

# Return to Practice Process Guidelines

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**Guidelines for Assessors and Osteopaths**



**General  
Osteopathic  
Council**

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## Introduction

1. The General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) needs to ensure that all osteopaths on its register are fit to practice in accordance with the standards set out in the [Osteopathic Practice Standards](#) available on the GOsC website: [www.osteopathy.org.uk](http://www.osteopathy.org.uk)
2. Where an osteopath has been away from the register or non-practising for a significant period of time, there may be a risk that they have lost some of the necessary skills, competence or knowledge that makes them safe and competent. The GOsC considers that this risk may increase after a period of 24 months away from the register or non-practising and operates a return to practice process to evaluate risk. The process is intended to be supportive and contribute to the continuing professional development (CPD) of the osteopath. It is conducted by experienced practising osteopaths acting in the capacity of GOsC reviewers. The process begins with a review of summary information submitted by the osteopath, which may be followed by a discussion with the reviewers. A report is produced after each stage which will make recommendations to the osteopath and may contain guidance in support of their CPD.
3. The process is confidential, and both reviewers and osteopaths are asked to state any potential conflicts of interest before the process begins.

## Aims

4. The aims of the return to practice process are:
  - > To ensure that osteopaths who have been away from the register or non-practising for a period of 24 months are fit to practise safely and competently and are compliant with the [Osteopathic Practice Standards](#).
  - > To offer guidance to the osteopath on how to make the transition back into practice or back to the register.
  - > To offer guidance to the osteopath on continuing professional development activities that will assist them in their return to practice or the register.

## Stages

5. If an osteopath has been away from the register or non-practising for a period of 24 months or more, then they should complete a self-assessment form and undertake a discussion prior to returning to practice. Details are provided below.

### Self-Assessment Form:

6. Initially an osteopath will notify the GOsC that they wish to be restored to fully-practising status or return to the register. A Self-Assessment Form (Appendix 1) is issued to the osteopath for them to complete and return. The form contains a number of questions designed to explore what the osteopath has been doing in their time away from practice to maintain their knowledge and skills, including the submission of their mandatory CPD requirements where the osteopath has remained on the GOsC register. It also asks the osteopath to identify their plans for returning to practice, any areas for development and how they intend to strengthen these areas.
7. The completed form is issued to two GOsC reviewers. They will consider the form and decide whether the osteopath is ready to return to practice or the register immediately or whether further support is required. At this stage, the osteopath may be restored or admitted to the register to fully-practising status, with or without written guidance. If further support is required then they will be invited for a face-to-face, online or telephone discussion.

### Discussion

8. The discussion is undertaken by two GOsC reviewers with the osteopath. The discussion provides an opportunity to explore further some of the aspects of the Self-Assessment Form. The reviewers will ask the osteopath to expand on the answers provided, explore any areas of concern and discuss their proposed plans to move back into practice in the UK. As with the previous stage, the osteopath may be restored directly to fully-practising status or admitted to the register

after the discussion, with or without written guidance. Some suggested questions for reviewers are provided in Appendix 2.

## Outcome

9. Completing the Return to Practice process to the satisfaction of the reviewers means that the osteopath is able to demonstrate that they are capable of meeting the [Osteopathic Practice Standards](#).
10. For both stages there will be one of two outcomes:
  - > The osteopath returns to practice or the register, without further guidance from the GOsC;
  - > The osteopath returns to practice or the register with written guidance on their CPD from the GOsC.

## Reports

11. Each of these two stages will be supported by a consensus report from the GOsC reviewers explaining the reasons for their recommendations. The report will be produced within an agreed time period, usually within one to four weeks of receiving the form or conducting the discussion. A template for the report is provided in Appendix 3.

## Guidance

12. Guidance is provided to support the osteopath's return to practice or the register through relevant CPD or other activities. Where written guidance is to be provided, this should be clearly drafted by the GOsC reviewers and form part of the report.
13. The written guidance may provide advice on CPD prior to or after returning to practice or the register and may include (although is not limited to) the following:
  - > Advice on shadowing colleagues prior to returning to practice;
  - > Advice on visiting an osteopathic education institution (OEI);
  - > Advice on support mechanisms/networks for the osteopath, including, for example, returning initially to a group practice rather than sole practice.
14. It is intended that, as an outcome of the discussion, some activities will be mutually agreed between the osteopath and the reviewers and form the basis of the osteopath's CPD plans. Other activities may take the form of recommendations for consideration by the osteopath.
15. It is not possible for registration to be conditional on completion of the proposed activities outlined in the advice given in the report. However it is strongly advised that the guidance given will inform the osteopath's CPD planning for their forthcoming CPD cycle.

## Return to Practice Self-Assessment Form – Guidelines for Osteopaths

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16. The process for returning to practice in the UK is designed to be developmental, therefore you would benefit from reflecting on your previous practice before completing the self-assessment form.
17. To assist osteopaths rejoining the Register, we have prepared 'the Return to Practice process' preparing to undertake the requirements of the new CPD scheme.

A range of resources designed to support osteopaths in engaging with the CPD scheme is also available at the GOsC's website [cpd@osteopathy.org.uk](mailto:cpd@osteopathy.org.uk). This includes:

- > [workbooks](#)
- > [templates](#)
- > [guidance](#)

18. Whichever approach you take, you should make sure that you:
  - > take account of the circumstances of any period away from practice or away from the UK;
  - > consider your time in practice before you went non-practising or while you were away from the UK and consider your areas of strength and areas for development.
19. In completing the form, you should ensure that you have:
  - > assessed your strengths and areas for development thoroughly;
  - > identified areas for personal development;
  - > outlined appropriate actions to address your practising needs;
  - > considered your CPD strategy for the forthcoming three year cycle based upon your reflections.

## Return to Practice Discussion – Guidelines for Osteopaths

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20. The discussion will be based on the responses you provided to the questions in the Self-Assessment Form.
21. As the return to practice process is intended to support your continuing professional development (CPD) as an osteopath, it is important to be open in identifying individual strengths and areas for development and to have given careful consideration to possible courses of action, so that the GOsC reviewers can offer guidance which is beneficial to you.
22. The GOsC reviewers will explore with you:
  - > A brief overview of your personal circumstances;
  - > How long you had been practising and/or non-practising;
  - > Your reasons for returning to practice in the UK;
  - > How and when you intend to return to practice;
  - > Your future plans for practice (sole practitioner or working with others);
  - > What CPD activities you have undertaken and why;
  - > How these CPD activities have helped you maintain your clinical competence and professional skills;
  - > Which aspects of your clinical competence and professional skills you consider require strengthening (This discussion will be based upon your responses to Sections 2 to 5 on your Return to Practice Self-Assessment Form);
  - > How you would like to strengthen these areas;
  - > What support and guidance you would like to assist you in this;
  - > Your future CPD plans;
  - > What support and networking opportunities you already have access to;
  - > Whether you have any concerns or other areas you wish to explore with the GOsC reviewers.

23. It is intended that the discussion will lead to mutually agreed activities which will form the basis of your CPD plans. The reviewers may also make recommendations for your consideration. It is strongly advised that this guidance should inform your CPD requirements for the forthcoming CPD cycle.

24. The GOsC reviewers will want to be satisfied that you are fully supported in your return to practice in the UK. They will base their recommendation on your ability to fulfil the demands of the [Osteopathic Practice Standards](#) (OPS), as indicated by your current level of clinical and professional skills, and the initiatives outlined in your Return to Practice Self-Assessment Form to enhance specific capabilities. You will find the guidance given in each section of the OPS will form the basis of any decisions made.

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## Appendix 1 Return to Practice Self-Assessment Form

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Please refer to the **Return to Practice Self-Assessment Form - Guidelines for osteopaths** before completing this form

Name:

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Reference number:

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Non-practising/away from the register since:

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Period of practice as an osteopath prior to commencing non-practising period (if applicable):

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Preferred return to practice in the UK date:

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### Section 1: Returning to practice

1.1 Why are you returning to practice in the UK?

1.2 Why did you stop practising in the UK?

1.3 Do you intend to return to work on a full or part time basis? Please explain.

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1.4 Do you intend to work on your own, or in a group practice with other osteopaths and/or other health practitioners? Please explain.

## Section 2: Communication and patient partnership

Please consider A1 – A7 (inclusive) of the *Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS)* in completing this section

2.1 What activities have you undertaken during your non-practising period or time away from the register to enable you to maintain and enhance the skills required?

2.2 With reference to your reflections on these skills, and/or a personal learning needs analysis are there any areas which you need to strengthen?

2.3 How do you intend to enhance these skills and what help and support do you need, if any?

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### Section 3: Knowledge, skills and performance

Please consider B1 – B4 (inclusive) of the OPS

3.1 What activities have you undertaken during your non-practising period or time away from the register to enable you to maintain and enhance the skills required?

3.2 With reference to your reflections on these skills, and/or a personal learning needs analysis are there any areas which you need to strengthen?

3.3 How do you intend to enhance these skills and what help and support do you need, if any?

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## Section 4: Safety and quality in practice

Please consider C1 – C6 (inclusive) of the OPS

4.1 What activities have you undertaken during your non-practising period or time away from the register to enable you to maintain and enhance the skills required?

4.2 Are there any skills that you feel require strengthening in this area?

4.3 How do you intend to do this and what help and support do you need, if any?

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## Section 5: Professionalism

Please consider D1 – D12 (inclusive) of the OPS

5.1 What activities have you undertaken during your non-practising period or time away from the register to enable you to maintain and enhance the skills required?

5.2 Are there any skills which you feel require strengthening in this area?

5.3 How do you intend to do this and what help and support do you need, if any?

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## Section 6: General comments

6.1 Are there any other issues that you wish to raise or comments you would like to make?

**Thank you for completing this form.**

**Please return the completed form to:**

The Registration Department  
General Osteopathic Council  
Osteopathy House  
176 Tower Bridge Road  
London SE1 3LU

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## Appendix 2 Return to Practice Discussion – Questions for Reviewers

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These questions are aligned to the Return to Practice Self-Assessment Form and are intended to provide a series of prompts. It is understood that reviewer’s questions will be based on the osteopath’s responses to the form. The boxes provide space to record the osteopath’s responses to the questions and will form the basis for the report.

### Section 1: Returning to practice

1.1 How long had you been in practice before you stopped practicing in the UK, and why did you stop practising?

1.2 Why have you decided to return to practice in the UK at this time? When will you start?

1.3 Why have you chosen to work full/part time (delete as appropriate)? How will you phase yourself back into practice in the UK?

1.4 Why have you decided to work independently/ with other osteopaths/ other health practitioners (delete as appropriate)? Is this different to your previous situation? What benefits will it bring? Are there any disadvantages?

1.5 What are your future plans?

## Section 2: Continuing professional development

This part of the discussion will be based on the osteopath’s responses to Sections 2 to 5 (inclusive) on the Return to Practice Self-Assessment Form

2.1 How have you kept up to date with developments in *Osteopathic Practice Standards/* legislation? (Use a current example.)

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2.2 What continuing professional development (CPD) activities have you undertaken while not practising or while you were away from the register to maintain your clinical competence and professional skills in each of the four areas?

2.3 In which areas of practice do you feel you have retained your skills most effectively?

2.4 Which aspects of your clinical competence and professional skills do you consider require strengthening? Which would you prioritise?

2.5 How would you intend to strengthen your skills in these areas?

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2.6 What support and guidance would you like to assist you in this?

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2.7 What are your CPD plans?

2.8 Have you considered visiting an osteopathic education institution (OEI) to see how students are currently being trained?

2.9 What support and networking opportunities do you already have access to?

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### Section 3: General comments

Remind the osteopath that activities recommended by the GOsC reviewers should form the basis of their CPD return for the forthcoming year

3.1 Do you have any concerns or other areas you wish to explore with us?

3.2 Is there anything else that you would like to add which may help us to offer guidance in support of your CPD?

### Section 4: CPD and Recommendations

4.1 The following CPD activities were agreed during the discussion (please list):

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4.2 The following recommendations for consideration by the osteopath were also made (please list):

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## Appendix 3 Return to Practice Process Report Template

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### Introduction

1. This report follows (*delete as appropriate*)
  - > a review of the Self Assessment Form completed by <osteopath's name> and submitted on <date>
  - > a discussion held with <osteopath's name> on <date>
2. The report has been prepared jointly by <GOsC reviewer's name> and <GOsC reviewer's name>.

### Returning to practice

3. This section should include a summary of the osteopath's reasons for returning to practice and/or the register, why they stopped practising or left the register and what plans they have for the future. See section 1 of 'Return to Practice – questions for GOsC reviewers'.

### Continuing professional development

4. This section should include an evaluation of the principal CPD activities undertaken by the osteopath to maintain and enhance clinical competence and professional skills; their awareness of their own strengths and personal learning needs under each area of the OPS; the suitability of their plans for development; the support you consider they need and their ability to access it.

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## Strengths

5. Please provide a summary of the osteopath's strengths.

## Areas for development

6. Please provide a summary of the osteopath's areas for development.

## Recommendation

7. Please see 'Return to Practice Process - guidelines – Outcome' for the possible recommendations.

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8. The reviewers recommend that the osteopath returns to fully practising status or the register without further guidance from the GOsC/the osteopath returns to practice or the register with written guidance on their CPD from the GOsC (please delete as appropriate)

### Guidance

Please see 'Return to Practice – guidelines – Guidance' for suggestions on advice to candidates.

9. The following activities have been agreed with the osteopath in support of their continuing professional development: (Please list)

10. The reviewers offer the following recommendations for consideration by the osteopath: (Please list)

GOsC reviewer's name:

GOsC reviewer's name:

Signed:

Signed:

Date:

Date: