

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE
16 MARCH 2011
PRE-REGISTRATION CURRICULUM CONTENT**

<u>Classification</u>	Public
<u>Purpose</u>	For decision
<u>Issues</u>	The GOsC intends to publish a revised Standard of Proficiency and Code of Practice as part of a combined Osteopathic Practice Standards document in June 2011. Graduates with 'recognised qualifications' must meet the new standards when they come into force in June 2012. Would a pre-registration core curriculum or core learning outcomes document be helpful to support our regulatory functions?
<u>Recommendations</u>	To agree to develop a pre-registration core curriculum content or core learning outcomes review. To agree the draft terms of reference for the review.
<u>Financial and resourcing implications</u>	The budget for the development of the pre-registration curriculum content project for 2011/12 is £10 000.
<u>Equality and Diversity implications</u>	None arising from this paper.
<u>Communications Implications</u>	Clear communication on the purpose and outcome of the pre-registration curriculum content or core learning outcomes review with the Osteopathic Educational Institutions (OEIs) will need to be continued. In due course, this could be facilitated with our GOsC / OEI Group and perhaps also through a dedicated working group for specific aspects of the work. Any core curriculum or core learning outcomes which are developed would be formally consulted on with all stakeholders.
<u>Annexes</u>	Annex A - Terms of reference for pre-registration curriculum content review
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Background

1. An initial analysis undertaken of the OEIs' high level course content in September 2009 demonstrated that there appeared to be little core to all institutions. The presentation setting out this high level analysis is available on request from Joy Winyard (jwinyard@osteopathy.org.uk or 020 7357 6655 x239).
2. The GOsC Corporate Plan 2010 to 2013 states that we will 'consider the need for core curriculum content to supplement the Osteopathic Practice Standards'. It also states that we will 'prepare and carry out a consultation on the concept of a pre-registration curriculum content document' during 2011/12. Our 2010/11 Business Plan states that we will 'scope and agree the terms of reference for this work taking into account other work streams'.

Discussion

What are the issues to be addressed?

3. The GOsC has recently conducted a consultation on revisions to its Code of Practice and Standard of Proficiency, with proposals to combine the two under the title of Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS).
4. One of the clear messages that came out of the OPS consultation was that some of the descriptions of competencies, particularly in the Standard of Proficiency sections were not specific enough. Statements such as: 'You must understand osteopathic concepts and principles, and apply them critically to patient care' or 'You must have sufficient knowledge and skills to support your work as an osteopath', did not provide the necessary criteria against which an osteopath could be assessed.
5. The purpose of the OPS is to outline the high-level standards and ethical principles required in order to practise as an osteopath and to provide further guidance on how these standards might be interpreted in a contemporary changing context. The purpose of the OPS is not to provide criteria for the assessment of knowledge or skills required by osteopaths.
6. The OEIs which deliver osteopathy courses are required to map their curricula to the Standard of Proficiency and Code of Practice to ensure that these high level outcomes can be achieved by graduating students. This helps us to confirm that the award of the RQ is 'evidence of having reached the standard'¹.
7. In this way, the Standard of Proficiency and Code of Practice (and in due course, the OPS) are not set out as detailed educational learning outcomes but are supported by educational learning outcomes defined by the OEIs.

¹ See Section 14(2) and Section 14(3) Osteopaths Act 1993.

8. The GOsC does not define core pre-registration curriculum content or core educational learning outcomes. Therefore there is no clear method to demonstrate consistency in terms of what osteopaths are trained and assessed in and can therefore do at the point of registration. This could also be a challenge for existing registrants who cannot see how particular aspects of practice might be changing.

How is curriculum content mapped in the current QA process?

9. Currently the GOsC does not have a document that details more specific educational learning outcomes. However, the GOsC and the OEIs have contributed to the development of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Benchmark Statement for Osteopathy available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/statements/osteopathy07.asp>.
10. The Benchmark Statement provides indicative guidance for the development of osteopathy courses including such areas as curriculum content, knowledge, understanding and skills, teaching and assessment. It was developed against the Standard of Proficiency (2000) and the Code of Practice (2005). However, these documents will be replaced by the revised OPS in June / July 2012 when the revised edition is planned to come into force.
11. The Benchmark was adopted by the Education Committee to act as a standard for osteopathic education and has been used by the QAA as part of the review of osteopathic courses and course providers. Whilst an indicative curriculum is set out in the Benchmark statement, it does not require a core that all courses must have.

What are the issues in terms of development of a pre-registration core curriculum content or core educational learning outcomes?

12. In previous work undertaken in relation to developing a Scope of Osteopathic Practice, the GOsC considered that 'there was a considerable lack of clarity around what constitutes osteopathic practice' and that 'this raises questions for us as a regulator, but also has the potential to cause confusion amongst the public' (Osteopathic Practice Framework, March 2009).
13. The GOsC is currently monitoring developments within the profession in relation to the scope of practice and is not actively seeking to lead on this definition itself.
14. Core curriculum content or perhaps core learning outcomes would not specify or limit practitioners to a particular 'scope of practice' at all. Indeed, one might argue that a limiting scope of practice would prevent innovation which is often described as the lifeblood of practice.

15. However a core curriculum or core learning outcomes could, in this sense, indicate the core outcomes that all osteopaths with a 'RQ' have been trained in. This would not affect osteopaths seeking further postgraduate training or CPD in any other area. But perhaps this model could help to reinforce the idea that osteopaths should be trained or should be able to demonstrate competence in areas that were not covered by their pre-registration curriculum, through additional training.
16. The development of such pre-registration core-curriculum content or core learning outcomes may also help currently registered osteopaths to consider CPD in areas that they had not been trained in as an undergraduate but that were considered core for newly qualified osteopaths. This provides a potential opportunity to develop practice across the profession.
17. The prospect of a pre-registration curriculum or core learning outcomes review has previously been raised with the OEIs with no major objections being voiced. The feedback from some has been that some sort of a core curriculum content or core learning outcomes would be helpful.
18. It is submitted that the Education Committee should agree to develop pre-registration curriculum content or core learning outcomes.
19. Draft terms of reference setting out the possible scope for this review are attached at Annex A.

How might a review be carried out?

20. As part of a review, the GOsC would need to collect and analyse data from the OEIs on the content of their existing curricula. The Benchmark statement provides a basis for this, but we would need to consult with the OEIs directly to determine what they see as core parts of their own curriculum – the areas of practice which are essential for producing osteopaths who meet the (in due course) OPS.
21. It would also be important to consider what osteopaths were doing now and how this is or perhaps should be reflected in pre-registration core curricula content or core learning outcomes to ensure that future graduates are prepared for contemporary practice. The Standardised Data Collection project may assist with this. The forthcoming research about patterns of osteopathic practice would also link to this too.
22. Once this review was complete, the Committee could use the analysis to determine the core areas of the curricula which all osteopathy courses should contain with reference to the revised OPS.
23. Once core areas have been identified, the Committee would be in a position to consider developing key learning outcomes and core content. This could provide the 'missing link' in terms of criteria between course curricula and the OPS as identified

in the 2010 OPS consultation and could help to better support the quality assurance process.

24. We would then be in a better position to explore the links to the QAA Benchmark statement to provide a more coherent framework for osteopathic education which clearly links to the revised Osteopathic Practice Standards.
25. Clearly extensive consultation with all stakeholders would be appropriate once sufficiently developed.

Timescales

26. If the Committee is content to agree the broad terms of reference for the review at Annex A, we will next consider a detailed structure and timetable for the commencement of this major piece of work collaborating with the progress of the existing research to inform the review.

Recommendations:

27. To agree to develop a pre-registration core curriculum content or core learning outcomes review.
28. To agree the draft terms of reference for the review.

Pre-curriculum content review

Terms of reference

Purpose

To consider the need for core curriculum content in pre-registration osteopathic education and training.

To develop an education-specific document which details the learning outcomes for osteopathic qualifications to support the revised Osteopathic Practice Standards.

Terms of reference

1. To develop core principles to underpin an effective review.
2. To analyse the core curricula of the OEIs, including the learning outcomes.
3. To analyse relevant research about current osteopathic practice including the standardised data collection project and the patterns of practice research.
4. To develop draft core learning outcomes.
5. To clarify the core contemporary roles for the pre-registration curriculum framework and QAA Benchmark Statement and the relationship to the revised Osteopathic Standards.
6. To consider the implications for the quality assurance framework.
7. To publish a consultation on proposed changes to the framework for undergraduate or pre-registration training.

Method of delivery

We anticipate that this work will be undertaken under the auspices of the Education Committee. Further work about methods of delivery and timescales will be undertaken once the scope of the review is agreed.