ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION STATEMENT (2019/20)

Provider's name**:** European School of Osteopathy

Provider's UKPRN: 10002344

Introduction

The European School of Osteopathy has a long history of recruiting mature students and those with non-standard entry qualifications. The hands-on nature of the profession also attracts those whose skills do not lie with high-level literary and mathematical ability. Thus a relatively high proportion of the intake demonstrates "learning differences" that require special consideration.

The Mission of the School underlines its commitment to "Concern for the Individual" but also "The need to embrace the wider community of Europe and the world".

An analysis of the data we hold on the backgrounds of our applicants and students has shown where we are doing well and where we need to improve. This is laid out in summary below and in addition detail is provided regarding our ambitions and strategy, and the student support activities that we already have in place.

Theme 1: Areas we are seeking to address

- The ethnic origin of our students and applicants is difficult to accurately gauge as a significant minority (~ 40%) declines to admit ethnic origins. However a majority (~60%) admits to being White. Less than 2% admits to being Black. The awareness of experienced onlookers would suggest the vast majority of students and applicants (~98%) are White. Clearly this is an area to be addressed;
- As regards socio-economic classification, the highest proportion (~45%) of students and applicants falls into Category 9 (unclassified – this includes the unemployed, the retired, and not stated or refused). Of the remainder who are classifiable, about 35% are in categories 1, 2 & 3. Approximately 20% fall into categories 4, 5, 6 & 7. This is a difficult area to clarify. However experience suggests that a significant minority of our students and applicants are in straitened circumstances and more could be done both to attract such students and to support them once they have arrived;
- As indicated within the introduction, the School has always performed well with the recruitment of mature (>21yrs old) students. The proportion of mature students amongst students and applicants routinely exceeds 50%. Nevertheless as mature students outperform younger student groups as judged by progression statistics, this is an area we are seeking to continue to address, particularly within underrepresented groups;
- The gender balance amongst students and applicants is also good. Currently the balance of males to females is 50:50; this balance is essential to sustain training in handling skills and is one we will seek to maintain;
- In terms of nationality, approximately 60% of students derive from the UK with 30% from other EU countries (this is likely to change after Brexit). The

remaining 10% derive from non-EU European countries (~7%), with the last 3% deriving from non-EU international countries. This mix of nationalities is a reflection of the origins of the school in France and the many international links it has formed over the years since its inception. It is our intention to increase our intake of non-EU International students (via our Tier 4 Licence) in part providing the income to allow us to support those of lower socio-economic status;
The mix of nationalities adds to the richness of the student experience.

- The proportion of the students and applicants admitting to some sort of disability amounts to approximately 10%, mainly learning differences, but includes unspecified mental health issues, and autism. The nature of osteopathic training may exclude other types of disability through self-selection. This is an area where more could be done to advertise the potential for osteopathy as a career choice for at least certain disabled groups;
- The number of applicants we attract with no or very limited entry qualifications is about 6% of students and applicants. This is an area we will target.

Theme 2: Ambitions and Strategy

Our global ambition in terms of Access and Participation is to make the ESO the choice for all osteopathic students, under and postgraduate, national and international, maintaining a commitment to widening participation amongst all groups.

Within our 5 yr strategic plan, we are developing the option of a BSc Honours route within the Integrated Master's Programme that will avoid the necessity for a level 7 research dissertation. This could appeal to those with learning differences but with skills in other areas. We are additionally aiming to offer a part-time mode for the Integrated Master's Programme that would allow more opportunity for gainful employment whilst studying, likely to be of interest to mature students.

Also of interest to mature students the following features are to be developed by September 2020:

- Distance learning modules in knowledge subject areas within the Integrated Master's Programme;
- Stand-alone pre-entry modules to encourage return to study and building towards a qualification;
- An Access to HE Diploma Programme that would permit the recruitment of those with limited formal qualifications at least some of whom will progress to the Integrated Master's Degree in Osteopathy.

With the aim of targeting low income groups we plan by the start of Session 2019/20, to establish a bursary scheme to add to our existing student hardship fund. The bursary scheme will provide support for new undergraduate students in their

first year of study with a low household income and support for students who are care leavers.

In terms of outreach activity, in our recruitment strategy we already target local Secondary Schools but we also intend to embed by September 2019 the targetting of:

- local state primary and secondary (non-grammar) schools with poor Ofsted ratings;
- local youth clubs and other societies;
- Sports Clubs.

By so doing we would hope to broaden our catchment to include lower socio-economic groups and minority groups including BMEs and the disabled.

Supporting our existing Student Recruitment process we envisage the following by September 2019:

- The setting up of Summer Osteopathy Taster Days to allow local state AS school children to attend the ESO to practise "osteo-science" becoming acquainted with the notion of osteopathy as a career path. They could also be introduced to UCAS form filling supplementing advice from their school;
- The inclusion within the ESO advertised Admissions Policy, of the statement that although not guaranteeing a place on the Integrated Master's Programme, fair consideration will be given to eligible students with the potential to succeed, but who have special circumstances that means they may find it difficult to achieve the standard offer.
- The Student Clinic is a major marketing tool for the school and within our Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire will be the inclusion of how to access details of the pre-registration training programmes that we operate. The Clinic already offers reduced fees for those of low income, and with its wide catchment, including the Medway Towns, plays a significant role in supporting the local community.

<u>Theme 3: Our activities and support for students</u>

The following are current initiatives which focus on the needs of particular students:

- We operate annually a short and intensive Summer Science Course that is directed at those with proven study skills but in non-scientific areas, that require reorientation. This Summer Science Course is also useful for the mature student who has been out of education for a substantial period and who requires a refreshment of both their study skills and their science background knowledge;
- The School has always operated a very flexible entry system that includes the Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning, and a range of non-standard entry qualifications with a focus on personal attributes and osteopathy backgrounds;

- The School already attends the National Career Guidance Show at Olympia where we talk directly to Careers Advisors from all over the UK. This is designed to broaden access exposure of the profession to secondary schools, colleges and career changers alike.
- We have always supported and continue to support students in financial need with their grant applications and the search for government awards (eg DSA);
- The School has always operated extra-curricular early morning study groups on osteopathic technique skills development for those feeling the need for additional guidance that could include those with atypical academic backgrounds or lower entry qualifications;
- The School, via the Student Attendance and Support Committee (SASC) , closely monitors the attendance and progress of all students including those with learning differences. Poor attenders are then followed up for potential health/study problems;
- The School is gradually phasing in a Personal Tutor System, providing the students with a consistent source of guidance and support throughout the 4 years of the programme and to feel better supported as part of the ESO community; both via the SASC (see above) and the Personal Tutor system, the student can gain access to specialist disability, health and academic support;
- The Student Welfare Officer is always available for students to consult regarding health and study issues. The welfare record of the School speaks for itself particularly with the support offered to those students with learning differences. Recent progression statistics reveal that student disability is not a bar to progression. This support will be invaluable in reducing attainment gaps and non-continuation rates for the underrepresented groups that we hope to attract;
- Students in Yrs 1 & 2 of the four year Integrated Master's Degree are required to undertake a certain number of hours of Clinic Observation. To date this observation has been restricted to observation within the School Clinic. We are planning to extend this to include observation at external osteopathic practices that will broaden experience of best practice, provide the opportunity for those with additional responsibility to observe more easily and for those wishing to specialise in specific areas of practice, to observe practice of interest whilst still contributing to their required observation hours (within defined parameters);
- In the Final Year of the Integrated Master's Degree there are elective topics that the student can choose, assisting the student in the decision as to what area of practice life within which to work;
- The Final Year Portfolio and the Yr 3 Business Plan support the student in their preparation for working life within regulated professional practice;
- To support the students as they approach entry into professional practice the school operates a Careers Fair that provides options for the student to consider (research, teaching, opportunities abroad, sports care etc). The

School is planning to extend this to an Employability Academy that will be better able to cater for students' individual needs.

Our statement is ambitious and will be reviewed each year by the Academic Board to assess how much has been achieved. The student voice will be essential in this respect. We already use Student Ambassadors to assist in aspects of Student Recruitment and they have been consulted in the compilation of this statement.