

1. Provider Context

1.1. Introduction to UCO

The University College of Osteopathy (UCO) is a specialist institution providing education and clinical training in osteopathy. The UCO has a central role in delivering osteopathic education and expanding the impact of osteopathy; 42% of current UK osteopaths were educated at the UCO, and we have the largest student population of any of the UK osteopathic educational institutions. The main source of income is from students on its Integrated Master of Osteopathy (M.Ost) degree, a 480-credit course which is delivered over 4 years full time (FT) or 5 years part time (PT).

Since its establishment in 1917, the UCO has been a leading provider of osteopathic education and training, with an established reputation for quality and excellence, nationally and internationally. The UCO's strategy is to grow its HE provision within the institution's specialist areas of health education, training and research.

The UCO's osteopathic education and training is accredited by its professional statutory regulatory body, the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC). The UCO's osteopathic course must not only meet the required quality standards assessed as part of our own approval process, but also the professional requirements that ensure graduates can practice safely and competently in the UK.

The UCO runs its own outpatient osteopathic clinic offering osteopathic health care to the local and wider community and providing an excellent real-world environment in which our osteopathic students train and complete their clinical hours. It is the largest teaching clinic for osteopathy in the UK, annually delivering approximately 35,000 supervised, student-led osteopathic appointments pre-pandemic, and serving a diverse range of patients with a wide variety of clinical presentations. The UCO Clinic operates from its own dedicated facilities as well as a range of off-site settings which extend access for patients and learning opportunities for students. These off-site specialist and community clinics include a clinic for people living with HIV and a clinic in a GP practice, ensuring an extensive and varied clinical experience for all students. We deliver approximately 5,000 free appointments within our community outreach clinics each year. No other osteopathic education institution currently offers students this extensive access to this diverse range of patients and the benefits of this to students' academic experience and preparedness for practice are significant.

1.2 UCO Mission and Strategic Aims

UCO's mission is to "*Continually provide the highest quality education and research for all and the very best care, for each patient, on every occasion*". We interpret this with a focus on excellence in teaching, learning, research, and sustainability. We remain committed to delivering outstanding education to our students and high-quality healthcare to our communities.

1.3 Size and Shape of Provision

The UCO's core course is the M.Ost, currently delivering osteopathic training to FT students through weekday contact teaching, and PT students who have classes at weekends with weekday clinic days. We also offer a specialised, GOsC accredited 2-year full-time MSc in Osteopathy (Pre-Registration) course to students per intake who

are qualified healthcare professionals wishing to further their careers with an osteopathy qualification. In addition, we offer a Postgraduate Certificate in Specialist Paediatric Osteopathic Practice to students per intake and a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Clinical Education to students per intake.

In addition to the above courses, UCO has entered into several partnership agreements with a small number of providers, including the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine; Northern College of Acupuncture; the Osteopathic Centre for Animals; and an Italian osteopathic institution (AIMO), which are out of the scope of this submission. The UCO has recently entered into a franchise agreement with the College of Esports to deliver a range of undergraduate programmes in this subject area and expects data from students registered with this partner to be included in future reports.

Over a four-year period, the number of students on our core M.Ost FT course has remained stable with a slight reduction in the number of students joining the M.Ost PT course. The majority of M.Ost students are mature with approximately 75% of students over 21 (and with slightly more female students overall (56%) than male). This is particularly so on the M.Ost PT course, which is designed to be a flexible study option to accommodate students with work or family commitments and therefore attracts students wishing to change or enhance their career. This is also evident when considering the range of entrance qualifications. Approximately 30% of students enter the M.Ost FT course having completed an Access or other level 3 qualification and approximately 12% arrive with a BTEC or equivalent, whereas over 70% of entrants for the PT course have a previous HE qualification and 19% with an Access or other Level 3 qualification, reflecting the mature nature of our part-time student population.

The number of students reporting a disability on the M.Ost FT is increasing, with 14% of students reporting a disability in 2017-8, 23.7% in 2020-21 and 19.1% aggregated. Most are declared as learning disabilities with a small number of mental health conditions. This increase may reflect the significant efforts that our Student Support department has put in to help students identify a disability and to signpost available support.

The ethnic diversity of our students has remained broadly stable, with approximately 40% of full-time students and 21% of part-time students identifying themselves as non-white. Due to limited awareness of osteopathic treatment in certain areas of the UK, a majority of our students continue to be from IMD Quintile 3, 4 or 5 (53% of our full-time and 62% of our part-time undergraduate student population). Brexit has inevitably had an impact on students arriving from the EU, with the number of full-time students from the EU declining from 11.1% in 2017-2018 to 3.7% in 2020-2021.

When considering the data indicators, we are aware that smaller cohorts can have a significant impact on the figures, and that there are a number of students reluctant to share some aspects of sensitive personal data, which might have a significant impact on the split metrics. Several indicators do not have data due to data suppression which prevents a comprehensive overview, particularly relating to the part-time student experience.

Despite this challenge where small numbers can have a more significant impact on metrics, the data indicators demonstrate that overall, our performance over the past four years,

considering the challenge of delivering a vocational subject during a pandemic, is extremely positive with several areas materially above the baseline.

Our overall student outcomes performance is high, this is evident in the measures for programme completion and progression, particularly in our main full-time Master of Osteopathy programme. Retention at the start of the programme has been identified as an area for enhancement; exit interviews with non-continuing students suggest that Covid was a significant factor, with students feeling under-prepared for study at undergraduate level due to disruption to their education, or in the case of mature students, greater uncertainty about their finances. To address this, we provide all applicants with optional free online access to 'refresher' materials as they commence the course, and are trialling a more flexible payment option for students undertaking our Access to Higher Education Diploma prior to the M.Ost.

Our overall student experience performance has been broadly in line with the baseline, however there is a degree of difference across reporting years due to the small student numbers involved. We are, however, especially pleased to note the significant improvements of students' full-time experience of teaching across the four years (from -4.5% in year 1 to +7.5% in year 4) as well as assessment and feedback (-0.3% to +7.5%) have been made.

One theme identified through our analysis is supporting more mature students to access the support we provide, noting that a number of our split metrics relating to age are below benchmark. This is addressed in the Section 2.2.3, however, we are particularly proud of how our students perceive our Student Voice mechanisms, where full-time course performance is materially above the benchmark.

We are also exceptionally pleased with our student outcomes indicators which demonstrate that our students are outstandingly successful in gaining highly-skilled and meaningful employment in professional practice, demonstrating that the approach to teaching at the UCO is effective and of a very high standard.

1.5 COVID

The last three years have not been typical in terms of student experience at any Higher Education Provider (HEP) due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however the UCO was committed to, and successful in, delivering the highest level of education and support with minimal disruption throughout. The UCO suspended course delivery for just two days following closure of HEPs as part of social distancing measures and implemented online delivery at the start of the following week. We were able to deliver students their expected education with no reduction in live teaching hours or tutor contact. Practical classes were adapted and delivered online and skills were followed up on when in-class delivery commenced.

The UCO ensured that students were within an appropriate environment and well-equipped to continue with their studies by contacting each student individually through a survey and responding to and providing support to those who did not have access to an appropriate electronic device through which to access their online classes and resources.

During the temporary closure of the UCO clinic, the UCO was quick to put into place an innovative virtual clinic to ensure that students' clinical education, training, and mentoring could continue. Our ability to adapt and innovate ensured that students were able to continue with their curriculum without compromising academic standards and quality; while enhanced

UCO do not utilise many traditional lectures; the majority of theoretical classes are delivered in a tutorial environment where students are encouraged and expected to actively participate in class learning activities to maximise the benefits of active learning. Small class sizes allow all students to contribute in teaching sessions and educators to easily engage with and respond to students in the classroom setting. Practical classes are a key component in providing students with the manual skills and knowledge they need to treat patients effectively, competently and safely. These are delivered in small groups, of 1:10 staff to student ratio, where students work on each other as models to both practice and experience practical skills and manipulation.

Theoretical and practical class activities are often case-based, enabling students to apply their developing skills through different patient scenarios across different components of the course to aid the application and consolidation of their learning within a healthcare and patient-centred context. Case-based learning helps students to develop their critical thinking and diagnostic reasoning skills, in addition to instilling a sense of curiosity and enquiry.

Students' clinic education and training is undertaken in the UCO Clinic and at off-site clinics and has been commended by our External Examiners (2). Our diverse range of patients enables students to experience a variety of patient presentations which extensively prepares them for real-world practice. Dedicated Practice Educators supervise and mentor students in clinical sessions and train and encourage students to integrate and apply their theoretical knowledge and practical skills to manage and treat complex clinical cases in an osteopathic context. Students have one-to-one preparation and debriefing sessions with Practice Educators in addition to group feedback sessions where students and educators can share experiences and learn from each other.

Supporting the above teaching and learning practices, the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment is a key academic resource providing students with learning materials, directed reading, links to relevant evidence-based research, videos and podcasts, and formative quizzes and exercises to support and embed their learning.

The UCO employs an early intervention scheme to ensure students remain engaged with their studies and monitors student class attendance and engagement with the Virtual Learning Environment to ensure support is provided at the earliest opportunity. Monitoring is carried out by the UCO's Engagement Monitoring Group (EMG) (3), a proactive and effective support mechanism which identifies students who are struggling to attend or engage with online learning activities; and develops bespoke strategies and support interventions to address individual student needs and to help them continue and succeed with their studies. Interventions include discussions with tutors, the Student Support Officer (SSO), Course Leader and Registry staff. Conversations highlighting the benefits of attendance, learning gains and changing behaviours are had. Many students respond positively and make necessary changes. Some are offered other interventions such as taking a year out and returning in the future as part of our Suspension of Studies policy (4).

To prepare students for professional practice post-qualification our assessment strategies are carefully designed to mirror the demands of osteopathic healthcare and are based on real-world scenarios. Students undertake knowledge-based, reflective, practical and clinical assessments, the latter of which occurs within a clinical setting. This, combined with students experiencing at least 1,000 hours observing and treating patients within our clinic and off-site

clinics throughout the course, means students have obtained a wealth of experience of different patient presentations and healthcare settings, in addition to the skills required of a competent practitioner by the time they qualify, ensuring they can progress immediately into practice and making them highly attractive to employers.

Assessment promotes learning and enhances the performance and outcomes of students through effective feedback strategies. Students at the UCO experience ongoing continuous feedback in addition to formal assessment performance. This happens through continuous dialogue between students and educators in classroom settings and by appointment. This is most apparent in practical teaching sessions where high ratios of educators allow us to provide bespoke feedback to individuals, enabling students to identify and work on their own areas for improvement.

This model of continuous performance feedback is also followed in clinical sessions, where the high ratio of Practice Educators to students (one to every four treating students) ensures a high level of individualised feedback for students, enabling them to discuss and defend diagnostic hypotheses and treatment plans with their Practice Educator in detail. In addition, within clinical teaching sessions students benefit from group patient debriefing sessions where students are encouraged to discuss their patient cases with others and share clinical experiences under the guidance of an experienced Practice Educator. This makes for a fully supportive clinical learning environment. Continuous in-class feedback is complemented by formal formative and summative assessment feedback.

Students are able and encouraged to discuss any questions or points of clarification about formal assessment feedback directly with educators and are also able to arrange one-to-one drop-in sessions throughout the course as an academic support mechanism.

To enable students to make effective use of the continuous and formal assessment feedback they receive, they are provided with formal teaching sessions on reflective practice. This is an important element of osteopathic learning and development, helping them to develop into a reflective practitioner in preparation for their osteopathic career and to evaluate their own strengths and areas for development on their educational journey.

Teaching, learning and assessment methods and feedback are reviewed annually as part of course annual reporting and monitoring processes and in response to External Examiner and student feedback. The introduction of video-recorded practical assessments, implemented in response to comments made in External Examiner reports (2) and more recently in the NSS (5) is an excellent example of feedback being used to enhance students' academic experience. Students can now review their assessment performance with educators to clearly understand the grade they have been awarded and how they can improve. In addition, video recording practical assessments has enhanced the quality of moderation of practical assessments through sampling video recordings rather than relying on real-time observation of a sample of practical assessments. This has also helped to support the Academic Appeal process.

The metric indicators are indicative of the commendations External Examiners have highlighted regarding our teaching, learning and assessment and feedback practice which include: nurturing students to use the high-level criticality skills they show in their research activity in the clinical environment; clearly sharing moderation processes with learners;

creating fair and appropriate assessment adjustments; preparing students to work in the changing arena of Allied Health Professionals and in having students' experience as a focus in all that we do. We have also been commended for instilling independent thinking in students and for appropriate levels of challenge in our assessment, which our learners rise to (2).

The UCO is also committed to maintaining our high quality of teaching, learning and assessment practice by supporting students through effective policies and procedures. All policies are made available to students throughout their course on our website (4) and students are able to seek procedural advice from the Student Support department. Policies and procedures cover all aspects of UCO student life and help to provide a framework to manage expectations and apply fair processes for staff and students alike. Students are provided with all relevant policies at offer stage to ensure that they are fully aware of what they will be held accountable for, and at student induction these are covered in depth and related clearly to the difference of being a student on a pre-registration course (6). Specific policies that are particularly relevant to the M.Ost course, such as that related to Fitness to Practise (4), ensure that students are fully informed of what studying to be a healthcare professional entails and the higher standards they are held to, whereas other policies are identified to students to ensure that they are aware of the supportive policies in place, such as those related to Special Circumstances and Timetable Adjustments (4). Staff are introduced to policies on appointment and are responsible for familiarising themselves with and for following the procedures contained within them to ensure that they can support students effectively.

2.1.2 How UCO inspire students to engage in and commit to their learning

The teaching and assessment metrics, which was identified as an area for improvement in our previous TEF submission, indicate a welcome improvement in our performance on the full-time programme, with the difference in indicator value and weighted sector benchmark value improving from -0.3 in the first year of the survey to 8.2 in the most recent year, as well as an overall positive difference of 2.7 overall. This reflects the significant efforts made to enhance the quality of our feedback to students, for example the development of video recordings to support written feedback provided immediately after practical examinations. Our part-time course metrics remain slightly below the weighted sector average, which may in part reflect the constraints that students studying on a course delivered over the weekend experience in accessing support at other times, given many will have conflicting personal and career priorities. The work done to address this is discussed in Section 2.2.1.

At the UCO clinical practice is at the core of students' education; from the outset students interact with patients in the UCO Clinic and progress from observing patient interactions in their first year to establishing and managing their own patient list as the lead practitioner by the final year, under the supervision of our Practice Educators. The UCO clinic and all our community clinics are built on a team-based system of students and staff, with junior and senior students working alongside one another in observational and lead practitioner roles under the supervision and mentorship of a fully-qualified osteopath. This team-based approach supports the development of professional, supportive and collaborative relationships between staff, students and peers. This is encouraged by team activities such as case-based presentations and discussions, mini-tutorials and preparedness for practice. This team-based approach also provides a cohesive tutoring team in the clinic, where staff can provide high quality clinical supervision and seek support in complex or demanding situations, clinically

and/or with students. A very high Practice Educator to patient ratio in the clinic of 1:4 enables staff to dedicate ample time to students and patients, particularly at Level 6.

The clinical content of the course provides students with varied opportunities to care for a wide range of patients from a diverse range of backgrounds which enhances their clinical experience in real-world settings, develops their osteopathic practitioner skills and prepares them for autonomous practise when they graduate. In the final year of the course students have the opportunity to study clinical practice specialisms throughout our own specialist and off-site community clinics which may include paediatric osteopathy, the care of expectant mothers, the elderly, sports injuries, people living with HIV and AIDS, patients with complex psychosocial needs, and the management of people with chronic pain. This allows for advanced learning opportunities and additional preparedness for practice whilst satisfying the GOSc's requirement of providing students with at least 1,000 hours of clinical experience.

Our specialist and community clinics exist to broaden and enrich the clinical and work-based experience of our students and provide invaluable preparation for life in practice. Working in different settings such as a hospital, GP practice or at local community or support centre, enables UCO students to apply their knowledge, understanding and attitudinal development in different environments, working within different teams and with varied patient groups. This is frequently challenging for students but often leads to increased confidence, resilience and developed problem solving skills, all supporting UCO students in their readiness for work.

Supporting and underpinning clinical content of the course is the academic knowledge base that students require. They gain an extensive and in-depth knowledge of human anatomy, physiology, pathophysiology, neurology, biomechanics and the biopsychosocial model in addition to the ability to apply this knowledge alongside the development of effective and safe practical osteopathic skills.

The course content also enables students to develop and gain a wide range of professional and transferable skills including team working, study, communication, presentation, reflective practice skills and goal setting. This is in addition to content that will enable students to set up their own osteopathic practice, which includes business skills, medico-legal issues, marketing and financial information.

The content of the course is underpinned by scholarship and research undertaken at UCO (7) in addition to research-based evidence undertaken nationally and internationally. As part of the course content, students undertake a major independent project that incorporates an understanding of research ethics and governance and aims to be of a standard suitable for publication and presentation to peers and colleagues. Students can choose their own projects, some of which are within the scope of current research being undertaken by our experienced researchers, and thereby contribute to osteopathic research. Projects by our students have also been published and presented at national research conferences (8).

In order to become a competent osteopath, M.Ost students must be able to combine their knowledge-base, practical and research skills with effective practical skills to provide critically informed and person-centred care to a diverse range of people. Therefore, the course content also contains components which are designed specifically to enable students to achieve this within the ethos of 'being an osteopath'. The content within these components includes managing challenging patient encounters, including the management of mental health issues.

Students are also instilled with an awareness of their own self-care, their own limitations and ability as an osteopath and when to refer patients to other healthcare professionals.

By graduation, the course content ensures that UCO students are well-equipped to understand, manage and treat a wide variety of patients, some of whom will have complex health needs. They become caring, proficient and effective in applying skills and knowledge, and are aware of their own and their patients' uncertainties and limitations whilst remaining confident in their ability to manage these. They demonstrate adaptability and sensitivity, using strong verbal and non-verbal communication skills to inform and reassure patients. They also have a clear sense of professional identity within the wider context of health and social care provision and are prepared to fulfil the duties and responsibilities this entails. The content of the course encourages students to always question assumptions, investigate the unexpected and seek to further their understanding using the knowledge, skills and experience the course has provided them with.

The extensive range of clinical and academic knowledge and skills that students are required to develop throughout course is challenging for students and is largely achieved through their commitment to and effective engagement with their studies. Recognising this challenge, particularly for part-time students who typically have other personal commitments, the UCO has built excellent academic and welfare support systems which students are strongly encouraged to access.

As noted above, the UCO's EMG closely monitors student attendance and engagement with their studies and is an effective way of actively identifying and providing targeted support for students who may be struggling. Students also have weekday, evening and weekend access to our Learning Hub's team of Learning Advisors (LAs) who provide bespoke academic skills support to students, in addition to the services of the SSO for welfare support and guidance, and our team of Counsellors who offer a series of free counselling sessions for students needing emotional support.

In addition to our academic and welfare support systems, the course makes use of a wide variety of teaching methods to help students learn and develop. Lectures, tutorials, seminars, practical classes and clinical experience are applied in a variety of ways, so that students gather, interpret, discuss and reflect on their learning.

2.1.3 Research, Scholarship and professional informed practice.

Research and scholarship activities at the UCO are key to the students' learning journey and in supporting the profession. The research infrastructure and the associated research and scholarship activity undertaken at the UCO provide a firm foundation that underpins an evidence-informed learning environment and develops students' own critical thinking and research skills.

In the wider context of the profession as a whole, our research activities enable our graduates to develop the capabilities required to contribute to, and promote, an evidence-informed culture, which is essential to the growth of the osteopathic profession. The UCO's participation in osteopathic research and scholarship is held in very high regard and by embedding this in the M.Ost course, responsible for producing the highest number of new osteopaths in the UK annually, we are confident that our graduates will lead the way on this important change.

The UCO Research Centre currently has a team of eight members dedicated to delivering and supporting research and scholarship at UCO. The team also provide research teaching at UCO and support staff and students to develop scholarship and publish research. Research-based activities include providing lectures and practical skills workshops about critical appraisal of research literature and quantitative and qualitative research methods on undergraduate and postgraduate courses and managing a wide range of student research projects. The team also help to develop and implement larger, funded studies within UCO and in collaboration with other national and international research organisations and educational institutions. Since 2018 a number of projects have taken place at the UCO that have directly informed the curriculum and impacted on students learning activity, including work on mindfulness with chronic pain patients, paediatric care and therapeutic approaches to practice (7).

Our Research and Scholarship Strategy aims to ensure that research and scholarship are embedded into the institution's academic practice. Staff involved in research are required to seek opportunities to disseminate their work, help to secure research funding, build capacity for new areas of work, and support the development of their colleagues' research and scholarship. Members of faculty contribute to publications in peer-reviewed journals, national clinical guidelines and successfully present work at osteopathic research conferences as well as at general medical conferences nationally and internationally. The Research Team also peer-review for academic journals and contribute to editorial boards including having a member of staff as the current Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine published by Elsevier.

The GOsC has a clear expectation that osteopaths should be using scholarly activity and research to inform what they do with patients so the UCO not only generates new osteopathic research but has a very clear focus on graduating research active professionals. Among the five units that comprise the M.Ost, Research & Enquiry is focused specifically on building students' critical capabilities, starting with self-reflection and reflectivity and progressing on to the completion of a publishable piece of independent research. The UCO's research and scholarship activities, led by its experienced Research Centre Team, not only inform the M.Ost curriculum and its development, but also ensure that students are provided with relevant and contemporary research and enquiry skills that enable them to produce a publishable piece of work by the end of their studies, provide them with transferable critical thinking and research skills, and also prepare them sufficiently for further research study and professional practice requirements (8).

The UCO provide a bursary to resource students to publish their project work in a peer reviewed journal. Since 2018 several UCO students have gone on to have their project work published in The International Journal of Osteopathic Medicine (9) and to present at collaborative conferences, but even those who choose not to undertake further research activities post-graduation have the knowledge and skills to find and apply research evidence to their practice, and to complete case analyses and clinical audits, as required by the GOsC OPS.

In addition to the UCO's research and scholarship activities, the UCO ensures the outstanding clinical experience of our students by employing a diverse team of Practice Educators and providing exposure to a range of different clinical settings and patient presentations.

UCO Practice Educators are dual practitioners: they are registered osteopaths working in private practice and are able to bring a wealth of clinical and professional work-based experiences to inform student learning and experience. They are responsible for teaching, supervising, and mentoring of students in osteopathic healthcare in line with the OPS, provide exemplars of practice to developing students and engender best practice within the clinical setting. They are trained to support students professionally and academically, whilst ensuring best patient care, and challenge the student in a constructive manner, gradually increasing their exposure to more complex situations as they progress through the course and encourage them to arrive at their own solutions to clinical problems.

2.2. Resources, support and student engagement

2.2.1 UCO support for Staff

Ensuring staff are sufficiently qualified and supported to embed excellent academic practice across the UCO is fundamental to assure an outstanding academic experience for students. All educators at the UCO are required to hold a postgraduate teaching qualification and all Practice Educators are required to be registered with the GOsC.

The UCO identified that the academic postgraduate qualifications available did not meet its specific and specialised requirements of its educators and in 2011 developed a unique Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Clinical Education qualification (10) which encompasses clinical, practical and academic teaching skills and methodologies and aims to provide experienced clinicians with the skills to become competent and confident educators. This bespoke qualification is offered to UCO educators and staff free of charge and ensures the professional teaching skills of our staff meet the specific requirements and high expectations of the UCO and our students. Staff can apply for Study Leave to support them in gaining this qualification.

Our Staff Appraisal and Professional Development Review (PDR) Policy sets out our staff performance review process which is undertaken annually for all staff by Line Managers. This process reviews staff performance over the previous year, identifies areas for enhancement, and generates an action plan which is updated by the staff member and monitored by the Line Manager. As part of this process, teaching staff are required to take part in peer observation. Each member of staff is observed by their Unit Leader or Senior Practice Educator as appropriate and staff are required to reflect on these to enhance their own practice. The PDR exercise also enables staff to identify their individual training needs.

In addition to addressing individual staff training needs, the UCO regularly provides bespoke staff training and development days that focus on specific areas in response to staff feedback, changes in UCO practice or external collaborative opportunities. This has recently included participation in Knowledge Exchange Framework activities.

Key to UCO embedding outstanding academic practice across the institution are our annual staff conferences. These are an opportunity for staff to engage and network with each other and provide staff with institutional and strategic planning updates in addition to group training sessions which focus on curriculum development, academic practice, and the student experience. Our staff conferences are valuable in promoting and delivering professional development but also offer an essential opportunity to share good practice, support team

learning, establish formal and informal mentoring relationships and to plan the practical application of the learning and initiatives discussed (11).

In addition to the formal staff development activities above, projects and internal reviews also inform staff development processes and enhance academic practice. For example, in 2019 it was identified through NSS feedback that students had concerns about inconsistencies in their clinical education depending on which Clinic Team they were assigned to. In response, an extensive project was undertaken to review clinical education within the clinic environment, address any issues identified and thereby enhance academic practice in clinical teaching. The project involved observations of clinical sessions, discussions with clinical staff and students and was helpful in identifying that clinical sessions were well managed with effective learning environments being created and supported by Practice Educators. The process identified a development need for a small number of our Practice Educators which enhanced the academic experience and the sharing of good practice within the clinical learning environment (12).

We also involve our students in the professional development of staff, specifically within the clinical environment as a primary focus of the M.Ost course. This involves senior students providing anonymous feedback about the Practice Educators they have worked with using the Osteopathy Clinical Teaching Questionnaire (13). This has instilled a responsibility in students to be appropriately critical yet reflective of their educators, which is an important stage of the development of students as healthcare professionals, who are reflective, analytical and empowered to make positive contributions, in addition to identifying interventions and professional development opportunities for Practice Educators. Staff training and development activities identify good academic practice and ensure that this is embedded consistently across the UCO.

2.2.2 UCO Learning Environment

Since September 2018 our Student Support department has been restructured with a consequent refocus of the service regarding delivery of academic and welfare services and staff responsibility for this.

A new Head of Student Services role was introduced in September 2018 and instigated a period of review and change in this area. Our traditional library has been redesigned as a vibrant Learning Hub introducing a team of Learning Advisors (LAs) and the Student Support Officer (SSO) role has been refocused to support mental health and disability needs, reasonable adjustments and those who are at risk of failing or withdrawing from the course as well as aligning student support services more closely to course and student learning outcomes.

The LAs are focussed on providing a learning support service to all students which specifically underpins the M.Ost curriculum and learning experience and have developed a particularly close collaborative working relationship with the research teaching team in direct response to student feedback identifying the need for additional support with research projects. To support this in 2019 the LAs attended and shadowed research educators which enabled them to provide research-focused support for students. This has since progressed further with LA's now contributing to research teaching and will enhance research-focused learning support in subsequent years. The LA's have been provided with training to also introduce database

research workshops in line with the teaching timetable, enabling them to support students in a more responsive and 'real-time' way. The LA's have also created referencing guides collaboratively with the Research Team and, in addition, their close working has enhanced student communication and feedback regarding research teaching and assessments.

The Counselling service has been transformed from an internal part-time service operating within limited hours to an external service offered by a diverse team and available on student demand, including at evenings and weekends. This caters for both full-time student availability, and in particular for part-time students whose availability is typically more limited. Demand for counselling has increased over recent years. Reports of service usage (14) indicate that there are no patterns in the characteristics of students using the service, but that personal circumstances and financial concerns are the main reasons why students access the service. In response to this, the UCO has in place a range of financial support packages available to students, including a hardship fund which is non-repayable by students to assist them with living and study costs (15).

The SSO receives all requests for reasonable adjustments, special circumstances and deferrals, working closely with professional services staff who administrate assessments and with educators to ensure that student support measures are implemented confidentially and effectively.

The SSO's full-time services are available to all students, including part-time students at weekends and by arrangement out of hours via MS Teams. The SSO offers one-to-one sessions delivered remotely and in person, as well as an on-site drop-in service, providing flexibility and accessibility to all students.

Due to the clinical focus of the course, the SSO holds weekly meetings with the Practice Educator team which have enabled better collaborative working and greater understanding of effective student support within the clinic environment which can be particularly challenging for students. This has offered students a more holistic and supportive approach to their clinical learning experience, with the SSO providing drop-in sessions at the clinic for students to have immediate access to them during their clinical training sessions.

For many years the UCO operated a traditional academic tutoring system but this was not effective; the take-up of academic tutor appointments was very low, and it was apparent that the majority of students were instead seeking the direct support of lecturers or Practice Educators they were working most closely with. However, with a predominately part-time faculty access to specific lecturers was sometimes limited. In 2020 (16) the UCO undertook a review of staffing, with the aim of strategically increasing full-time roles and student access to academic staff. The academic tutoring system was replaced, and contracts for all lecturers and practice educators were reviewed to allocate more time to the support of students, and revised role descriptions to ensure that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area (17).

We also introduced two formal interventions for the first two years of study where continuation is lower and students need more support. In the first year this consists of a student support interview with each student to discuss any concerns and to identify any support required: students are encouraged to develop a study plan supported by both the lecturers and the student support team. Students are again interviewed within the first two years of the

Becoming an Osteopath unit to review progress. In the final years of the course, students can choose whom to access support from, the Course Team provide drop-in sessions each week for academic matters to be discussed and practice educators are available at least twice a week during clinical work. We are currently evaluating this approach with students and will look to modify if required.

Attendance data is recorded and reviewed on a monthly basis by unit leaders and termly by the Engagement Monitoring Group (EMG), a sub-committee of Teaching Quality Standards Committee (TQSC) which is discussed in section 2.1.1. Students with full or almost complete attendance are also contacted to let them know that the course team have noticed their excellent attendance records. Students respond positively to this recognition, continuing their attendance pattern and demonstrating a willingness to get involved with other aspects of the UCO.

The end of year assessments boards provides another opportunity for student intervention. Every student with a resit opportunity on any element of any unit is offered a supportive conversation with the relevant unit leader. In some cases, involving the student support team providing a holistic approach to students who are at risk of failing on their year of study. The Learning Hub offer exams workshops, preparing for assessments and managing exam anxieties. These workshops are offered to all students with a particular focus on first year students which are students with the lowest continuation rates.

2.2.3 UCO Facilities and Resources

The nature of the teaching and learning process for osteopathy requires substantial specialist accommodation and equipment, such as dedicated rooms with plinths, clinical skills equipment, and anatomical models. The UCO has also invested in its own purpose designed clinical facility. Unlike physiotherapy, nursing or midwifery, our clinical facilities mean students are not required to seek external placements and none of the clinical costs are borne by the NHS.

The UCO recognises that the way in which students learn is changing, in part due to the pandemic and also the advances in technology utilisation and student expectations. The UCO seeks to ensure students are provided with high-quality physical and digital resources to enhance their learning.

A number of notable enhancements to IT services at the UCO have been put in place since the last TEF report. UCO commissioned an external IT audit in late 2017 (18) and several key areas were identified to bring significant benefits to both students and staff. Foremost of these changes was the migration from an outdated e-mail messaging and intranet solution to Microsoft office 365 that went live for the start of the 2018-2019 academic year. Extensive support with one-to-one drop-in sessions for both students and staff were provided to ensure a smooth transition. New timetables were provided using Outlook calendar functionality and students for the first time had access to live timetable information.

The teaching of practical skills requires facilities for demonstrations and for students to view and evaluate their own and peer performances. In recognition of this UCO invested in a new dedicated video treatment room. The system was configured so that students could book the room, log into MS Teams and record themselves practicing. This could then be shared with UCO tutors for assessment and constructive feedback. The teaching team have also been

using this to update the catalogue of training videos available to students to ensure resources are current.

During the summer of 2022 a dedicated VR suite was installed within the Learning Hub as a trial to support anatomy teaching, providing students with access to 3dOraganon Anatomy software. Output from the VR headsets can be cast to wall mounted display panels for small groups of students and tutors to discuss and explore. This project is due to be evaluated in Summer 2023.

The UCO is now practiced and better prepared to deliver learning opportunities using easily accessible computer tools and in ways that offer flexibility in how resources are used. Before, during and since the pandemic, procedures for computer assisted learning have been refined and modified so that current procedures now provide the best in digital education.

The Learning Hub, which replaced the library in 2019 is a flexible working environment providing learning resources, expert advice and guidance for all students. The Learning Advisors (LA's) work collaboratively with the research team and course team, on occasion acting as teaching assistants and support staff linking into the curriculum, as discussed in Section 2.2.2. The Learning Hub team have introduced workshops on referencing, using research databases and English as a Second Language; all of which are offered on a one-to-one basis.

The LAs have been tasked with improving student wellbeing and providing a holistic and supportive environment for students and work closely with the SSO to ensure all aspects of student wellbeing are covered. Additionally, reminders of assessments dates, recent research papers and 'Book of the Week' help to maintain the link with students' academic experience and wellbeing.

What was once an isolated traditional library has become a flexible and supportive learning space with a staff team more clearly focussed on students and supporting their learning and wellbeing to ensure they have appropriate support to be successful.

2.2.4 UCO Student Engagement

As a small specialist institution, we are able to respond to student feedback quickly and we are confident that our excellent performance in the student voice metrics provides evidence that we will be able to continue in making improvements to support the student experience during the next four-year period.

We have an active Student Representative system, these Student Representatives are members of the Student Staff Liaison Consultation Group (SSLCG), a formal committee established to represent student views to UCO staff. In addition, several of our academic committees include Student Representative membership enabling them to contribute to academic decision-making and institutional oversight through representation on our Academic Council and our Board of Directors. All Student Representatives are supported by the Head of Student Services and are provided with training and support to enable them to effectively fulfil and engage with this role.

The effectiveness of the SSLCG was reviewed in 2022 in response to feedback from staff and students to enable a more robust student feedback process. The outcome of this review resulted in extending the membership of the committee to include the full course team,

Practice Educators and representatives from all support services, implementing a '3 C's' (Compliments, Comments and Concerns) format to the meeting, and an expectation that responses to students' feedback are provided to Student Representatives within a few days of the SSLCG meetings taking place who report back to the student body to close this feedback cycle. In addition, the 3C's and responses to them are then discussed and reported at the termly Course Team meetings to ensure that these matters are considered as part of course enhancement activities.

To address variable response rates to end of year student surveys, we have reviewed the way that we collect data and the questions we are asking. We have initiated a series of formal anonymised online Pulse Surveys, completed by students across the course of the year as a health check on their academic experience, and providing timely feedback for the UCO to action and report on. These Pulse surveys were introduced in 2022 and their implementation and effectiveness will be monitored over the next year.

We also regularly hold focus groups with students to discuss matters in depth with students as required. For example, this year as we started a new academic cycle without any pandemic restrictions, students were invited to share their thoughts on the extent to which their course should continue to employ distance learning and online teaching strategies post pandemic. Students were invited to share their experiences and circumstances regarding this and asked to consider this alongside the benefits of in-person attendance. This was done with a view to providing the most effective learning opportunities for all as well as establishing support packages for students requiring reasonable adjustments.

Student voice feedback from Student Representative discussions with M.Ost course staff, SSLCG meetings, Pulse Surveys and focus groups are used not only to address students' ongoing compliments, comments and concerns, but to also inform course development activities with consequent impacts on students' academic experience and student outcome. As such it is a fundamental aspect of maintaining academic standards and quality. Students are therefore very much encouraged to engage with our range of Student Voice mechanisms, and are reminded of this at induction sessions and throughout their studies.

The GOsC monitors our student engagement activities through our annual report submission and have identified on more than one occasion our student voice mechanisms as examples of good practice. For example, in response to the 2019-2020 GOsC Annual Report the GOsC note that "*There is a full range of mechanisms by which students are able to provide feedback about the delivery of their course, enabling the UCO to respond to any concerns and suggestions for enhancement throughout the academic year.*" (19).

There have been a number of notable improvements to our provision that have been possible due to effective dialogue with students, and these are detailed annually in our internal Course Annual Reports and Action Plans (20). Examples include improved communication of the course timetable; reintroduction of Reading Weeks to support students' consolidation of learning; enhanced supervision processes for students' final year projects; and the introduction of student experience focus groups with regular meetings to highlight issues, create action plans and suggest modifications to social and learning experiences and course resources for students from under-represented groups.

Prompted by the Black Lives Matter movement, and in response to student and staff feedback where it was identified that there was a need for safe spaces for students and staff from under-represented groups to share experiences, the UCO established several community groups. These were established in March 2021 for those from similar backgrounds and with similar protected characteristics to share opinions, with the option to share experiences, research solutions and provide recommendations to the Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity Committee to enable change at UCO. These community groups include: Black@UCO (the Black Community Group), CareGivers@UCO (for those with caring responsibilities), ENable@UCO (for those with a disability), Interfaith@UCO (the Interfaith Community Group), Women@UCO (for women) and Out@UCO (for those who identify as LGBTQ+). These groups aim to create an environment free of tension and judgement where like-minded people are encouraged to meet to make the UCO a more inclusive academic community. For example, pronouns have been added to staffs' official email signatures, that unconscious bias training be shared, and that a mechanism for providing anonymous feedback to raise racism and harassment issues be developed (21).

3. Student Outcomes

3.1 Strategy for student success

One of the UCO's primary objectives is to promote the profession of osteopathy and provide a clear route to practice regardless of an applicant's background. The statistics provided by the Office for Students on the "size and shape of provision" data supports this as this indicates that we welcome students from a range of different academic backgrounds. The aggregated data indicates that we admit only 16.1% of students with A levels of BCC or higher on our full-time course. Just over 40% arrive with BTEC, Access or other Level 3 qualification which means students may need additional support to transition to our undergraduate programme.

On our part-time programme, 67.5% enter with a HE level qualification. Whilst generally indicative of a high academic standard and familiarity with HE, this latter statistic is indicative that students are mature and therefore have often have competing professional and personal priorities that may provide a challenge to studying a professionally accredited, intensive training programme. The UCO strives to help students survive what may prove to be early challenges to enable them to flourish and be successful in a professional environment.

The starting point for this journey is our admissions process. All our students are interviewed personally by a member of the course team. As the breadth of entry qualifications indicates, this process is focused primarily on the applicant's motivations for studying osteopathy, to provide an awareness of the considerable demands of committing to a practical course and to discuss an appropriate study pathway.

In this respect, in addition to our main M.Ost programme we offer applicants the option of studying a one-year Access to Higher Education qualification. In our desire to widen access to osteopathic courses we developed the access course to specifically align with the M.Ost course, it is externally validated by Laser Learning Awards and therefore provides a UCAS-tariff qualification (22), as well as our Introduction to Healthcare Sciences (IHS) programme (23). The IHS programme is delivered over six weeks through e-learning, with some face-to-face teaching, and is assessed internally to ensure students have a core scientific knowledge base in readiness for study. The Access qualification is primarily designed to support

applicants with either no or very low level 3 qualifications whereas the IHS course is designed to support more advanced students, often with an HE qualification but not with a scientific background. Both routes provide experience of the Higher Education environment and, as all students are using e-learning systems they will encounter as an undergraduate student, are an effective preparation for study. Our internal data indicates that the IHS course has been effective in this way, with 92.3% of part-time students completing the course prior to the start of the 2020-21 academic year still registered on the programme comparing to an overall part-time continuation rate for the four-year reporting period of 77.6%.

Even with the study pathways we identify and offer, some of our students do find it a challenge to adjust to the intensive study demands of our osteopathy degree. This is particularly apparent in the first year of the degree. Students are expected to attend classes, especially practical and clinical sessions, and attendance is actively monitored through the EMG, which considers a range of progression and participation data about all our students, including class attendance, absence requests and special circumstances requests. The purpose of this monitoring is focused on reaching out to those students who require further support to be able to study, with very active involvement from our Academic and Student Support team, although inevitably we do have students who are unable to continue with their studies and in these cases our support can focus on helping them make an early and correct option with respect of their continued participation. With the recent development of our new student management system, Quercus by Ellucian, we are working to ensure that student participation data is collected, integrated and available to those who contribute to supporting students in a more timely manner, which is enabling us to target interventions earlier and to actively monitor whether these are working.

When we identify students who need more ongoing support in finding success beyond that which is offered in the classroom and the clinic, then the Student Support department become involved. In partnership with the Course Leader and Senior Practice Educators, who normally identify these needs, our SSO will meet with the student and devise a Managed Support Plan. The Managed Support Plan (4), which was launched in 2022 and complements the Fitness to Practice Policy (4), is designed to support all students in meeting professional requirements. This includes students who have temporary or long-term physical or mental health conditions which have an adverse impact on their ability to study and to engage with the course. The process is not concerned with passing judgement on a student's actions or motivation, rather its focus is on finding pathways to facilitate a student's affective learning with a view to progression and completion. we have had students referred to the Fitness to Practice Policy each year, but it remains an essential part of maintaining the UCO's high completion rates and making sure students are able to succeed beyond their studies.

Outside of Managed Support Plans we also put together precisely tailored support packages for our students who require them, which involves consultation across a range of staff including Practice Educators, Unit Leaders and practical skills educators coordinated by the Student Support team. Student-facing staff are familiar with individual students by name, allowing us to create learning and support packages on a genuine case-by-case basis. In the clinic this means that everything done to prepare graduates for their working lives is planned around their particular needs and the areas of the OPS that they need to focus on, at any particular

time and with any particular patient. Since none of this is generic, it also better prompts them to carry a very clear idea of what they need to do to succeed with them, even after they have left the UCO.

The specific vocational nature of the degree and its construction around professional standards in osteopathy mean that our teaching and student support practices are directly related to ensuring students' success beyond their studies by ensuring they can present themselves as a highly developed and professional practitioner to employers and patients. Therefore, professional development post-qualification is also a particular focus of our degree and students' learning experience. The UCO pay for all students to gain membership of a professional membership body, the Institute of Osteopathy (iO), from the first year of study. This means our students have access to dedicated resources and advice through the iO's Student Voice newsletter and section in Osteopathy Today, their Graduate Hub and representation on the iO Student Committee. Members of the iO also deliver teaching on the M.Ost course. Students are taught to reflect and highlight both career and personal development needs in the Professionalism strand of our curriculum, starting with professional reflective exercises, through the completion of a Career Development Plan well before the end of their studies. At this point students are also given access to resources from our regulatory body, the GOsC, so that they can be prepared for registration at the earliest point. During the final year students work on and present an early career plan in reflection of and in preparation for the requirements that will be on them to do this as qualified practitioners. The GOsC have very detailed Continuing Professional Development (CPD) expectations, and these inform much of the learning at Level 7 so that students leave ready and equipped to be lifelong learners within these parameters. This is also an essential part of the final years of their clinical education where they are required to evaluate real patient interactions and to work to enhance their proficiency and effectiveness.

47% of UK osteopaths are working as principals of multi-practitioner clinics or sole practitioners (24), therefore graduating from the UCO with a good knowledge of business management skills is essential. For this reason, extensive time on this is spent with students in their final year where they will look at key administration skills in addition to self-employment and setting up a practice, being a principle of a practice, networking, marketing and financial matters. Students also receive CV writing and interview skills to prepare them to join a practice as an employed practitioner. In 2019 (25) the business development aspects of the course were extensively reviewed and students now also learn about insurance, clinical audit, taxes, health & safety, data protection and contracts relating to employment and premises management.

Additionally, during 2021-2022 the UCO provided students the opportunity to participate in Enterprise Workshops where a guest lecturer in entrepreneurship (specialising in healthcare) designed and delivered sessions in partnership with the Professionalism Unit team. The sessions were delivered to a mixed audience of students, academics, and Practice Educators focusing on a variety of areas including enhancing student employability and impact outcomes, benefits to student retention, recruitment, and engagement and developing student start-up stories considering impacts for professional reputation development. The sessions were well-attended and received extremely positive feedback (26). This activity enhanced the business skills teaching for final year students and is now being brought into the curriculum formally.

Since 2021 we have also held a Careers Development Day for final year students to prepare them for further practice and to promote different professional options as they move towards graduation. During this event students meet osteopaths who are running successful clinics, hear from professional figures about NHS working and marketing, learn directly about CPD requirements from the GOsC, have presentations on working abroad and engage in workshops to discover postgraduate study options to specialise in paediatric and animal osteopathy.

In addition, the UCO has produced a comprehensive Graduate Leavers Guide (27) which was developed and is informed by alumni which is provided to students in their final year. We also have an active online alumni resource, which is available to current and past students, in addition to employers. As well as linking students to those graduates working in the profession, our online alumni community provides a very practical way for potential employers to advertise job opportunities to prospective and recent graduates.

3.2 UCO Continuation and Completion

The continuation rate indicators for the previous four years demonstrate very high quality as, overall, we are broadly in line with our weighted benchmark. We can see that our rates of continuation on our full-time programme are more positive than that of students on our part-time programme.

There are split metric indicators which we recognise need improvement. These are Mixed Ethnic full-time students where the indicator is 10.3% below the benchmark and full-time ABCS Quintile 1 at -2.9%, which also includes our relatively younger part-time students, where we are -2.7% on students aged 21-30 years. In response to noting the disproportionately large impact our relatively small student numbers can have on reporting metrics which is compounded by our awareness from our student population data that a number of students do not declare sensitive student information, we will be conducting a specific project to analyse the performance of these student groups to identify the reasons why they have difficulty continuing in addition to analysing the impact actions we have taken do far to support these students. This project will aim to identify further actions to enhance our student outcomes performance within these student groups in addition to the measures that we have already put in place, such as our Engagement Monitoring Group and responsive student support practices.

Although the above project focuses on students with particular characteristics, we will also be able to apply the outcomes of this consistently to all students given our relatively small student population. Gathering and analysing live student engagement data through our new student management system will enable timelier access to this data to help us identify and support students at a much earlier stage than we currently do. The outcome of this analysis will also be shared with our community groups to ensure that we have effective relevant student input into these considerations.

We are very pleased to note that our completion rates demonstrate outstanding quality in many areas, most notably on our full-time programme where the overall and most individual indicators on our full-time programme are considerably above 2.5 on our weighted benchmark but also on the most recent year of our part-time programme (year on year we have demonstrated a rise of -0.8% in year 1 to +6.4% in year 4). This we believe reflects that

individually focused support we provide for students as outlined in section 2.2.1 but also our highly supportive special circumstances system.

Taken together, our continuation and completion rates indicate that we recognise that the varied backgrounds of students coming to the UCO to study osteopathy, as recognised by the entry profile, means that, like similarly specialist institutions, we do face challenges in initially retaining students at an early stage but that once the students have successfully negotiated that hurdle, our support mechanisms allow our students to flourish. We hope that by identifying those specific areas where students struggle to adapt through access to data at the very earliest stage, we can be more proactive in ensuring our continuation rates are more consistent with our outstanding completion rate performance.

3.3 UCO Student Progression

It can be seen that the UCO demonstrates outstanding rates of successful progression to employment or further studies, particularly on our full-time programme. We are aware that with small numbers, some of the data is suppressed, and for this reason there are no indicators for our part-time provision.

However, when referencing the additional HESA open-source data on Graduate Outcomes (28) we can see that, where they have responded, our part-time students are reporting a 100% rate of employment, further study, or other status, which compares favourably to the overall benchmark of 97.2% although we do recognise that both are high values.

As described above, we are confident that our teaching, learning and assessment practices, a full and varied curriculum with a strong focus on clinical training and integration of the knowledge and skills that meets regulatory standards, responsive approaches to student and external feedback and the tailored academic and welfare support we provide to our students has contributed this outcome.

4. Educational Gains

The UCO is aware that there are many facets that represent educational gain and currently do not have any formalised means of measuring educational gain specifically. We consider the broad reference to educational gain, that of knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development, to be highly relevant. The UCO can clearly demonstrate the considerable education gains that its students achieve. The M.Ost degree as a vocational course prepares students for a career as an Osteopath and as such the entire degree is focused specifically on giving students skills that will be relevant to them in their future careers.

The UCO utilises a range of documents to inform its curriculum, these guidance documents and the UCO's close adherence to them guarantee that students benefit from the development of a range of relevant skills and subject knowledge in a specific professional context, which means they are gaining the ability to diagnose and treat the full range of symptoms and dysfunction that osteopaths may encounter. Alongside this however, students are also gaining an ability to critically evaluate scientific information and data and are developing high order problem-solving and thinking skills. Furthermore, students learn key skills in communication and professionalism, learning how to gather clinical data respectfully and effectively, how to adapt communication approaches, manage boundaries, fulfil duties of candour, writing and maintaining policies, business and marketing skills and recognising patients' diversity and

individual values. Many of the soft skills that might be a part of the hidden curriculum in other education providers are as core to what students do at the UCO as the gaining of concrete knowledge and skills, including as teamworking, leadership, time management, interpersonal skills and academic curiosity. These are as essential to a successful osteopath as knowing the full range of hands-on techniques and the position of anatomical landmarks.

The UCO clearly sets out its educational gains for M.Ost graduates in its course information forms, its unit information forms, course handbooks and also in its definition of a UCO graduate document (29). Students are expected on graduation be able to demonstrate not only an essential knowledge base of osteopathy but also to demonstrate practical, interpersonal, cognitive and key transferable skills, an attitude of critical enquiry, self-reflection, professionalism, ethical caring and respect that characterises a competent, capable, caring and effective osteopath and an approach to teaching and learning that embodies the effective management of change and uncertainty, and encourages a commitment to self-managed, life-long learning. The course itself is designed with educational gain at its core, where student's progress from novice to proficient over the duration of the course, with skills development as key indicators of their development.

The definition of a UCO graduate document clearly sets out the attributes and skills of a graduate from the UCO. The document expresses the educational gains that our students can expect to graduate with in addition to the expectation of a generic 'osteopathic graduate' student. Examples of extra educational gains at UCO are highly relevant skills to working as an osteopath, a clear sense of professional identity, awareness of the limits of their professional expertise, critical awareness, and team working. Some of these educational gains are not currently measured in a formal manner but the majority form part of M.Ost assessments. The UCO graduate should be perceived as being a unique product of the UCO and UCO courses will provide a diverse range of learning opportunities for students. It is expected that UCO graduates will have developed a common body of knowledge, skills and attributes that sets them apart as Osteopaths.

Another educational gain M.Ost students achieve is the development of lifelong learning skills. We educate students to utilise Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses, thus enabling our students to smoothly transition from being taught within an educational setting to taking responsibility for their own ongoing professional development as a newly qualified osteopath in line with the GOSc's CPD Scheme. From the start of the course students are taught to identify and reflect on their personal, professional and career development goals and needs so that they graduate feeling prepared and equipped to be lifelong learners within the field of osteopathy. To support this, the UCO holds an annual careers development day where the GOSc attends to present the CPD Scheme to students, in addition to other presenters attending to provide students with a range of different career, further study and research options available to them as they approach graduation. The UCO's own CPD provision is designed to align to the GOSc's CPD Scheme and provides a discount to current students and alumni of the UCO.

We also encourage student engagement with the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) and other discursive activities as areas for development. During 2021-2022 the UCO provided students the chance to participate in Enterprise Workshops as part of KEF activities to enhance student employability outcomes and impacts institutional reputation, curriculum

innovation and benefits of funding associated with student learning, experience and professionalism. The sessions were very successful and received positive feedback and engagement throughout, enhanced the curriculum development at the UCO, promoted exchange culture and activities, and enhanced student experience in this area.

To promote work readiness, we have a supportive alumni network. All final-year students are encouraged to join our alumni community website free of charge which enables students to reconnect with former classmates, network with other alumni and staff, find mutual support, post and find job and volunteering opportunities and join a mentoring programme to early career osteopaths. This online alumni community is intended to be an active and engaging hub of support which students can continue to access at every stage of their career.

The entire M.Ost degree is focused specifically on giving students skills that will be relevant to them in their future careers as primary healthcare osteopaths, therefore all the work we undertake to educate and support students is with this aim in mind. Our approach is that all students are recognised as individuals and one size does not fit all.

Our well-defined support networks for students outlined in this report help students to gain these essential skills as do our experienced educators, the majority of whom are osteopaths who work in practice as well as teach, modelling the professional behaviour and skills expected of an osteopath, ensuring that students are constantly exposed to those attributes as detailed in the UCO Graduate Definition (29).

Students join the UCO from a range of backgrounds but all of them have travelled a significant distance, educationally, by the time they leave. Around 25% of our students come directly from school having completed biology, PE, psychology and other A-Levels, Applied Science BTECs or other related higher education entry courses. For these learners the addition to their knowledge and skills is considerable. They come with a sound grounding in the sciences, but the advanced application and high level medical and clinical knowledge delivered by the course takes them so much further.

Other students join the UCO with different experiences and existing qualifications in personal training, sports therapy massage or yoga. Sometimes they themselves may be competitive sports people or accomplished dancers. These students come with a good awareness of the human body and often some business skills but the M.Ost degree will still progress their knowledge exponentially. Rarely do any students join the M.Ost course with anything approaching the level of diagnostic reasoning skills and planning of treatment regimens that they eventually gain and put into practice as a qualified osteopath.

The remaining students of each new cohort comprise career changers from a wide range of backgrounds. The majority come with previous degrees so already have good academic and learning strategies. Some have a basic knowledge of human body systems and pathology whereas others may have no science background are required to complete our pre-entry Access or IHS courses, but again the level of knowledge, skills and reasoning to which the M.Ost takes them in this respect is much more advanced.

Our broad range of applicants often join the course with excellent interpersonal and communication skills for example having worked in professions including HR, policing, marketing, IT and events management, but having to reframe and apply these skills within a healthcare context to gather clinical information is also a significant and advanced change.

In the final year of the course the students work autonomously in the UCO Clinic under the supervision of our experienced Practice Educators who support them with difficult and complex cases and oversee patient treatment. The expectation, however, is that students take responsibility for and defend their diagnostic hypotheses and treatment plans. This brings together all the skills and knowledge students have developed from the start of the course into clinical practice and ultimately into the primary healthcare arena.

The above education gains comprising development and application of advanced hard and soft skills, the ability to reflect, and to apply all learning to real patient needs, are embedded in the UCO's assessment strategies and therefore evaluation of these gains is closely monitored and reviewed throughout the students' course. There are robust and clear processes in place to assure that learning outcomes in these areas are defined and achieved through assessment, assuring that graduates are supported in meeting the requirements and standards set out by the GOsC and national sector benchmarks.

The UCO is currently undertaking a periodic review of its curriculum. Part of this review is to consider inclusivity of the curriculum, and whether it enables students from all backgrounds to effectively gain the education we wish and intend for them, and by engaging with our graduates develop a model whereby we can measure educational gain.

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