

Process used for assessing Competent Authority Status of the General Osteopathy Council (GOsC) United Kingdom

Relevant Policy

The ANZOC *Policy for Assessment and Recognition of Overseas Assessment and Regulatory Authorities*¹ establishes criteria and processes to enable the assessment and recognition of selected “authorities in other countries who conduct examinations for registration in osteopathy or accredit programs of study relevant to registration, to decide whether persons who successfully complete the programs/examinations conducted or accredited by the authority have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practice the profession in Australia” under s.42(c) Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (The National Law). The policy states:

Where a pathway offered by an authority is assessed as being equivalent in its standards and processes for accreditation of courses and/or assessment of osteopaths for the purpose of registration, the osteopaths who have been registered under a pathway which is deemed equivalent by ANZOC will be permitted to apply for registration in Australia via Competent Authority Pathways set out by the OBA and defined in detail in the ANZOC Guidelines for Overseas Applicants.

The policy also sets out the criteria for establishment of equivalent status:

The following characteristics of the international authority will be considered in establishing equivalence:

- 1. The authority operates as an independent regulatory authority established by legislation within its identified jurisdiction.*
- 2. The authority has course accreditation standards, processes and outcomes and assessment processes that are equivalent to those operating in Australia.*
- 3. The authority has governance arrangements, committee and decision making processes which are comparable in their rigour and attention to fairness and equity in applying accreditation standards (although they might differ in format).*
- 4. The authority has policies and processes relating to the maintenance of competence of practitioners and continuing professional development.*
- 5. The authority has policies and processes relating to the investigation of complaints and disciplinary action against practitioners.*
- 6. There is congruence between the education and health system context in the jurisdiction in question and the Australian context.*

¹ http://www.anzoc.org.au/assessment_of_overseas_authorities.html

The policy also details the process for assessing and reporting on equivalence:

ANZOC will appoint an assessor who will:

- *gather the relevant evidence pertaining to the regulatory authority,*
- *do a desk review of the evidence and compile it into an annotated inventory for filing by ANZOC*
- *construct a matrix of equivalence using the 'Criteria for establishing Competent Authority status' and*
- *provide a report that identifies areas of equivalence or non-equivalence and, where relevant, the need for more in depth exploration with the authority concerned.*

ANZOC Board of Directors will review the report and evidence and recommend that the report containing the assessment of the extent of equivalence of the overseas authority and recommendations for assessment of applicants registered under that authority for registration be forwarded to the OBA, or that further investigation needs to occur before a determination can be made.

Assessment of the equivalence of the GOsC and GOsC recognised qualifications

In June 2012 ANZOC appointed an assessor in accordance with the policy and an assessment was undertaken and documented against the criteria stated in the policy. A matrix was used to perform these comparisons. An outline of the matrix establishing equivalent authority status is at Annex A. The process consisted of two basic steps.

STEP 1: Comparison of GOsC with ANZOC as an “authority”

Annex A lists the Australian and United Kingdom documents used for comparison against each criterion established in the policy. Detailed comments were provided to ANZOC and the Osteopathy Board of Australia (OBA) in relation to each area of comparison.

Some documents provided to ANZOC by GOsC are ‘in confidence’ documents, others are publicly available on their website.

ANZOC considered the report and the documentation provided and accepted the recommendation that GOsC be recognised as an “equivalent authority for the purposes of assessing GOsC registrants’ eligibility for registration in Australia via a ‘Competent Authority Pathway”.

Having determined the equivalent status of GOsC as an authority the second step was to determine whether the standards, criteria and processes used by GOsC for accrediting Osteopathy educational programs are equivalent to those used by ANZOC in accrediting Osteopathy educational programs. The report recommended and ANZOC accepted that equivalence only applied to accreditation (or recognition in the UK terminology) gained after 1999.

STEP 2: Comparison of standards, criteria and processes for accreditation of osteopathy education programs by GOsC and ANZOC

Osteopathic Standards

A matrix was constructed in which the ***Australian Capabilities for Osteopathic Practice Domains and Learning Outcomes*** were compared directly with the ***UK Standard 2000 Standard of Proficiency Areas of Capability and Learning Outcomes***.

Accreditation Standards and Processes

A matrix was constructed in which the ***ANZOC Standards for the Accreditation of Osteopathic Courses in Australia*** were compared directly with the ***UK Recognised Qualifications Application Guidelines for Providers 1999 – 2004*** and with the ***Quality Assurance Agency Handbook for the General Osteopathic Council Review of Osteopathic Courses and Course Providers 2nd edition, 2005***.

Detailed comments were provided to ANZOC and OBA in relation to each area of comparison.

Because both GOsC and ANZOC/OBA have undergone structural and regulatory changes in recent years the comparisons are limited to the period 2000 – 2012. Consequently, the establishment of equivalence of accreditation of programs is limited to that period.

In effect, equivalence of accreditation standards and processes over the 2000 – 2012 period implies that graduates of programs accredited in that period can be considered to have graduated with knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes which are equivalent to those possessed by graduates of Australian and NZ training institutions accredited in the same period.

The only area judged to be lacking in equivalence relates to the socio-cultural, structural and medico-legal aspects of Australian healthcare delivery and financing. These deficits will be addressed in a specially developed module for all internationally qualified osteopaths seeking registration in Australia.

ANNEX A: Matrix for assessing authority equivalence (Authority under assessment: GOsC)

No.	Criterion	Overseas authority reference document(s)	Australian reference document(s)
1	The authority operates as an independent regulatory authority established by legislation within its identified jurisdiction.	GOsC Governance Handbook Dec 2010 GOsC Supporting Documents May 2011	ANZOC Constitution
2	The authority is equivalent to Australia in the following: 2a Course Accreditation Standards 2b Course Accreditation Processes 2c Learning Outcome Standards		
2a	Course accreditation standards	GOsC Process for the Recognition of Osteopathic Qualifications and supporting documents (1999-2004). The QAA Handbook for the general Osteopathic Council review of osteopathic courses and course providers 2 nd edition, 2005 QAA Osteopathy Benchmarks Statements, 2007 Standard 2000 Standard of Proficiency, 1999	ANZOC Standards for the accreditation of osteopathic courses in Australia, 2010 (Revised June 2012)
2b	Course accreditation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOsC Process for the Recognition of Osteopathic Qualifications and supporting documents (1999-2004). • GOsC Recognised Qualification (RQ) Process Guidelines, 1999 • GOsC RQ profile and documentation required • The QAA Handbook for the general Osteopathic Council review of osteopathic courses and course providers 2nd edition, 2005. • Handbook for Course Providers (post 2012) • Handbook for Course Visitors (post 2012) • The UK Quality Code for Higher Education: A brief guide (2012) 	ANZOC Procedures for the accreditation of osteopathic courses in Australia, 2010 (Revised June 2012)

No.	Criterion	Overseas authority reference document(s)	Australian reference document(s)
2c	Learning outcome standards	QAA Benchmarks Osteopathy 2007 Standard 2000 Standard of Proficiency, Mar 1999	Capabilities for Osteopathic Practice, January 2009
3	The authority has governance arrangements, committee and decision making processes which are comparable in their rigour and attention to fairness and equity in applying accreditation standards (although they might differ in format).	GOsC Governance Handbook Dec 2010 GOsC Standing Orders, Dec 2010 GOsC Code of Conduct, Dec 2010 GOsC Supporting docs May 2011	AHPRA legislation and ANZOC Constitution
4	The authority has policies and processes relating to the maintenance of competence of practitioners and continuing professional development.	GOsC Supporting docs May 2011	OBA policies
5	The authority has policies and processes relating to the investigation of complaints and disciplinary action against practitioners.	GOsC Governance Handbook Dec 2010 GOsC Standing Orders, Dec 2010	OBA policies
6	The level of congruence between the education and health system context in the jurisdiction in question and the Australian context.	The UK Health System is a mix of regulated public, private, primary and referral based care in a predominantly English speaking but multicultural country. Procedural differences in billing and regulatory contexts can be accommodated with targeted training modules. There are differences in cultural, funding, and medicolegal systems.	