



University College
of Osteopathy

Academic Quality Framework 2017-2018

Section 15: Access to Higher Education & Pre-Entry Courses

ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK

SECTION 15: ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION & PRE-ENTRY COURSES

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to prospective students, existing Access to Higher Education students and faculty delivering pre-entry courses at the UCO.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British UCO of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
<p>If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk</p>					

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SECTION 15: ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION & PRE-ENTRY COURSES

CONTENTS

15.1	Introduction to the UCO's Access to Higher Education and Pre-Entry Courses	4
15.2	The Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences & Healthcare) Course	4
a)	The Review of Academic Standards	4
b)	External Moderation	5
c)	Access to HE Diploma Awards Board.....	6
d)	Careers Advice.....	6
15.3	Other Pre-Entry Courses.....	6
a)	The Introduction to Osteopathic Sciences (IOS) Course	6
AQF15: Forms & Templates		8
AQF15: Endnotes.....		8

15.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE UCO'S ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND PRE-ENTRY COURSES

- 15.1.1 The UCO is committed by its mission and values to providing access to higher education for learners from backgrounds that are under-represented in higher education. It very much endorses the view that higher education should be made accessible to all, regardless of background or financial status, to promote social justice and economic competitiveness.
- 15.1.2 In recognition of the need to widen participation, the UCO also designed, and had accredited by Laser Learning Awards (LASER), an Access to Higher Education Diploma course specifically designed for students who wish to study osteopathy but are new or returning to higher education. This course provides them with the foundation of knowledge required of them to prepare and succeed on our Integrated Master of Osteopathy (M.Ost) courses; successful completion of this Access to Higher Education course guarantees students a place on the M.Ost course at the UCO.
- 15.1.3 The UCO also recognises that an increasing number of applicants for our M.Ost courses have proven academic achievement but lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study Osteopathy. In response to this the UCO runs a short non-accredited pre-entry course (the Introduction to Osteopathic Sciences (IOS) course) enabling students to gain the required background knowledge in the basic sciences to prepare them adequately for M.Ost study.

15.2 THE ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION DIPLOMA (OSTEOPATHIC SCIENCES & HEALTHCARE) COURSE

- 15.2.1 The UCO works with Laser Learning Awards (LASER)¹, a leading Access Validating Authority, to approve its Access to Higher Education Diploma in Osteopathic Sciences and Healthcare course. LASER is licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to award the Access to Higher Education Diploma.
- 15.2.2 Access provision in the UK is specifically intended to prepare students from under-represented groups for study within the higher education sector. Subsequently LASER has responsibility for approving and monitoring the quality of the UCO's Access provision.
- 15.2.3 The Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course is aimed at mature students new or returning to education so is delivered in a manner that allows learners to work alongside their studies.
- 15.2.4 The course consists of twelve units, each of which is worth a specified number of credits.
- 15.2.5 Access Course units are delivered at both Level 2 and Level 3² over one academic year.
- 15.2.6 Classes are delivered through three or four hour sessions on Friday evenings from 6:00pm and all day on Saturdays during the UCO's term time structure. Within every three or four hour session there is a mix of discussion and didactic teaching with students often given time to work in groups and individually. Learner's ideas and points of learning are fed back to the whole class allowing consolidation of key facts and skills as well as conversation about misconceptions and misunderstandings. There are also many formal formative learning opportunities within sessions.

a) THE REVIEW OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 15.2.7 The UCO works with LASER to ensure that Academic Standards are reviewed regularly and appropriately. Access courses are regularly re-validated periodically every five years to ensure that courses continue to meet the QAA Specification for Access to Higher Education (HE) Diplomas³.

15.2.8 Similarly amendments to course titles and units are made through LASER's quality processes which include the completion of appropriate amendment forms and confirmation by both an External and Internal Reviewer.

15.2.9 Guidance regarding revalidations of and amendments to Access to HE courses is provided by LASER through its online Access Document Download bank⁴.

b) EXTERNAL MODERATION

15.2.10 The Access to HE Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course adheres to the External Moderation processes stipulated by LASER⁵ the purposes of which are stated in LASER's Access to Higher Education Quality and Moderation Handbook⁶ as follows:

- a) *"to assure, through a process which is external to the providing centre, the consistency and sufficiency of standards of student achievements leading to the award of credit and to the award of Access to HE Diplomas according to the specifications set out by the QAA;*
- b) *to ensure that equivalent standards and requirements for achievement apply on different Access to HE courses which lead to Diplomas, within the AVA and across different student cohorts;*
- c) *to ensure consistency in the award of credit and grades to learners and that learners are receiving fair and equitable treatment;*
- d) *to ensure that, where Access to HE Diplomas or common units are available on more than one course, consistent standards are applied across providers/centres in relation to assessment requirements and judgements about achievement (including graded achievement);*
- e) *to ensure that where Access to HE Diplomas or units are available in cognate subject areas on different courses, opportunities are provided for those involved in Access to HE assessment and moderation to define and compare specific standards of required achievement for the award of credits and grades, and its moderation systems take account of the outcomes of this process;*
- f) *to monitor and report on assessment arrangements of approved programmes;*
- g) *to be an ongoing and accessible source of critical advice for centres and their staff in order to support the continuous improvement of AVA validated Access Diplomas;*
- h) *to ensure Access Diplomas are delivered in accordance with the specifications agreed at the Validation Panel;*
- i) *to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of the quality and fitness for purpose of Access to HE Diplomas."*

15.2.11 LASER appoints an Access Diploma External Moderator to the UCO who act in accordance with their quality and moderation processes⁷.

15.2.12 The External Moderator conducts visits to and is in continuous contact with the UCO to check for and produces moderation reports about:

- a) *"Robust quality systems and processes.*
- b) *Consistent appropriate documentation and record keeping.*
- c) *Consistent and high quality assessment practice.*
- d) *Student satisfaction with the course experience."*⁸

15.2.13 Laser Awards is licensed as an Access Validating Agency (AVA) by the QAA. The External Moderator also acts as the AVA's representative at Access Awards Boards and acts on behalf of the AVA to confirm the award of Access to HE Diploma to students at Final Awards Boards.

15.2.14 The UCO responds to External Moderator reports in accordance with LASER's processes⁹

c) ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMA AWARDS BOARD

15.2.15 Access to HE Diploma Awards Boards are conducted in accordance with the QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to Higher Education Grading Scheme Handbook Section E: Student Results and Awards Boards¹⁰.

15.2.16 Awards Boards for the Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) are normally held at the UCO.

d) CAREERS ADVICE

15.2.17 The majority of students undertaking the UCO's Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course do so in order to gain entry onto an osteopathic degree course.

15.2.18 As well as developing students' underpinning academic skills this course also helps students to develop efficient study techniques, improve their communication and critical thinking skills and give an insight into what it is like to study and practise osteopathy.

15.2.19 As a nationally recognised Diploma it can be used to gain access to other relevant undergraduate courses.

15.2.20 Students who do not complete the full programme may be awarded partial credits and may be able to use these to pursue other studies in Higher Education.

15.3 OTHER PRE-ENTRY COURSES

15.3.1 The UCO recognises that it receives a large number of applications from students who have proven academic achievement but who lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study osteopathy. In response to this issue, the UCO has, for many years, been running short pre-entry courses to enable students to gain this background in the basic sciences.

15.3.2 Currently the UCO offers one pre-entry course, the Introduction to Osteopathic Sciences course.

a) THE INTRODUCTION TO OSTEOPATHIC SCIENCES (IOS) COURSE

15.3.3 The IOS course is aimed at applicants who already hold a non-science degree or equivalent but lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study Osteopathy.

15.3.4 This course is a non-credit bearing short course that has been developed by the UCO to specifically support and prepare these students for studying the UCO's M.Ost courses and is therefore not transferable to another Higher Education Institution.

15.3.5 The IOS course lasts from 4 – 6 weeks and is a period of intensive science study. Students attend several days of lectures at the UCO which are mainly scheduled at weekends and course materials are made available through the UCO's Online Learning Environment (BONE) allowing for home study.

15.3.6 Formative assessments are held within the units, providing students with feedback on their progression. The summative (final) assessment consists of online quizzes and a written examination.

15.3.7 Students are required to pass the summative assessment in order to secure their place on either of the UCO's M.Ost courses.

i. **EXTERNAL MODERATION**

15.3.8 The IOS course is a non-credit bearing course, is not accredited by an external body and does not result in a recognised qualification. Subsequently official external moderation of this course is not normally undertaken. There are, however, internal moderation mechanisms in place to ensure that IOS course assessments are fairly and rigorously considered including:

- a) The second/double marking of all borderline pass/fail grades by course tutors.
- b) In the event of a students' academic appeal against an assessment grade a tutor external to the course may be asked to re-mark the assessment.

ii. **BOARDS OF EXAMINERS**

15.3.9 Similarly due to the IOS course not being credit bearing, accredited by an external body or leading to a recognised qualification, full Boards of Examiners for this course is not normally scheduled. Final assessment grades are, however, reviewed and confirmed by the Foundation Education Portfolio Board¹¹.

AQF15: FORMS & TEMPLATES

Form / Template Reference Number	Form / Template Title
N/A	N/A

AQF15: ENDNOTES

¹ <http://laser-awards.org.uk/>

² <http://www.seec.org.uk/seec-credit-level-descriptors-2010-revised-2004/>

³ <https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Documents/Access-Diploma-Specification.pdf>

⁴ <http://laser-awards.org.uk/content2.asp?id=434#Validations>

⁵ http://laser-awards.org.uk/content2.asp?id=434#Ext_Mod

⁶ http://laser-awards.org.uk/content2.asp?id=434#Ext_Mod

⁷ http://laser-awards.org.uk/content2.asp?id=434#Ext_Mod

⁸ http://laser-awards.org.uk/content2.asp?id=434#Ext_Mod

⁹ http://laser-awards.org.uk/content2.asp?id=434#Ext_Mod

¹⁰ <https://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Pages/Grading-scheme-index.aspx>

¹¹ http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/UCO_Committees/: Foundation Education Portfolio Board Terms of Reference