



Academic Quality Framework

Section 14: Access to Higher Education & Pre-Entry Courses

2023-2024

Academic Quality Framework

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

This Section of the Academic Quality Framework should be of particular interest to prospective students, existing Access to Higher Education students and faculty delivering pre-entry courses at the UCO. This section is also of interest to Collaborative Partners and their students who may deliver pre-entry courses.

Version number	Dates produced and approved (include committee)	Reason for production/ revision	Author	Location(s)	Proposed next review date and approval required
V1.0	March 2014 Academic Council	To define the procedures for the management of academic quality and standards in teaching and learning at the UCO.	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V2.0	Sept 2016 Academic Council	Reviewed to update staff role and policy titles and to reflect current practice.	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Aug 2017 and on an “as required” basis.
V3.0	Sept 2017 Academic Council	Annual Review including amendments to reflect the name change of the British School of Osteopathy to the University College of Osteopathy	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Intranet	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V4.0	Sept 2018 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update weblinks.	Head of Foundation Studies Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V5.0	Sept 2019 PRAG Chair	Administrative Amendments to update weblinks, footnotes and to reflect current practice.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V6.0	Aug 2020 PRAG Chair	Annual Review: Administrative Amendments to reflect the change in delivery mode of the IOS Course.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.

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V7.0	Aug 2021 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect IOS course title change to HIS.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V8.0	Jun 2022 PRAG Chair	Administrative amendments to reflect new academic year dates.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: J:\ Quality Team \ 0 Quality Team – AQF Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
V9.0	Jun 2022 TQSC	Minor amendments to reflect new academic year dates and to reference Collaborative Partners.	Head of Foundation Courses Head of Quality & Partnerships	Master Version: SharePoint – Quality Team Published Version: Website	Annually and on an “as required” basis.
Equality Impact					
Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)					
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)					X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)					
If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this document, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk					

Academic Quality Framework

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

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

- 15.1.1 The UCO is committed by its mission and values to providing access to higher education for learners from backgrounds that are under-represented in higher education. It very much endorses the view that higher education should be made accessible to all, regardless of background or financial status, to promote social justice and economic competitiveness.
- 15.1.2 In recognition of the need to widen participation, the UCO also designed, and had accredited by Laser Learning Awards (LASER)¹, an Access to Higher Education Diploma course specifically designed for students who wish to study osteopathy but are new or returning to higher education. This course provides them with the foundation of knowledge required of them to prepare and succeed on our Master of Osteopathy (M.Ost) courses. Successful completion of this Access to Higher Education course guarantees students a place on the full-time or part-time M.Ost course at the UCO.
- 15.1.3 The UCO also recognises that an increasing number of applicants for our M.Ost courses have proven academic achievement but lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study Osteopathy. In response to this the UCO runs a short non-accredited pre-entry course (the Introduction to Healthcare Sciences (IHS) course) enabling students to gain the required background knowledge in the basic sciences to prepare them adequately for M.Ost study or study on another appropriate healthcare course offered by the UCO.

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

- 15.2.1 The UCO works with Laser Learning Awards (LASER), a leading Access Validating Authority, to approve its Access to Higher Education Diploma in Osteopathic Sciences and Healthcare course. LASER is licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to award the Access to Higher Education Diploma.
- 15.2.2 Access provision in the UK is specifically intended to prepare students from under-represented groups for study within the higher education sector. Subsequently LASER has responsibility for approving and monitoring the quality of the UCO's Access provision.
- 15.2.3 The Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course is aimed at mature students new or returning to education so is delivered in a manner that allows learners to work alongside their studies.
- 15.2.4 The course consists of twelve units, each of which is worth a specified number of credits.
- 15.2.5 Access Course units are delivered at both Level 2 and Level 3 over one academic year.
- 15.2.6 Classes are delivered through three- or four-hour sessions on Friday evenings from 6:00pm and all day on Saturdays during the UCO's term time structure. Within every three- or four-hour session there is a mix of discussion and didactic teaching with students often given time to work in groups and individually. Learner's ideas and points of learning are fed back to the whole class allowing consolidation of key facts and skills as well as conversation about misconceptions and misunderstandings. There are also many formal formative learning opportunities within sessions.

¹ <https://www.laser-awards.org.uk/>

a) THE REVIEW OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 15.2.7 The UCO works with LASER to ensure that Academic Standards are reviewed regularly and appropriately. Access courses are regularly re-validated periodically every five years to ensure that courses continue to meet the QAA Specification for Access to Higher Education (HE) Diplomas².
- 15.2.8 Similarly, amendments to course titles and units are made through LASER's quality processes which include the completion of appropriate amendment forms and confirmation by both an External and Internal Reviewer.
- 15.2.9 Guidance regarding revalidations of and amendments to Access to HE courses is provided by LASER.

b) EXTERNAL MODERATION

- 15.2.10 The Access to HE Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) course adheres to the External Moderation processes stipulated by LASER.
- 15.2.11 LASER appoints an Access Diploma External Moderator to the UCO who act in accordance with their quality and moderation processes.
- 15.2.12 The External Moderator conducts visits to and is in continuous contact with the UCO to check for and produces moderation reports about:
- a) Robust quality systems and processes.
 - b) Consistent appropriate documentation and record keeping.
 - c) Consistent and high-quality assessment practice.
 - d) Student satisfaction with the course experience.
- 15.2.13 Laser Awards is licensed as an Access Validating Agency (AVA) by the QAA. The External Moderator also acts as the AVA's representative at Access Awards Boards and acts on behalf of the AVA to confirm the award of Access to HE Diploma to students at Final Awards Boards.
- 15.2.14 The UCO responds to External Moderator reports in accordance with LASER's processes.

c) ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMA AWARDS BOARD

- 15.2.15 Access to HE Diploma Awards Boards are conducted in accordance with the QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to Higher Education Grading Scheme Handbook Section E: Student Results and Awards Boards.
- 15.2.16 Awards Boards for the Access to Higher Education Diploma (Osteopathic Sciences and Health Care) are normally held at the UCO.

d) CAREERS ADVICE

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

² <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/access-to-he>

- 15.2.18 As well as developing students' underpinning academic skills this course also helps students to develop efficient study techniques, improve their communication and critical thinking skills and give an insight into what it is like to study and practise osteopathy.
- 15.2.19 As a nationally recognised Diploma it can be used to gain access to other relevant undergraduate courses.
- 15.2.20 Students who do not complete the full programme may be awarded partial credits and may be able to use these to pursue other studies in Higher Education.

15.3 OTHER UCO PRE-ENTRY COURSES

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

a) THE INTRODUCTION TO HEALTHCARE SCIENCES (IHS) COURSE

- 15.3.3 The IHS course is aimed at applicants who already hold a non-science degree or equivalent but lack a solid grounding in the sciences required to study Osteopathy or other healthcare discipline.
- 15.3.4 This course is a non-credit bearing short course that has been developed by the UCO to specifically support and prepare these students for studying the UCO's healthcare courses and is therefore not transferable to another Higher Education Institution.
- 15.3.5 The IHS course is a period of intensive science study delivered online. Students study in their own time and have the opportunity to participate in online tutorials to meet other students and discuss course content, in addition to individual tutor support by appointment, IHS course materials are made available through the UCO's Virtual Learning Environment allowing for flexible home study.
- 15.3.6 Formative assessments are held within the units, providing students with feedback on their progression. The summative (final) assessment consists of quizzes and written examinations both of which are completed online under timed conditions.
- 15.3.7 Students are required to pass the IHS course summative assessments in order to secure their place on either of the UCO's M.Ost or relevant healthcare courses.

i. EXTERNAL MODERATION

- 15.3.8 The IHS course is a non-credit bearing course, is not accredited by an external body and does not result in a recognised qualification. Subsequently official external moderation of this course is not normally undertaken. There are, however, internal moderation mechanisms in place to ensure that IHS course assessments are fairly and rigorously considered including:
- a) The second/double marking of all borderline pass/fail grades by course tutors.
- b) In the event of a students' academic appeal against an assessment grade a tutor external to the course may be asked to re-mark the assessment.

ii. BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 15.3.9 Similarly, due to the IHS course not being credit bearing, accredited by an external body or leading to a recognised qualification, full Board of Examiner meetings for this course are not

normally scheduled. Final assessment grades are instead reviewed and confirmed by the IHS Course Leader, Head of Foundation Studies and the Registrar.

15.4 PRE-ENTRY COURSES DELIVERED BY COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

15.4.1 Where Collaborative Partners deliver pre-entry courses, the UCO is only responsible for the standards and quality of those that have been approved (validated) by the UCO through the established Course Approval process set out in AQF Section 4.

15.4.2 Where a Collaborative Partner's pre-entry course exists which leads to progression or prepares an applicant for study for a course that leads to a UCO award, the UCO may consider this as part of the established Course Approval process set out in AQF Section 4 to ensure that the course prepares students sufficiently for study.

AQF15: APPENDICES

Appendix Reference Number	Appendix Title
N/A	N/A