



Policy and Education Committee

4 October 2023

Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers -

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education – consultation on reviewed guidance.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To agree to recommend 'Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education, for consultation in accordance with the strategy outlined.2. To agree the Consultation Strategy and Consultation document.3. To note the Equality Impact Assessment.
Financial and resourcing implications	Consultation and engagement costs are included in our 2023/24 budget.
Equality and diversity implications	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. An equality impact assessment has been developed and is included as Annex D.
Communications implications	The consultation will be communicated through our usual channels as outlined in the consultation strategy.
Annexes	Annex A - Draft Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education Annex B – Consultation strategy



General
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3

Annex C – Consultation document

Annex D – Equality impact assessment

Authors

Steven Bettles and Banye Kanon

Key messages from the paper

- This paper reports to the Committee with draft updated Guidance about professional behaviours and student fitness to practise in osteopathic education, and seeks agreement to recommend this to Council for consultation.
- A draft consultation strategy and a draft consultation document is presented to the Committee for recommendation to Council for formal consultation.
- An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the consultation.

Background

1. We reported to the Committee at its [October 2022](#) meeting on plans to update various Quality Assurance Policies.
2. The current guidance in relation to professional behaviours and student fitness to practise was published in 2016, and is available on our [website](#)¹.
3. This paper updates the Committee on the outcome of this process, and sets out plans for a formal consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment.

Discussion

4. We sent a preliminary questionnaire to osteopathic educational providers for distribution to students and staff. The aim was to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to give initial feedback on the current guidance, including what worked well, what might be enhanced, and any other feedback. We received a small number of responses (16) but it was useful in highlighting some areas that we might enhance, particularly around language and the ways in which case studies might be improved.
5. We also sought initial feedback on the current guidance from an EDI consultant, to further explore which aspects we might need to take into account in updating the guidance. Issues raised included:
 - Greater clarity around the focus on professional behaviours and health and disability issues
 - Reference to behaviours that might be sexist, homophobic, ageist, disablist.
 - References to gender in the case studies not being helpful – suggest that these be made neutral unless a specific case requires gender to be referenced.
 - Reference to neurodivergence.

¹ <https://www.osteopathy.org.uk/training-and-registering/becoming-an-osteopath/student-fitness-to-practise/>

6. The suggestions made have been reflected in the updated draft included as annex A. Other changes include:
- Combining the guidance into one document aimed at both students and education providers. There is a degree of cross-referencing between the two current documents (one aimed at students, and one at education providers) and we are keen to explore the impact of combining these into one document. Combining the documents in this way has enabled us to reduce considerable repetition between the documents.
 - Ensuring the guidance reflects the 2019 version of the Osteopathic Practice Standards. We have 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. The aim is to focus more on professional behaviours than on process, but to retain this as an Annex to support institutions and students.

Consultation

7. A draft consultation strategy has been developed and is included as Annex B to this paper. The consultation document draft is included as Annex C. The Committee is asked to consider these and provide feedback.

Equality Impact Assessment

8. An Equality Impact Assessment has been developed and is included as Annex D. This will continue to be updated as the project develops.

Timetable

9. The indicative timetable for the consultation as set out in the strategy document is as follows:

Month	Activity
November 2023	Council approval of draft guidance for consultation and consultation approach
Early January 2023 – End March 2024	Consultation
April – May 2024	Analyse feedback and finalise draft guidance
June 2024	Report to PEC
July 2024	Report to Council
Following Council approval	Publish and publicise guidance

Recommendations

1. To agree to recommend 'Guidance about Professional Behaviours and Fitness to Practise for Osteopathic Students and Educational Providers', for consultation in accordance with the strategy outlined.
2. To agree the Consultation Strategy and Consultation document.
3. To note the Equality Impact Assessment.