

Recommendation:

- To agree the draft review specification for the UCO proposed RQ programmes at Bournemouth.

ANNEX

Draft Monitoring Review Specification for UCO – Change of delivery to existing RQ Programmes.

Background

Review Specification

1. The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) currently deliver the following Recognised Qualifications:
 - Bachelor of Osteopathy (BOst)
 - Integrated Masters of Osteopathy (MOst)
 - MSc Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) (MScPR)
2. These are recognised without an expiry date, and an RQ review of these was last conducted in 2023.
3. UCO are in the process of merging with AECC University College, with a completion date of 1 August 2024 planned for the merger.
4. UCO has notified us of its intention from September 2025, to offer its existing RQ programmes for delivery at the AECC University College campus in Bournemouth as well as its current teaching and clinical sites in London.
5. The GOsC requests that Mott MacDonald schedules a review visit to consider issues around the delivery of the following RQ programmes at the AECC University College:
 - Bachelor of Osteopathy (BOst)
 - Integrated Masters of Osteopathy (MOst) (full time and part time delivery)
 - MSc Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) (MScPR)
6. The aim of the GOsC Quality Assurance process is to:
 - Put patient safety and public protection at the heart of all activities
 - Ensure that graduates meet the standards outlined in the Osteopathic Practice Standards
 - Make sure graduates meet the outcomes of the Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education.
 - Identify good practice and innovation to improve the student and patient experience
 - Identify concerns at an early stage and help to resolve them effectively without compromising patient safety or having a detrimental effect on student education
 - Identify areas for development or any specific conditions to be imposed upon the course providers to ensure standards continue to be met
 - Promote equality and diversity in osteopathic education.

7. The format of the review will be based on the [interim Mott MacDonald Handbook \(2022\)](#) and the [Graduate Outcomes and Standards for Education and Training \(2022\)](#). The Committee would like to ensure that the following areas are explored:
- Plans for delivery of the existing RQ programmes at the merged AECC University College
 - How consistency in teaching across all teaching sites will be achieved to ensure that Graduate Outcomes are met and the Standards for Education and Teaching are delivered.
 - How an osteopathic provision will be developed and incorporated within the teaching clinic, so that this will be sufficiently developed to meet the clinical education needs of students as they progress through the programme.
 - How the distinctiveness of osteopathy as an approach to healthcare is maintained within a multi-disciplinary teaching and clinical environment in accordance with the Graduate Outcomes.
 - Plans to increase online teaching of some aspects of the programme – how has this been developed to take into account student feedback and preferences, and how consistency and quality of experience is assured.
8. The following Standards for Education and Training are highlighted as particularly important to consider in the context of teaching an existing RQ programme in a new site, but these are not inclusive and should be considered in the context of all the Standards for Education and Training and the whole provision. (UCO's courses underwent an RQ visit in May 2023, and thus have been considered within the last year in the context of the SET):
- a. Programme design, delivery and assessment
 - All staff involved in the design and delivery of programmes are trained in all policies of the educational provider (including policies to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion and are supportive, accessible and able to fulfil their roles effectively)
 - Subject areas will be delivered by educators with relevant and appropriate knowledge and expertise
 - b. Programme governance, leadership and management
 - They implement effective governance mechanisms that ensure compliance with all legal, regulatory and educational requirements.... This should include effective risk management and governance andgovernance over the design, delivery and award of qualifications.
 - Systems will be in place to provide assurance with supporting evidence that students have fully demonstrated learning outcomes.
 - c. Learning culture

- Students are supported to develop as learners and professionals during their education
 - External expertise is used within the quality review of osteopathic pre-registration programmes
- d. Resources
- they provide adequate, accessible and sufficient resources across all aspects of the programme, including clinical provision, to ensure that all learning outcomes are delivered effectively and efficiently.
 - the staff-student ratio is sufficient to provide education and training that is safe, accessible and of the appropriate quality within the acquisition of practical osteopathic skills, and in the teaching clinic and other interactions with patients.
- e. Students
- are provided with clear and accurate information regarding the curriculum, approaches to teaching, learning and assessment and the policies and processes relevant to their programme.
- f. Clinical experience
- clinical experience is provided through a variety of mechanisms to ensure that students are able to meet the clinical outcomes set out in the Graduate Outcomes for Osteopathic Pre-Registration Education.
 - there are effective means of ensuring that students gain sufficient access to the clinical experience required to develop and integrate their knowledge and skills, and meet the programme outcomes, in order to sufficiently be able to deliver the Osteopathic Practice Standards
- g. Staff support and development
- there are sufficient numbers of experienced educators with the capacity to teach, assess and support the delivery of the Recognised Qualification. Those teaching practical osteopathic skills and theory, or acting as clinical or practice educators, must be registered with the General Osteopathic Council, or with another UK statutory health care regulator if appropriate to the provision of diverse education opportunities.
- h. Patients
- patient safety within their teaching clinics, remote clinics, simulated clinics and other interactions is paramount, and that care of patients

and the supervision of this, is of an appropriate standard and based on effective shared decision making.

- the staff student ratio is sufficient to provide safe and accessible education of an appropriate quality.

Provisional Timetable

9. The provisional timetable for the review will be as follows, but is subject to review in discussion with UCO, Mott and the Visiting Team:

RQ visit in TBC 2025

Month/Year	Action/Decision
June 2024	Committee agreement of initial review specification
October 2024	Statutory appointment of visitors
10 weeks before the visit TBC	Submission of mapping document
c. TBC	Review takes place
5 weeks following visit	Draft Report to UCO for comments - statutory period.
TBC	Comments returned and final report agreed.
TBC	Preparation of Action Plan to meet proposed conditions (if any)
June 2025	Recommendation from the Committee to Council whether to make changes to the RQ programme approval (e.g., conditions or addition of an expiry date)
July 2025	Recognition of Qualification ongoing by the General Osteopathic Council
September 2025	Privy Council Approval