



General Osteopathic Council statement to Osteopathic Educational Institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic

In relation to osteopathic education, we are keen to do all that we can to support osteopathic educational institutions. This includes protecting patients, public, staff and students. We are also keen to support graduates to graduate this year, if possible, and to be flexible in the way that our requirements are met in the current emergency context.

Our legislation requires that the Osteopathic Practice Standards are met before the award of the RQ and this remains the case. However, we will be flexible allowing osteopathic educational institutions to adapt the ways in which they assure themselves that only students meeting the Osteopathic Practice Standards are awarded a recognised qualification.

Assessing and documenting any changes to courses

The general RQ conditions attached to all RQs with an expiry date, or the requirements attached to Action Plans for RQs without an expiry date, provide that the educational institutions 'must inform the Education Committee as soon as practical, of any change or proposed change likely to influence the quality of the course leading to the qualification and its delivery, including but not limited to:

- substantial changes in finance
- substantial changes in management.
- changes to the length of the course and its mode of delivery
- substantial changes in clinical provision
- changes in teaching personnel
- changes in assessment
- changes in student numbers (an increase or decline of 20 percent or more.)
- changes in patient numbers passing through the student clinic
- changes in teaching accommodation
- changes in IT, library or other learning resource provision.'

We ask you to document any changes made to courses in the current context and this should include an analysis of potential impact on the Osteopathic Practice Standards, and the steps taken to mitigate this to ensure that students are meeting the Osteopathic Practice Standards.

Participation of real patients

The general RQ conditions attached to all RQs with an expiry date, or the requirements attached to Action Plans for RQs without an expiry date, provide that the educational institutions 'must comply with the General Council's requirements for the assessment of the osteopathic clinical performance of students and its requirements for monitoring the quality and ensuring the standards of this assessment. These are

outlined in the publication Subject Benchmark Statement: Osteopathy (2015) and Guidance for Osteopathic Pre-registration education, 2015, General Osteopathic Council. The participation of real patients in a real clinical setting must be included in this assessment. Any changes in these requirements will be communicated in writing to the educational institution giving not less than 9 months' notice.'

This means that during the course, at some stage, assessments must have included real patients prior to the award of the RQ. However, as indicated above, institutions may make changes to their current delivery and assessment strategy provided that they can assure themselves and others that RQs are only awarded to students meeting the Osteopathic Practice Standards.

In terms of practical advice, we also suggest that where possible osteopathic educational institutions should give priority to the teaching and assessment of final year students.

If you have any questions, please contact our education team at education@osteopathy.org.uk

General Osteopathic Council
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