



General
Osteopathic
Council

iO
THE INSTITUTE
of OSTEOPATHY



Response to the Association of Nutritionists consultation: Competence Requirements for UKVRN Registered Nutritionist (Healthcare)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

About us

This is a joint response from the following organisations in the osteopathic sector:

The General Osteopathic Council

The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) is the statutory regulator for osteopaths, established by the Osteopaths Act 1993. It holds the UK Register of osteopaths. It is illegal to practise as an osteopath in the UK, unless registered with the GOsC. In common with the other eight statutory health professional regulators (the General Chiropractic Council, General Dental Council, the General Medical Council, the General Optical Council, the General Pharmaceutical Council, the Health and Care Professions Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland), the GOsC is overseen by the Professional Standards Authority and has functions to set standards, quality assure undergraduate and pre-registration education, hold the statutory register and remove or restrict the practice of osteopaths who do not meet standards (further information is available at www.osteopathy.org.uk).

The Council for Osteopathic Educational Institutions

The Council for Osteopathic Educational Institutions (COEI) is the academic body bringing together the UK educational institutions offering osteopathic qualifications quality assured by and leading to registration with the General Osteopathic Council.

The Institute of Osteopathy

The Institute of Osteopathy (iO) is the professional body for osteopaths representing around 70% of the osteopathic profession (further information is available at www.osteopathy.org).

The British Naturopathic and Osteopathic Association

The British Naturopathic and Osteopathic Association is the post-graduate special interest group for those interested in naturopathic osteopathy (further information is available at: <http://bnoa.org.uk/index.php>).

The annex provides background information about osteopathy and standards.

Consultation Response

We make the following points in relation to the consultation:

Purpose and value of registration with the voluntary register

We note that there is more than one organisation for registering nutritionists. Some voluntary registers are provided with accredited status by the Professional Standards Authority. The purpose and value of voluntary registration as a nutritionist should be clear to the public.

Entry to the voluntary register

The entry point to the proposed Register of Nutritionists is registration with some but not all of the healthcare professional regulators. As some osteopaths give nutritional advice as part of their practice, we suggest that osteopaths, as statutorily regulated healthcare professionals, should not be excluded from applying for entry to the register.

Assessment for entry onto the voluntary register

In relation to the assessment against competences for entry to the voluntary register, we suggest that formal education and training in nutrition is required for admittance to a post-registration voluntary register for nutrition and that this should not simply be assessed on the basis of experience.

Next steps

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss the voluntary register and the osteopathic sector more broadly if that would be helpful.

Osteopathy and Standards

The Institute of Osteopathy advises that 'Over 30,000 people every day visit an osteopath suffering from a variety of conditions including neck or back pain, joint or muscular pain, sports injuries, recurring headaches and more. Osteopathy is a gentle and effective hands-on approach to healthcare, based on the principle that the way your body moves influences how it functions.'

Osteopaths are trained to be primary contact healthcare practitioners. The core standards, set by the General Osteopathic Council, are the *Osteopathic Practice Standards*. These require osteopaths to take a case history, perform an examination or undertake investigations, form a differential or working diagnosis and treat and/or refer the patient to another health practitioner. Osteopaths must always work within the limits of their competence.

The *Osteopathic Practice Standards* are available at:

<http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/standards/osteopathic-practice/>

Osteopathic treatment approaches vary. Some osteopaths will provide advice on nutrition as part of their osteopathic practice.

The *Osteopathic Practice Standards* include the following:

- Standard B2 – 'You must have sufficient knowledge and skills to support your work as an osteopath'. The associated guidance includes: 'Your knowledge and skills should be drawn from formal training, research and other sources such as self-reflection and feedback. To be sufficient, they should include: 1.4 – Sufficient knowledge of psychology and social determinants of health to provide context for your clinical decision making and patient management.'

The GOsC also publishes *Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration Education* (available at <http://www.osteopathy.org.uk/news-and-resources/document-library/training/guidance-for-osteopathic-pre-registration-education/>), which sets out the learning outcomes for osteopathic students to demonstrate before they are awarded an osteopathic qualification. These learning outcomes include aspects of diet and nutrition, within the context of osteopathic practice as follows:

- '19. Osteopaths must possess the relevant knowledge and skills to function effectively as primary-contact healthcare professionals.
- 20. The graduate will be able to do the following:
 - a. Know and understand the key concepts and bodies of knowledge in order to be able to practise osteopathy, underpinned by osteopathic principles and appropriate guidelines. These key concepts include: ...;
 - (ii) principles of a healthy lifestyle (for example, nutrition) ...
 - d. Take an accurate and appropriate patient history, utilising all relevant sources of information (including for example, diet and exercise)

- p. Recognise the impact of a sedentary lifestyles and the possible effects of diet, nutrition, alcohol and drugs, and use opportunities to promote health by explaining the implications to patients.

Further information about osteopathy and standards can be obtained from the organisations contributing to this response.

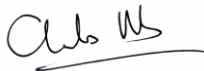
Yours sincerely



Tim Walker
Chief Executive, General Osteopathic Council



Maurice Cheng
Chief Executive, Institute of Osteopathy



Charles Hunt
Chair, Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions

Manoj Mehta

Manoj Mehta
Chair, British Naturopathic and Osteopathic Association