



## Policy and Education Committee

6 June 2024

### Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Student Fitness to Practise

<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Purpose</b>	For noting
<b>Issue</b>	Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education – consultation on reviewed guidance.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To note the update on the outcome of the consultation on Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education.</li><li>2. To note the proposal to convene a stakeholder working group to consider our response to the feedback and further updates to the draft guidance as a result.</li></ol>
<b>Financial and resourcing implications</b>	Consultation and engagement costs are included in our 2023/24 budget.
<b>Equality and diversity implications</b>	Equality and diversity issues are a key component of this work. We sought advice from an EDI consultant to inform the review process and we will further explore this as part of the consultation. Equality issues featured in the consultation, and will be reflected in the final draft to be reported to the Committee in October 2024. An updated Equality Impact Assessment will be included with the final guidance.
<b>Communications implications</b>	The consultation will be communicated through our usual channels as outlined in the consultation strategy.
<b>Annexes</b>	Annex A - Draft Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education  Annex B – Consultation analysis
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## Key messages from the paper

- This paper reports to the Committee with an analysis of the consultation feedback received in relation to the draft updated Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education.
- This outlines proposed areas for consideration as a result and a proposal to convene a stakeholder reference group to consider collaboratively further changes to the draft guidance to reflect feedback received.

## Background

1. At its [October 2023](#) meeting, the Committee agreed to recommend 'Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers' (Annex A), for consultation in accordance with the strategy outlined.
2. Council further agreed this for consultation at its [November 2023](#) meeting.
3. The consultation took place as agreed and was open from 7 February 2024 to 1 May 2024.
4. This paper provides an initial analysis of feedback received (Annex B) and outlines a course of action to collaboratively consider further updates to the draft as a result, with a view to reporting a final draft for consideration to the Committee at its October 2024 meeting.

## Discussion

5. The [October 2023](#) Policy and Education Committee paper explains the developmental process behind the update of this guidance. Changes to the current guidance were outlined including:
  - Greater clarity around the focus on professional behaviours and health and disability issues including specifying what those professional behaviours looked like for students for the first time.
  - Combining the guidance into one document aimed at both students and education providers.
  - Ensuring the guidance reflects the 2019 version of the Osteopathic Practice Standards, and further developed the professional behaviour aspect of the document, and replaced the table in the current version with a more integrated reference to the standards in each theme of the OPS, with examples of what is expected, as well as types of behaviours which might raise concerns in relation to each.
  - A review of the procedural section regarding the management of fitness to practice cases, including the context within which they take place, and placing this in an Annex rather than in the main body of the guidance.

6. These aspects were reflected in the updated guidance upon which we consulted (included again for information as Annex A).
7. An overview of consultation responses and feedback is set out as Annex B, which includes an analysis of these and an overview what we now propose to do.
8. Key areas for further consideration as set out in the analysis include:
  - Expansion of case studies to ensure consistency and application to illustrate the effective implementation of the guidance (cases where students are found able to continue with remediation, contrasted also with cases where this is not the case).
  - A further review of the contrast between 'low-level' and 'serious' concerns, and how low-level issues can combine to become a serious issue.
  - The way in which student fitness to practise processes are referenced, and the extent to which this aspect remains helpful within the guidance and reflective of contemporary regulatory thinking.
  - Clarity and accessibility – ensuring effective design and presentation of the guidance (this is implicit, really, but worth noting given the comments received in the feedback).
  - Some helpful comments from the patient focus groups and others about some of the expected student behaviours
9. Our suggestion is that we convene a stakeholder working group for a one-off meeting to consider the key aspects raised in the consultation and further updates as a result of these. We adopted this approach when we reviewed the Osteopathic Practice Standards and the Graduate Outcomes and Standards for Education and Training, but would not normally do so for a guidance document such as this. In this case, however, we are keen to ensure that the points raised are properly addressed in a collaborative format with stakeholders (particularly educators, students, patients and the Institute of Osteopathy). This will provide further assurance to the Committee when we report with a final draft for approval in October 2024.

#### *Timetable*

10. An updated timetable for the consultation as set out in the strategy document is as follows:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
June 2024	Preliminary report to PEC
By September 2024	Stakeholder working group
October 2024	Report to Committee with final post consultation draft for consideration
November 2024	Report to Council for agreement to publish
Following Council approval	Publish and publicise guidance

**Recommendations**

1. To note the update on the outcome of the consultation on Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education.
2. To note the proposal to convene a stakeholder working group to consider our response to the feedback and further updates to the draft guidance as a result.