



Policy and Education Committee

10 October 2024

The BCNO Group – Recognised Qualification Specification update and Visitor approval

Classification	Public
Purpose	For decision
Issue	The agreement of the updated Review Specification and appointment of the visitors for the BCNO Group’s Recognised Qualification Review.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To agree the updated review specification at the Annex.2. To agree to appointment of Brian McKenna, Phil Stephenson and Stephen Hartshorn for review of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost)• BSc (Hons) Osteopathy (modified attendance)• BSc (Hons) Osteopathic Medicine• Master of Osteopathy and BSc (Hons) Osteopathy, (validated by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) awarded by the ESO)• Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost) and Bachelors in Osteopathic Medicine (B.OstMed), (validated by University of Plymouth (UoP) awarded by BCOM)
Financial and resourcing implications	The costs of the review will be budgeted for within the 2023-24 & 2024-25 financial year. It has been added to our current contract with Mott MacDonald at a cost of £22,083.93 to enable it to take place in 2025.
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 the BCNO Group, 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 BCNO Group Renewal of Recognition review.
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Key Messages

- This paper asks the committee to approve the updated review specification for the next BCNO RQ visit to take into account of year 1s being taught again at Maidstone.
- This paper also seeks the approval of the visitors.
- The visit is due scheduled to take place on Tuesday 18 February – Thursday 20 February 2025.

Background

1. The BCNO Group currently provides the following qualifications which are approved with an expiry date of 31 August 2026.
 - Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost)
 - BSc (Hons) Osteopathy (modified attendance)
 - BSc (Hons) Osteopathic Medicine
 - Master of Osteopathy and BSc (Hons) Osteopathy, (validated by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) awarded by the ESO)
 - Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost) and Bachelors in Osteopathic Medicine (B.OstMed), (validated by University of Plymouth (UoP) awarded by BCOM)
2. This paper asks the Committee to agree the updated review specification following the recent notification of change in relation to year 1s being recruited to Maidstone again.
3. The Committee is also 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.

Discussion

Review specification

4. The BCNO Group's Senior Management Team previously announced that undergraduate teaching will be transitioning from both the Maidstone and London sites and from 2024, all first year groups will only be taught in London. This means that for 2024, there will be no first year taught in Maidstone, with Years 2, 3 and 4 being taught out at the site at Tonbridge Road Maidstone. The RQ Specification previously agreed was drafted on this basis.
5. The decision has recently been reviewed however, and it is now intended that there will be a first year recruited to the Maidstone site in Tonbridge Road from September 2025. Teaching at the Boxley House site has now ended, and renovations to the Tonbridge Road site have also been completed to facilitate all teaching and clinical activities to take place on this site. The ground floor of this

building is now dedicated to teaching and student relaxation. The building hosts three large classrooms fitted with hydraulic couches and modern audio-visual equipment. The Review Specification has been updated to reflect this change. As there will be no first years for the 2024-25 year, it would be important to assess the management of this fallow year. This has been accounted for in the updated review specification set out in the Annex.

6. We will also be sharing this updated review specification with the BCNO group.

Appointment of Visitors

7. Section 12 of the Osteopaths Act 1993 provides that 'The Education Committee may appoint Visitors to report to the Education Committee on the nature and quality of instruction and such other matters as required to report on by the Committee'.
8. The Committee is invited to appoint Visitors to participate in the review of the BCNO Group's qualifications as outlined in the updated review specification in the Annex.
9. The proposed Visit Team is:

Name	Role
Brian McKenna	Osteopath
Phil Stephenson	Lay
Stephen Hartshorn	Osteopath

10. These recommended Visitors are members of the Visitor pool (comprising lay and osteopathic visitors) administered by Mott MacDonald who undertake selection, training and appraisal of all visitors on our behalf. All visitors participated in training delivered by the Mott MacDonald prior to the visit.
11. We have checked that the proposed osteopathic visitors are currently registered. We have also checked the Visiting Team with the BCNO Group who have confirmed that there are no issues for the Committee to consider in appointing the team. The proposed Visit Team has not declared any conflict of interests in undertaking the review of the BCNO Group. There is no known reason why we should not appoint these visitors.

Recommendations

1. To agree the updated review specification at the Annex.

2. To agree the appointment of Brian McKenna, Phil Stephenson and Stephen Hartshorn as Visitors for the review of the BCNO Group's following programmes:

- Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost)
- BSc (Hons) Osteopathy (modified attendance)
- BSc (Hons) Osteopathic Medicine
- Master of Osteopathy and BSc (Hons) Osteopathy, (validated by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) awarded by the ESO)
- Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost) and Bachelors in Osteopathic Medicine (B.OstMed), (validated by University of Plymouth (UoP) awarded by BCOM)

Draft Review Specification for BCNO Group - Renewal of Recognised Qualification Review. (As at 27 September 2024)

Background

1. The BCNO Group currently provides the following qualifications which are due to expire on 31 August 2026:
 - Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost)
 - BSc (Hons) Osteopathy (modified attendance)
 - BSc (Hons) Osteopathic Medicine
 - Master of Osteopathy and BSc (Hons) Osteopathy, (validated by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) awarded by the ESO)
 - Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost) and Bachelors in Osteopathic Medicine (B.OstMed), (validated by University of Plymouth (UoP) awarded by BCOM)

Review Specification

2. The GOsC requests that Mott MacDonald schedules a renewal of recognition review for Visitors to report on the following qualifications:
 - Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost)
 - BSc (Hons) Osteopathy (modified attendance)
 - BSc (Hons) Osteopathic Medicine
 - Master of Osteopathy and BSc (Hons) Osteopathy, (validated by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) awarded by the ESO)
 - Masters in Osteopathy (M.Ost) and Bachelors in Osteopathic Medicine (B.OstMed), (validated by University of Plymouth (UoP) awarded by BCOM)
3. 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.
4. The format of the review will be based on the [interim Mott MacDonald Handbook \(2020\)](#) and the [Graduate Outcomes and Standards for Education and Training \(2023\)](#). In addition to the usual review format for a renewal of recognition

review, the Committee would like to ensure that the following areas are explored (account for new RQ):

- Arrangements to manage the fallow year in recruitment to Year 1 at the Maidstone campus for 2024-25 and in subsequent years, including impacts on staffing and patients.
 - The provision of resources and facilities to accommodate the consolidation of Kent based teaching at the Tonbridge Road site following the sale of Boxley House.
 - How feedback from staff is gained to ensure that that staff needs are addressed appropriately.
 - How shared decision making with patients is embedded within the teaching clinics.
 - How the safeguarding policy is implemented and how patients are made aware of this.
 - How feedback on students from staff is managed centrally to ensure actions are being addressed and resolved, to support their development as learners and professionals.
 - How the outputs from student feedback mechanisms are cohesively reviewed to ensure actions are effectively identified, monitored and implemented.
 - How data monitoring practices of student experience within the clinic is being fed back to relevant individuals for action, for example, to the marketing team to undertake targeted advertising for certain patient presentations.
 - The processes by which the College reflects on student complaints to identify any required actions to ensure there is an effective process in place for responding to and learning from student complaints.
5. In addition, BCNO has submitted a new Recognised Qualification application for the following course for Visitors to report on in addition of the qualifications listed above.:
- BSc (Hons) Osteopathic Medicine (3 year full time)
6. This programme is to be validated by the University of Plymouth in June 2024. It is intended that students will commencing this course from September 2025 with the first cohort graduating in 2028. The new course will be delivered alongside the courses above. The first year cohort is expected to be 30 students with the second year cohort expected to be 45 students. A copy of the Recognised Qualification (RQ) Initial Recognition Declaration of Intent and RQ Initial Recognition Application Questionnaire is attached for information along with supporting documentation outlined.
7. As a result of this application, the GOsC requests that Mott MacDonald includes this initial recognition review as part of the existing renewal of recognition

review.

8. For the new RQ Visitors are also requested to particularly explore the following in relation to the planned new qualification. It will be important to have assurance that the planned curriculum meets the Graduate Outcomes and that intended delivery of the curriculum will evidence the appropriate quality and quantity of clinical experience as outlined in the Graduate Outcomes at paragraphs 22 to 28 and that there are sufficient resources to do this alongside the current qualifications delivered.

9. The following Standards for Education and Training are highlighted as particularly important to review in terms of the new curriculum and plans for delivery to meet the Graduate Outcomes in an existing course provider but these are not inclusive and should be considered in the context of all the Standards for Education and Training and the whole provision:
 - 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)
 - Curricula and assessments are developed and evaluated by appropriately experienced and qualified educators and practitioners
 - They involve the participation of students, patients, and where possible and appropriate, the wider public in the design and development of programmes, and ensure that feedback from these groups is regularly taken into account and acted upon.
 - The programme designed and planned for delivery reflects the skills, knowledge base, attitudes and values, set out in the Graduate Outcomes (including all outcomes including effectiveness in teaching students about health inequalities and the non-biased treatment of diverse patients)
 - Assessment methods are reliable and valid and provide a fair measure of students' achievement and progression for the relevant part of the programme.
 - 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. Quality evaluation, review and assurance
- effective mechanisms are in place for the monitoring and review of the programme, to include information regarding student performance and progression (and information about protected characteristics), as part of a cycle of quality review.
 - external expertise is used within the quality review of osteopathic pre-registration programmes
- e. 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.
- f. 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.
- g. 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
- h. 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.

i. 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.

10. Visitors should consider the stage of development of the course in making their recommendations and should consider if further inspection should be recommended prior to the first cohort of students graduating in the context of this established provider.

Provisional Timetable

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

RQ visit in TBC 2025

Month/Year	Action/Decision
March/June 2024	Committee agreement of initial review specification and statutory appointment of visitors
10 weeks before the visit c November / December 2024	Submission of mapping document
18-20 February 2025	Review takes place
5 weeks following visit c. March 2025	Draft Report to BCNO for comments - statutory period.
April / May 2025	Comments returned and final report agreed.
May 2025	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

This timetable will be the subject of negotiation with BCNO Group, GOsC and Mott MacDonald to ensure mutually convenient times that fit well with the quality assurance cycle.