

Conversion Course for Osteopaths A fifteen year review

1994 - 2008

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Rationale and Aims

- To convert the qualification of a Diploma to a BSc Hons degree in Osteopathy, a more widely acknowledged academic currency - Bologna Accord. This academic top-up does not confer practice rights in UK or elsewhere.
- To instil a research ethos.
- To develop critical, evaluative, creative and synthesising abilities as these relate to Osteopathic practice.
- To develop an enhanced awareness of the wider context of orthodox and complementary health care.

Learning outcomes

- Critically evaluate published research articles.
- Design a well argued research protocol.
- Evaluation of importance of epidemiological studies in the advancement of clinical knowledge.
- Construct a critical overview of differing models of healthcare in Europe.
- Successfully undertake a research study constructed along sound ethical principles.

History

- Course unique within Osteopathic institutions.
- First course August 1994, offered annually since. Validated by University of Westminster and reviewed 1996, 2001 and 2008.
- In recent years UK demand has been largely satisfied. To accommodate European demand part of the course has been re-focussed to include a European health perspective.

Admissions

- Completed a minimum 4 years full time Diploma course.
- Current professional body / association membership.
- Sound written and spoken English - IELTS 6.5.
- Cohort limited to ~20 students.

Course outline

- 3 components at level 6:
- **Research methodology**
 - 15 credits, 20% marks
- **Community medicine**
 - 15 credits, 20% marks
- Both elements delivered as 2 intensive 5 day blocks
- **Dissertation**
 - 30 credits, 60% marks
- Over 8 months usually in-practice

Research methods

- Critical evaluation of papers
- Research design
- Questionnaire design
- Descriptive statistics
- Inferential statistics
- Writing the Dissertation

Advances in Osteopathic Medicine

- Osteopathy, Ethics and the Law
- Applied dietetics
- Osteopathic sports care
- Topics on latest advances

Course work assessments

100% of module marks

PART I - notional 150 taught and study hours each module

Research methods

- Short answer data analysis questions

Advances in Osteopathic Medicine

- 2000 word essay

PART II - notional 300 hours

Dissertation

- 10,000 words

- Pass mark 40% and all assignments double marked
- All modules must be passed

Student support

- Course handbook and Dissertation guidelines
- Constant access throughout course to personal supervisor and Course leader - via email and telephone.
- Face to face tutorial support.
- Access to college intranet for lecture notes, guidelines and student forum.
- Access to BCOM library throughout.
- Student feedback forms for each lecture / overall and Course committee.

Developments

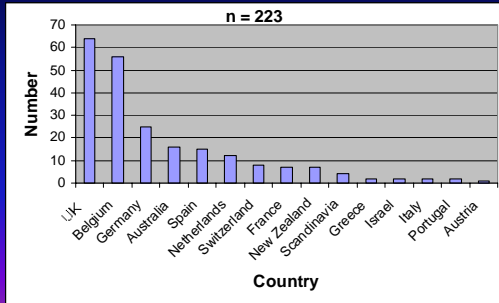
- **2004** Research methods module change in assessment from critical evaluation of 2 research papers to short answer data analysis.
- **2005** Advances in osteopathic medicine replaced Community medicine module to encourage more research base and include a European perspective.
- **2007** Dissertations submitted to Turnitin anti-plagiarism software.
- **2009** Introduction of Journal ready research paper replacing the dissertation. Also Protocol assessed.
 - Addition of Reflective practice module.
 - Minimum of 5 research logs emailed to supervisor.
 - Oral presentation to panel and peers.
 - Delivery in centres across Europe.

Quality management

- University validation and review with annual monitoring.
- Student feedback via module evaluation forms completed after taught course and end of 8 months. Also via Course committee.
- Annual external examiners reports:
 - ‘This course continues to be delivered effectively and to a high standard, being of great academic and practical value to students in clinical practice seeking to upgrade their diplomas to full degrees’ 2007
- Course leader reports

Cohort country profile 1994-2008

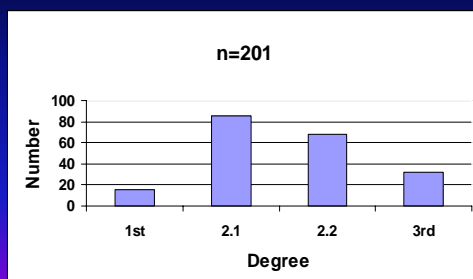
223 students enrolled from 15 countries



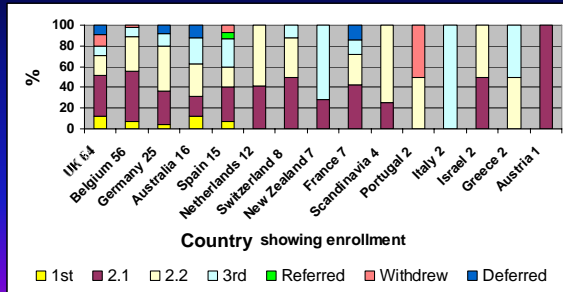
Student performance and progression 1994-2008

- 201 (90%) of the 223 students graduated.
 - 4% students withdrew, 5% deferred indefinitely and one was referred in the dissertation but did not resubmit.
- 50% of graduating students gained a first or upper second class degree.

Degree classifications for 1994 to 2008 cohorts



Performance by country



- Since completing the Conversion course 2 students have gained PhDs and others have published research and presented at conferences.
- Students are appreciative of an integrated international perspective.
- The increase in numbers of degree holding osteopaths widens the available pool from which institutions in UK and mainland Europe may recruit tutors.
