



## **THE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHS**

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2016-2021**

#### **Introduction**

##### **Overview**

Since its establishment in 1948, The College of Osteopaths has been a provider of specialist part-time osteopathic education in the United Kingdom. It initially gained successful validation of its degree programme whilst in partnership with Middlesex University in 1998, followed by successful 'Recognised Qualification' ('RQ') status with the General Osteopathic Council in 2000. In 2005 the College successfully validated the first Osteopathic programme in the North of England and has continued to successfully deliver recognised Osteopathy degrees - most recently through a partnership with Staffordshire University. The current MOst/BOst awards are delivered in London and in Stoke-on-Trent.

The College's resilience and ability to remain viable, has been the direct result of the College's strategic locations, flexible infrastructure and prudent financial management. During the period of the last Plan, the College built on its relationships in the North of England and is now firmly established within an area of development called the University Quarter in Stoke-on-Trent. It is an ambitious and unique regeneration

plan for the city and encompasses an area that incorporates the city's three key educational partners. All have the shared vision of breaking down barrier in order to provide the opportunity for everyone to achieve their full potential. The University quarter is about enablement. Through partnership and engagement of staff, students, local residents and a wider partnership, it is envisaged that this area will ensure the brightest possible future for Stoke-on-Trent.

At the same time the College has maintained its attractively positioned foothold in the South East of England. The last five years have seen the College confirm its intentions to remain a small niche market provider of part-time osteopathic education; which by the nature of the delivery, attracts those seeking to retrain or change careers.

This 2016-2021 strategic plan, continues from the last one, and responds not only to current global, economic and financial changes but also to those taking place within osteopathy and more broadly within higher education and the healthcare arena. The College's 2016 GOsC accredited and university validated degree programmes, reflect current H.E. and professional requirements, and will see the College continuing to evolve with programmes fit for purpose for the next five years and beyond.

The Plan for the next five years is influenced by the changes taking place within osteopathic education and higher education nationally and internationally. The key drivers shaping the medium and long term future direction of the College include:

- guidelines published by the healthcare regulators, the QAA, and specifically those related to osteopathy
- funding for higher education, and specifically that which relates to part-time students
- key reports and findings from the broader field of healthcare

- the use we make of information gained from our engagement with patients and the public
- the development of the partnership with the University of Staffordshire
- best practice and research in the osteopathic and healthcare sectors

The continued broad adherence to the College of Osteopaths' original vision and mission statements, underlie the overall ethos of the College and remain the mediating factors in the approach taken to achieve the objectives of this plan. It is the deliberate intention of the College to remain a small part-time educational provider therefore developing successful partnerships is an essential means of maintaining academic quality and achieving professional institutional growth. With campuses based significant distances from each other, the College is committed to further developing its use of technology to enhance its flexible learning provision (technology enhanced learning) and support essential quality and communication processes.

### **The Planning Process and Documentation**

The planning process sets out the main aims of The College over the next five years and the means by which it will achieve these aims. It draws on and is informed by other policy and planning documents which:

- describe the regulatory framework in which the college operates and documents which lay down the requirements of the General Osteopathic Council, the Quality Assurance Agency and the validating university.
- stress the values and ethos of the college

- set out academic strategies and policies of the college, especially those dealing with teaching, learning, assessment and research
- address human resources, finance, information and communication technology, estates and facilities
- cover governance, organisation and management
- address communications and marketing strategy and policy.

The strategic plan is a rolling five-year plan, revised annually by the major stakeholders and approved by the Board of Governors. Progress will be monitored by the Senior Management Team and the Board of Governors and formally reported on.

### **Risk Management**

The continued climate of change, requires the College to remain flexible enough in its risk management strategy to be able to identify key risks especially those that are mission-threatening. As such the risk management approach will continue to be directly linked to the strategic plan through the objectives that are prioritised on a two-year basis. The College has been active and successful in using this approach as is evident from the documented reports and monitored outcomes following on from the previous Plan.

### **The College of Osteopaths – The Next Five Years**

The College will continue to

- Strengthen its position as a small institutional provider of quality part-time osteopathic education, first and foremost, aimed at its niche market of mature learners in both the north and south of England.

- Build upon the firm foundations documented and realised in the previous strategic Plan
- Maintain and manage the College through sound financial planning and within the parameters confirmed during the period of the last strategic plan, and reinforced in estates strategy
- Maintain its commitment to widening participation and continue to remain a significant force in the provision of osteopathic education, both in the north and south east of England.

### **Mission & Vision**

The College's Mission and Vision remain the same. The College of Osteopaths is committed to producing autonomous and reflective practitioners, capable of contributing to the healthcare needs of an ever changing population, as well as contributing to the shape of future health care provision. The College remains faithful to meeting the educational and professional needs of a diverse range of students and remains focussed in providing a challenging professionally recognised programme, underpinned by current research, scholarship and professional practice.

Over the next 5 years, the College will continue to develop its role as an osteopathic school, remaining mindful and responsive to the changing educational climate and the needs of its students and staff. In all areas of the curriculum, the programme as a whole, and through the total student experience, our priorities will be:

- 1) Delivering excellence in teaching & learning
- 2) Strengthening the role of research
- 3) Developing professional practice
- 4) Providing osteopathic care to patients attending the clinics

By developing:

- the skills and knowledge of its staff through staff development activities
- the academic, practical and clinical learning environments
- effective and responsive governance, management and leadership
- a demand for the College's academic programmes
- and maintaining a sustainable financial position
- mutually beneficial relationships with local health care providers and the community
- productive relationships with other colleges, the validating university and the professional statutory registering body.

### **1) Delivering excellence in teaching and learning**

The College of Osteopaths will continue to work in partnership with its validating partner institution and professional body in order to continue to develop a range of learning and teaching styles appropriate to the education of health care professionals. The differing needs of its student body will be recognised by the increasing incorporation of ICT (Information Communication Technology). The College of Osteopaths will invest in staff development by supporting activities, specifically those linked to teacher training and professional improvement.

*Over the period covered by this plan the College will:*

- ensure that the undergraduate programmes retain 'RQ' status and meet the standards required to fulfil partner university validation requirements.
- continue to remain informed about and responsive to current best educational practice

- further develop its range of indicators and targets for teaching and learning quality and standards, by focusing on student progression and achievement and on the outcomes of external audit and assessment.
- with the support of partner institutions, incorporate elements of e-based learning to support curriculum development.
- continue to support professional training of staff

## **2) Strengthening the role of research**

The engagement of teaching staff in research underpins the capability of staff and strengthens the quality and relevance of the curriculum. The College of Osteopaths will integrate strategies to support continued development in research, scholarship, and professional practice. This will include drawing on the expertise of our validating institution, the National Council for Osteopathic Research and other Osteopathic Education Institutions.

*Over the period covered by this plan the College of Osteopaths will:*

- support students and staff in the submission and approval of research papers for publication
- support staff enrolment on postgraduate programmes
- develop collaborative research links
- further strengthen the research ethos within the degree programme
- develop a research governance framework in accordance with NCOR guidelines

## **3) Developing Professional Practice**

Osteopaths must deliver safe and ethical health care by interacting professionally with colleagues, other healthcare professionals and

patients. The importance of Professionalism to the osteopathic profession has been made explicit in the General Osteopathic Council's Osteopathic Practice Standards (OPS). The College recognises the importance of maintaining professional standards through the training of its students, the production of its graduates, and by the clear expectations placed on all staff employed by the College or associated with the College.

*Over the period covered by this plan The College of Osteopaths will:*

- Continue to develop course materials to reflect the OPS including Integrated Professional Portfolio, Clinic log book and module assessment criteria
- Further develop new level 7 module course materials to the new standards
- Provide staff development activities that strengthen and maintain professional expectations and behaviours
- Increase awareness of the policies and procedures adhered to by the college that relate to professionalism and professional expectations of all stakeholders.

#### **4) Providing osteopathic health care to patients the clinics**

The College recognises the importance that its clinics play in the maintenance of health in the local community, and will continue to improve the quality of the patient experience and build upon the reputation that its teaching clinics have gained in Borehamwood, London and Stoke-on-Trent.

*Over the period covered by this plan The College of Osteopaths will:*

- implement further QA processes within the clinic environment
- apply its marketing strategy to its clinics



- establish local initiatives that involve other health-care providers
- optimise provision of treatment at prices that reflect local circumstances

***These Priorities will be achieved by developing;***

**a) A skilled and motivated workforce**

The College of Osteopaths recognises staff as its most important resource.

*Over the period covered by this plan The College of Osteopaths will:*

- use staff appraisal to provide a framework to encourage reflection, evaluation and constant improvement in the quality of performance as well as motivation through staff development and job satisfaction.
- update the pay structure in order to ensure transparency, and that remuneration and incentives attract and retain staff.

**b) A quality academic, practical and clinical environment**

The College is aware of the importance of the quality of learning environments

*Over the period covered by this plan The College of Osteopaths will:*

- continue to maintain and enhance the standards of its clinical facilities
- continue to communicate with weekend teaching premises providers to ensure that academic and practical facilities remain fit for purpose.

**c) Effective governance, management and leadership**

The College will continue to adopt best practice in governance, management and leadership; and where appropriate also develop its

own approaches where these best suit the College's size, structure and ethos.

*Over the period covered by this plan The College of Osteopaths will:*

- review the skills, capacity and practices in governance, management and leadership to ensure that they are aligned with the needs of the College.
- continue to review the composition of the Board of Governors to ensure the Board continues to possess the skills set necessary to effectively govern the College and has key stakeholder representation.
- ensure that an effective the risk management process is in place and actively applied
- ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
- ensure governance, management and leadership practices are informed by sector lead best practice.

#### **d) Strategies to monitor and respond to the demand for osteopathic and related programmes**

In recognising our programmes' link to market trends, the marketing strategies formalised towards the end of the last Strategic plan will continue to support the development of the Colleges programmes, and provide the framework for a responsive and effective student focussed admissions process.

*Over the period covered by this plan the College of Osteopaths will:*

- Update the admissions process and manage, monitor and review its effectiveness against agreed targets
- regularly review the academic portfolio to ensure it is aligned to national trends as well as specifically reflecting the continuing professional development requirements of our alumni which remains a key marketing tool for the College

- Take effective measures to ensure that data related to the positive achievements of the College, specifically those directly related to the College's mission and vision, are used to promote the College and its courses.

#### **e) A sustainable financial position**

Financial stability is essential, if the College is to achieve its academic mission. As the vast majority of the College's income comes from student fees there is a constant need to be mindful of market pressures and to attract sufficient high quality students each year to the College's courses.

*Over the period covered by this plan the College of Osteopaths will:*

- Work towards establishing an appropriate financial reserve to meet a three month risk cycle (reflective of similar educational institutions)
- further develop marketing and communication channels to maximise the student and patient numbers
- regularly review its fee structure in response to the changing economic and H.E. climate.
- seek to maintain effective partnerships with validating universities and their broader networks
- maintain a market researched and targeted CPD portfolio
- optimise income and outgoings of the clinic provision
- optimise its position in respect of physical facilities by regularly reviewing its estates strategy.
- develop a fundraising policy
- explore charitable links and fundraising opportunities

#### **f) Relationships with local health care providers and the community**

The College of Osteopaths recognises the benefits that links with

business and the community can bring and also the contribution that it can make to the health of those who live and work in its surrounding communities.

*Over the period covered by this plan the College of Osteopaths will:*

- continue to contribute to relevant local initiatives related to healthcare provision and offer reduced cost treatments through the College's clinics.
- continue to establish links with other healthcare providers such as doctors surgeries and health clinics

**g) Productive relationships with other colleges, universities and the professional statutory registering body.**

The College of Osteopaths will be more effective in achieving its mission by working with organisations sharing its aims.

*Over the period covered by this plan the College of Osteopaths will:*

- provide representation where opportunities arise to meet with the profession (COEI, GOsC, OEI & NCOR meetings)
- provide representation where opportunities arise to meet with the university/H.E. sector