



Protocol for unsolicited information

Under the *Osteopaths Act 1993* the General Osteopathic Council (the GOsC) is the statutory regulatory body for osteopaths and course providers. The GOsC advises the Privy Council on which courses of osteopathic education merit Recognised Qualification (RQ) status. The Privy Council grants RQ status to courses where the governance and management of the course provider and the standards and quality of the course meet the requirements laid down by the GOsC. In particular, students must meet the practice requirements of GOsC's *Osteopathic Practice Standards*.

Decisions concerning the granting, maintenance and renewal of RQ status are made by the Privy Council following reviews of osteopathic courses and course providers. These reviews are conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), under contract from the GOsC. The review method is known as GOsC review.

GOsC review is carried out by teams of visitors. The visitors base their findings on meetings with staff and students, the observation of teaching and learning and on the analysis of written documentation. The written documentation is given to the visitors by the course provider. Other stakeholders, such as teaching staff, students or patients, may also bring information about the provider and its courses to the visitors' attention. We call this 'unsolicited information'.

How GOsC review deals with unsolicited information

Visitors may only consider information which is relevant to GOsC review, that is, information about the governance and management of the course provider and the standards and quality of the osteopathic course or courses it provides. For more information about the scope and purpose of GOsC review, please see the *Handbook for visitors*, at www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/general-osteopathic-council-review.

If the information is relevant to GOsC review, then QAA will forward a copy to the visitors and ask them to consider it. The visitors are obliged to corroborate any unsolicited information they receive with other sources of evidence, in the same way as they are obliged to corroborate information given by the provider.

QAA will also forward a copy to the GOsC and to the provider, with an invitation to the provider to respond to the visitors. **If you wish to remain anonymous to the provider then you must make that clear to QAA** otherwise we will assume that we have your consent to pass on your name. Even if you do wish to remain anonymous **you should be aware that you may be identifiable to the provider by the information you give us.**

If the information is not relevant to GOsC review, then QAA will still forward a copy to the GOsC and the GOsC may share it with the provider, but it will not affect the review outcomes.

Reporting concerns outside a GOsC review

If you have a concern about a course provider and/or its courses that you wish to raise outside GOsC review, you should contact the GOsC directly or refer to QAA's Concerns Scheme. For more information, see: www.qaa.ac.uk/complaints/concerns.

How to report unsolicited information

GOsC review will consider unsolicited information from any individual or organisation, as long as it is relevant to GOsC review.

If you wish to bring information to the visitors' attention, please contact David Gale, QAA Method Coordinator, by email at: d.gale@qaa.ac.uk or by post to:

David Gale
QAA
Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

It is helpful if you contact us as early as possible in advance of the review visit, so that the information can be given due consideration. It is also helpful if you submit evidence to support your concern, such as copies of any correspondence or minutes of meetings. QAA can provide further guidance on what evidence to submit.

Complaints would usually be raised through the provider's internal complaints procedure in the first instance, as this may prove more effective in reaching a resolution. However, we will accept all feedback, including complaints that have not been raised internally, which relate to the standard of education at a provider. We cannot, for example, deal with complaints relating to contractual issues.