

# **Access and Participation Statement 2022-2023**

**Providers UKPRN: 100009**

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## 1.0 Introduction

In September 2021, the British College of Osteopathic Medicine (BCOM) and the European School of Osteopathy (ESO) merged to form the BCNO Group. Where information is campus-specific, it will be referred to as Kent, London, or in reference to both, will be identified as 'our campuses.'

The BCNO's approach to the standards and quality of the programmes offered is informed by the guiding principles embedded in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2018). The BCNO works in close partnership with its validating universities University of Plymouth and Buckinghamshire New University as well as the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) to ensure academic and professional standards are upheld. The BCNO is dedicated to the provision of both undergraduate and postgraduate osteopathic training, emphasising all essential elements of good practice, sound management and quality care.

Our UK Osteopathy degree programmes are delivered at campuses in Kent (ESO) and London (BCOM). This provides flexible study options for students and allows them to benefit from the specialist knowledge, expertise and learning resources at each. We aim to prepare our graduates for a successful life in practice and to give them the skills needed to embrace new opportunities developing within the profession. Being part of the BCNO community enables our students to build a wider network of friends and osteopathic colleagues.

**Mission-** To be a leading educational establishment of choice for future generations of osteopaths and other healthcare professionals.

**Vision-** Our vision is to provide students with an educational experience which surpasses their expectations; providing them with the skills, knowledge and confidence to lead fulfilling careers as osteopaths or other healthcare professionals. We will achieve this through the quality of our teaching methods and approach, delivered within an inclusive, supportive and diverse learning environment.

### Values

**B**e the best at what we do

**C**ollaborate with the osteopathic community and other healthcare professionals to achieve our goals

**N**urture learning and a desire to succeed among our students

**O**ppportunity to develop professionally and personally

## 2.0 Context

BCNO's Access and Participation Statement outlines its commitment to supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented groups in the HE.

At present, BCNO enrolls 80+ HE students each year on two courses: BSc (Hons) Osteopathy and the Master of Osteopathy. BCNO offers attracts students from all over London and Kent who are seeking to study an osteopathy degree. Many of our students come from diverse backgrounds, with few belonging to typically low participation groups in higher education, such as mature students (19+), students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students who are the first in their families to attend higher education, and students with English as a second language. Most students choose to study HE at BCNO for one or more of the following reasons:

### 2.1 Academic quality

- BCOM and ESO are internationally recognised institutions, influential in the development of osteopathic education
- As specialists in osteopathic education, our focus is on providing the best learning environment and development opportunities for student osteopaths
- We teach a broad osteopathic programme, so graduates can help a wider range of patients and conditions

- We pride ourselves on the quality of our teaching, which has been praised at external review and has scored highly in the UK's National Student Survey
- Students have access to research facilities and a team of experienced researchers at both sites, who nurture and develop undergraduate research awareness
- We have an excellent staff-student ratio – 1:6 in clinic and 1:10 for practical classes
- The M.Ost degree programme is delivered in parallel at our London and Kent sites, which offers students the potential to transfer\*
- The BSc(Hons) Osteopathy degree provides a flexible study option for those with existing work or family commitments, so they too can study to become an osteopath
- We utilise technology to enhance the student experience and teaching and learning: live streaming of theoretical lectures offers flexibility in teaching and learning delivery; digital platforms enable live streaming simultaneously across sites, allowing lecturer and student interaction and real time Q&A sessions; clinical and practical sessions are delivered face-to-face, supported by additional material and online learning resources and content

## **2.2 Clinical experience**

- We have well-established teaching clinics, where students gain over 1000 hours of clinical practice and see approximately 50 new patients before graduating
- We offer a range of specialist clinics, so students gain experience with patients of all ages and backgrounds (including maternity, babies, sports and performing arts) and can learn directly from experienced, specialist tutors who are also practising osteopaths
- The M.Ost builds on the students' clinical experience with Complex Case Management
- Final year electives allow students to gain experience in an area of special interest\*\*

## **2.3 Career preparation**

- Our Master of Osteopathy degree provides the skills and attributes needed for a varied and successful health career, enabling BCNO graduates to grasp new opportunities arising within the profession
- Due to the unique nature of the osteopathic profession, students at Level 7 are taught business and practice management skills, allowing graduates to choose how they will develop their career as an independent practitioner
- 100% of graduates are in employment 6 months after graduating (based on 2020-21 BCOM respondents who had applied for employment – others travelled or went on to further study)

## **2.4 Supportive community**

- Both BCOM and the ESO offer a warm and friendly atmosphere and a strong sense of community
- We have an active student union, which organises sports and social events, including a number of online activities
- We have two campuses, with opportunities for students to come together to share study tips and to enjoy social events
- We have an excellent support system in place for students, who have access to study skills workshops, personal tutors, and counsellors
- The BCNO offers a wide osteopathic network, as a student and after graduating
- We offer CPD courses at each campus, with students and alumni eligible for discounts

## **2.5 Two great locations**

- BCOM is located in London close to the amazing Camden Town, Hampstead Heath, Regents Park, Wembley Stadium, and an eight-minute tube ride to Oxford Street.
- ESO is located in Maidstone, Kent; Boxley campus is set in an area of outstanding natural beauty, with 17 acres of stunning grounds. Students have easy access to Kent's beautiful countryside and coastline – all just an hour from London and links to mainland Europe.

- Students have access to facilities and tutors at each campus – those studying a Master of Osteopathy, from 2022, can choose to spend an academic year at the London/Kent campus, so they can experience both fantastic locations and experience working in different clinical settings.
- Students have access to study materials at each campus, including online learning resources and research publications.

## **2.6 The start of a fulfilling allied health career**

- Our graduates are known for their breadth of knowledge and clinical experience – they are in demand as practitioners, researchers and educators, in the UK and overseas
- Studying at the BCNO enables graduates to help a wider range of patients, leading to a more interesting and fulfilling career.

## **3.0 Access**

- Increasing the number of students from underrepresented groups entering higher education, particularly those from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, where the participation gaps are most acute.
- Reduce the drop-out rate of mature underrepresented students.

### **3.1 Success**

- Reduce the gaps between underrepresented groups and other students, particularly those from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities.
- Increasing achievement gaps between minority ethnic and disabled students and others from underrepresented groups.

### **3.2 Progression**

- Reducing the gap between minority ethnic groups and other students and improving progression rates for students from underrepresented groups, particularly minority ethnic groups and students with disabilities.

## **4.0 BCNO's Priorities -2021- 2022**

- Raise young people's achievement through collaboration with schools and local organisations
- Increase diversity in higher education through BSc (Hons) Osteopathy
- Achieve high quality participation and graduation rates by ensuring access to high quality courses
- Increasing the quality and volume of evaluation of access and participation plans
- Provide easy-to-understand access and participation plans for prospective students, their parents, and other stakeholders.

### **4.1 BCNO's Priorities -2022-2023**

- To increase the number of students identifying as mature in our higher education provision by as much as possible and to increase their entry rate
- Enhancing entry rates to HE for non-heterosexual people.
- To increase the number of students from black and mixed-race ethnicities who enter FT , HE and professional courses.
- Reducing the achievement and continuation gaps between African students and other ethnicities
- Increasing the range of data collected about our HE students at the time of application, enrollment, study, completion, and after graduation
- Collect more data regarding our HE students and provision by using a variety of data sources
- Maintain consistency, accuracy, and data return for internal and external data systems
- Invest time and resources in developing a management system and reporting trends on higher education participation and access

## **5.0 Ambitions and Strategy**

In line with our mission, vision, and values, BCNO has adopted a broad vision for the future that focuses on providing equal opportunities for future generations to access and succeed in higher education, and to succeed in fulfilling careers.

## **6.0 Activities and Support**

### **6.1 Bursary/Hardship Fund**

- The Student Hardship Fund was introduced to provide support for BCNO students in times of financial hardship. The only available funding from BCNO is the Bursary. Last year 22% of students who applied were awarded the Bursary.
- The Osteopathic Educational Fund allows students to apply for a loan of up to £3,000 which has to be paid back. For the 2014-15 academic year, 3 students applied for the funding.
- The majority of our students apply through the Student Loans Company. Very few are private payers.

The admission and finance team reviews applications as soon as they are submitted to make sure recipients meet the requirements of the bursary schemes allowing payments to be made as quickly as possible.

### **6.2 Additional Learning Support**

- BCNO strives to create an inclusive environment and to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.
- BCNO has a wellbeing department that provides additional learning support for students with dyslexia and other learning difficulties.
- Students can also access Student Assistance Programme, a safe, online community where people support each other anonymously to improve their mental health.
- The Student Assistance Programme works with BCNO to offer students complementary mental health support covering family issues, student issues, counseling, and anxiety-related issues.

### **6.3 Tutorial Support**

- Every full-time student at BCNO has a Personal Tutor.
- Tutors are available to help students complete their courses and achieve their qualifications by:
  - Ensuring students understand their course and expectations.
  - Referring them to support services within and outside the college, as needed, with any personal issues or problems that may interfere with their progress.
  - Tracking progress and setting goals to help them succeed.
  - Assessing the options for what to do next and ensuring they are prepared to move on to the next step, whether that be further study, employment.

## **7.0 Review**

The Access and Participation Statement will be reviewed annually in consultation and collaboration with students through student, management and governing bodies.