

Preparedness to practise research: key findings

The preparedness to practise research confirms that graduates are safe to commence autonomous clinical practice and are conversant with the current standards of osteopathic practice. It found also that:

- Osteopathy graduates' up-to-date clinical and scientific knowledge was recognised and commended by experienced osteopaths. Adequate underpinning knowledge is a pre-requisite for correct clinical reasoning and action, so this is a vital aspect of preparedness to practise.
- Graduates were considered to be competent in a limited range of clinical processes and techniques, which could collectively form the basis of initial clinical practice.
- Graduates understood and broadly supported evidence-based practice, and could play an active part in continuing debates about the contested nature of evidence in the context of osteopathic practice.

However, the research also identifies areas for further consideration, for example:

- Colleagues and employers felt that new registrants often exhibit insufficiently incisive clinical reasoning and excessive caution.
- Osteopathy graduates' interpersonal and communication skills are less well developed than their clinical knowledge and clinical skills, particularly in relation to communication with other healthcare professionals (as opposed to direct colleagues).
- There was widespread concern that osteopathy graduates did not properly appreciate the skills and effort required to build and maintain a successful osteopathy practice. In particular, they lacked appreciation of how small businesses build by word of mouth and the factors that affect this.