



Regulation of the Osteopathic Profession in Europe

An Overview

First Edition OCTOBER 2021

Contents

Introduction and aims of the EFFO	Page 3
Policy Committee statement	Page 4
Definition of the term regulation	Page 5
Type I and Type II Osteopathy training programmes	Page 5
Benefits of regulating osteopaths	Page 6
Osteopathy and brief history	Page 7
Osteopathic standards	Page 8
Osteopathic Education Committee statement	Page 9
Population and regulation overview	Page 10
Education overview	Page 12
Osteopathic practice overview	Page 13
Regulation in detail	
Regulation in Cyprus	Page 14
Regulation in Denmark	Page 16
Regulation in Finland	Page 18
Regulation in France	Page 20
Regulation in Iceland	Page 23
Regulation in Italy	Page 25
Regulation in Luxembourg	Page 27
Regulation in Malta	Page 29
Regulation in Norway	Page 32
Regulation in Portugal	Page 34
Regulation in Switzerland	Page 36
Regulation in the United Kingdom	Page 37
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Danish law on regulation	Page 39
Appendix 2: French law on regulation	Page 43
Appendix 3: Portuguese law on regulation	Page 46

The European Federation & Forum for Osteopathy (EFFO) is an organisation of organisations, and represents the professional associations of osteopaths from 22 countries in Europe, as well as from Canada and Israel. The aim of the EFFO is to establish standards, regulation and recognition for all osteopaths in Europe. Our mission is to advance the awareness and recognition of the role that osteopaths play in the health and wellbeing of the public, and ensure high standards of osteopathic care as well as patient safety.



Introduction

The European Federation & Forum for Osteopathy (EFFO) represents the lead professional associations of osteopaths and regulatory authorities from 22 countries in Europe, as well as from Canada and Israel. The EFFO aims to establish standards, regulation and recognition for all osteopaths in Europe. Our mission is to advance the awareness and recognition of the role that the osteopathic profession contributes to the health and wellbeing of the public, and ensure high standards of osteopathic care as well as patient safety.

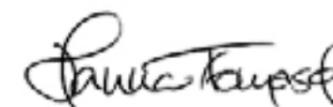
The EFFO came about as a merger between the European Federation of Osteopaths (EFO), and the Forum for Osteopathic Regulation in Europe (FORE) in March 2018. One of the successes of the two organisations is the establishment of the European CEN (Centre Européen de Normalisation) Standard for Osteopathic Healthcare Provision in 2015. The EFFO itself are members of the OIA which is a global osteopathic organisation of over 60 professional associations, regulators, universities and research groups, representing osteopaths and osteopathic physicians as two streams of the same profession.

The following regulation overview of the osteopathic profession is based on information collected by the Policy Committee within the EFFO and with contributions from all our membership, in 2021. The content in this document has been approved by the EFFO Board, the respective national organisations, and the Policy Committee. The document will be updated regularly, and the last updated version can be found, and downloaded, as a pdf on the EFFO website: www.effo.eu.

We would be very pleased to provide further information if needed.

With kind regards,




Hanna Tómasdóttir
President




Maurice Cheng
Chief Executive

Regulation of the Profession

The EFFO strongly urge all governments across Europe to recognise and regulate osteopathy as an independent, primary healthcare profession.

We recommend that the title 'osteopath' is protected by law, and that osteopaths and osteopathic physicians can only use the titles if they meet certain statutory conditions in terms of competencies and registration and/or licensure. This would normally require statutory registration, set out in national or state/provincial law, as the health professional must comply with set standards of practice that protect the patients they treat.

Patients should be able to consult an osteopath, confident in the knowledge that the practitioner is able to practise efficiently, effectively and safely. Countries which have properly trained and regulated osteopaths see the benefits of high patient satisfaction, safe practise and good patient outcomes.

The profession has well established internationally recognised education and practice standards, and has achieved statutory regulation and licensing in 11 countries in Europe as of 2021. Those countries are Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Norway achieved governmental support for regulation in December 2020, and the legal proposition is pending at the moment. Italy have recognised the status of osteopaths as an independent healthcare profession, and are working towards regulation.

In countries where there is, yet, no statutory regulation of the osteopathic profession, we strongly advise all relevant stakeholders, national organisations, healthcare and governmental bodies, to use and comply with the European CEN standard EN 16686 on Osteopathic Healthcare Provision, published in 2015.

On behalf of the EFFO Policy Committee



Hanna Tómasdóttir, (Denmark/EFFO)
Chair, EFFO Policy Committee, EFFO President

Members:

- Evangelos Evangelou, (Cyprus)
- Jean Bofferding (Luxembourg)
- Lluís M. Horta, (Spain/EFFO)
- Maurice Cheng (UK/EFFO)
- Michel Van Espen (Luxembourg)
- Nancy Spence (Canada)
- Nejc Mikič (Slovenia)
- Nina Köck-Mittendorfer (Austria)

What does the term 'regulation' mean?

"Regulated by law normally means that the title 'osteopath' is protected by law, and that osteopaths and/or osteopathic physicians can only use the titles if they meet certain statutory conditions in terms of competencies and registration and/or licensure. This would normally require statutory registration, as the health professional must comply with set standards of practice that protect the patients they treat; statutory regulation is set out in national or state/provincial law."

(Adapted from the Osteopathic International Alliance statutes 3.1)

Training programmes

According to the CEN standard and the WHO Benchmarks for Training in Osteopathy, there are two types of osteopathy training programmes:

- *Type I training programmes are aimed at those with little or no prior healthcare training, but who have completed high school education or equivalent; and*
- *Type II training programmes are aimed at those with prior training as healthcare professionals.*

Benefits of regulating Osteopaths:

- Regulation of the osteopathic profession leads to standardised, appropriate and recognised education standards, which improves patient safety
- Protection of the title 'osteopath' means that citizens can be reassured that the osteopathic practitioner have the skills and competences to convey safe and effective osteopathic treatment
- The *Comité Européen de Normalisation*, CEN, issued a European Standard on Osteopathic Healthcare Provision in 2015, (EN 16686), developed in partnership with the two former European osteopathy organisations: European Federation of Osteopaths (EFO) and the Forum for Osteopathic Regulation in Europe (FORE), now merged as the EFFE. The CEN standard sets a benchmark for high quality clinical practice, education, safety and ethics for Osteopathy in Europe and has been published in 33 European countries, and has served as a key reference for the legislative work related to regulation. Read more about the CEN standard here: <https://www.cencenelec.eu>
- As primary contact healthcare practitioners, osteopaths can relieve waiting lists for medical attention, as well as forming an integral part of multidisciplinary team working. The profession across Europe numbers some 60,000 highly trained healthcare practitioners, which are a key additional source of healthcare provision, particularly in a post COVID-19 health economy
- The EU mission of "Free movement - EU nationals" will be further supported when the osteopathic profession is regulated in all countries in the EU:

"Free movement of workers is a fundamental principle of the Treaty enshrined in Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and developed by EU secondary legislation and the Case law of the Court of Justice. EU citizens are entitled to:

- look for a job in another EU country
- work there without needing a work permit
- reside there for that purpose
- stay there even after employment has finished
- enjoy equal treatment with nationals in access to employment, working conditions and all other social and tax advantages"

Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457>

A brief history of osteopathy

Osteopathy is a primary contact and patient-centred healthcare discipline. The profession was founded by Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, an American physician and surgeon, in the late 1800s, and was brought to Europe, by one of his students, John Martin Littlejohn, in the early 1900s. John Martin Littlejohn founded one of the leading osteopathic universities in Europe today, the University College of Osteopathy (UCO), founded in 1915 (formerly the British School of Osteopathy).

According to the CEN standard, osteopathy can be described as:

"The practice of osteopathy uses osteopathic, medical and scientific knowledge to apply the principles of osteopathy to patient diagnosis and treatment. The aim of osteopathy is to improve and support all aspects of health and healthy development. Osteopathic treatment may be preventive, curative, palliative or adjuvant. Osteopaths analyse and evaluate the structural and functional integrity of the body using critical reasoning of osteopathic principles to inform individual diagnosis and treatment of the patient."

History of regulation of the osteopathic profession in Europe

11 countries in Europe have currently achieved regulation of the osteopathic profession on a statutory basis. Those countries are: Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

Statutory recognition of osteopaths started in Europe in 1993 with the Osteopaths' Act in the United Kingdom. This was followed five years later by the foundation of the UK statutory regulator, the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC). Osteopaths in the UK are first contact primary healthcare practitioners, to which the public can self refer. On graduating, which is at either Bachelor or Masters level, they have been trained and experienced to refer onwards to other healthcare professions as appropriate for the patient, and have an adverse incident record that is significantly better than the average in the National Health Service (NHS). Osteopaths in the UK are now recognised by NHS England as Allied Health Professionals, playing an important role in NHS transformation, as fellow health professions with the right skills and experience to relieve the immense pressure on waiting lists.

Since then other European countries have followed the UK lead in recognising and developing regulation for osteopaths, including Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Switzerland. Italy have now recognised the status of osteopaths as an independent healthcare profession, and are working towards regulation. Most recently, the Norwegian Parliament voted in favour of regulating osteopathy as a first contact primary healthcare profession, in December 2020.

Osteopathic Education

The EFFO recognises the importance of maintaining and developing high standards for osteopathic education, as described in CEN Type I and Type II programmes.

Education programmes should meet national requirements for recognised qualifications, where applicable. Proof of qualification should state the level of education, preferably in the format of university degrees based on a defined level of ECTS or equivalent. Proof of qualification should be supported by a transcript of records or similar, describing the content and amount of training, preferably stating the number of ECTS.

Education providers (EPs) should on a regular basis undergo external audit, based on requirements described by CEN and/or national requirements for recognised qualifications. EPs not yet accredited by a nationally recognised auditor, should actively pursue accreditation by a relevant national governing body as a higher teaching institution. This applies for EPs delivering both Type I and Type II education programmes.



Tomas Collin, (Norway)
Chair of the Education Committee

Members:

- Jonathan Bailey-Teyletche (UK/EFFO)
- Maurice Cheng (UK/EFFO)
- Giacomo Consorti (Italy)
- Robert Grech (Malta)
- Sandra Lois (Spain)
- Sandra Rinne (Finland)
- Dirk Segers (Belgium)
- Vangelis Skotiniotis (Greece)
- Nancy Spence (Canada)

In one of the most recent examples, osteopaths in Denmark have been recognised as a first contact healthcare profession in legislation passed in May 2018, by unanimous vote in the Danish Parliament. Authorisations, or license to practise as osteopaths, are issued by the Patient Safety Authority, who are the official regulator of all recognised healthcare professions. The authorisation process in Denmark was assisted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Benchmark for Training in Osteopathy, published in 2010, and the *Comité Européen de Normalisation* (CEN) standard for osteopathic practice and training, published in 2015. These two benchmark documents were of great assistance to the Danish government in their determinations, and for the Patient Safety Authority, where they served as a reference for the base level of education and as an overall qualification frame for the osteopathic profession. Both standards are used as reference standards by EFFO members and many of the osteopathic education providers across Europe.

Osteopathic standards

There are two international standards for osteopathy: The CEN standard and WHO Benchmarks for Training in Osteopathy. The two standards are almost congruent.

The WHO Benchmarks describes the core philosophy and principles of osteopathy, the main types of osteopathic training programmes, core competencies, and a benchmark training curriculum.

The World Health Organization published Benchmarks for Training in Osteopathy in 2010.

The *Comité Européen de Normalisation* (CEN) issued a European Standard on Osteopathic Healthcare Provision in 2015 (EN 16686), which was developed in partnership with the European Federation of Osteopaths (EFO) and the Forum for Osteopathic Regulation in Europe (FORE), and took the preexisting WHO Benchmarks into account during development. The CEN standard sets a benchmark for high quality clinical practice, education, safety and ethics for Osteopathy in Europe and has been published in 33 European countries.

Read more about the CEN standard here:

www.cencenelec.eu

Population and Regulation Overview

Iceland

Population **368,000**
 Osteopaths in Total **8**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No¹**

United Kingdom

Population **68 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **5,500**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No¹**

France

Population **67 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **25,600**
 Primary Health Care **No**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No¹**

Switzerland

Population **8.6 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **1,300**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No¹**

Portugal

Population **10.1 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **2,050**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No**

Finland

Population **5.5 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **500**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No¹**

Norway

Population **5.5 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **425**
 Primary Health Care **Yes³**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes³**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **Yes³**

Denmark

Population **5.8 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **220**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **Yes**

Liechtenstein

Population
 Osteopaths in Total
 Primary Health Care
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected

Italy

Population **60.36 million**
 Osteopaths in Total **12,000**
 Primary Health Care **Yes⁴**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes⁴**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No²**

Cyprus

Population **650,000**
 Osteopaths in Total **18**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **Yes**

Luxembourg

Population **636,000**
 Osteopaths in Total **250-300**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **Partly**

Malta

Population **500,000**
 Osteopaths in Total **26**
 Primary Health Care **Yes**
 Title 'Osteopath' Protected **Yes**
 Legislation based on CEN/WHO Benchmark **No¹**

¹ **No** - legislation passed prior to CEN publication

² **No** - CEN has been presented to the Ministry

³ **Yes** - Norway is in process of regulation

⁴ **Not yet** - Italy is in process of regulation

Education Overview

	Education Level Required to Practise	Type I educated within association	Type II educated within association	Osteopathic Physicians	Type of education offered
	Master/DO	16	2	None	None
	Bachelor	50	170	1	Type II
	Bachelor	120	80	3	Both Type I & Type II
	See page 21	550	150	1.000-2.000	Both Type I & Type II
	Bachelor	3	0	None	None
	See page 26	1634	2590	23	Both Type I & Type II
					
	Master*	30	50	Between 5-10	None
	Bachelor	26	0	No data	Type I **
	Bachelor/DO	200	175	None	Type I
	Bachelor	1845	205	No data	Type I
	Master	No data	No data	No data	Type 1
	Bachelor	5000	50	50 - estimate	Both Type I & Type II

* Read more on page 28

** Read more on page 30

Osteopathic Practice

	Private Practice	National Health Services	Restrictions to practise	Reimbursed by State	Reimbursed by Insurance	VAT on consultations
	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X
	✓	X	X	X*	X	X
	✓	✓****	✓	✓****	✓	X**
						
	✓	✓***	✓	X	✓	X
	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X
	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X

* No, but unions

** Yes - until regulation will be finalized!

*** In theory

**** When the regulation process will be over

Regulation in Cyprus

Based on information received from the national osteopathy association, Cyprus Osteopathic Association, COA.



Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Cyprus has a population of 850,000 inhabitants, and there are a total of 18 practicing osteopaths. All 18 osteopaths are members of the only osteopathic professional association, the Cyprus Osteopathic Association, COA.

There are at present no student members of COA, and no osteopathy students in Cyprus.

There are also no osteopathic physicians within COA, and no official data on any osteopathic physicians practising in Cyprus.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy has been regulated as a Healthcare Profession in Cyprus since 3 July 2020 by Law Number 2020 (N. 78(I) of 2020, and the title 'Osteopath' is protected.

The Regulatory Body is Cyprus Registration Board:
Telephone Number: +357-99 444252.

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact health profession in Cyprus, and patients can self-refer. Osteopaths need to be registered before practicing osteopathy in Cyprus, but otherwise there are no restrictions to the scope of practice.

The Registration Council has the power to ask the applicant (osteopath) to do more clinical hours or cover academic areas, as well as testing the knowledge of the osteopath with oral, written, practical (technique) and clinical environment exams to bring them up to the Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), the European standard for osteopathic practice and training, in order to register.

Osteopaths in Cyprus only work in private practice.

Educational Levels & Programmes

The level of education required to practice osteopathy in Cyprus is University Degree/ Masters or DO acquired in an EU state where there is a state register and the osteopath is able to join and practice in that state.

16 osteopaths in COA are Type I educated, and 2 are Type II educated.

No educational osteopathy programmes are offered in Cyprus.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There is a legal obligation of 30 hours of Continuing Professional Development per year. This involves lectures, seminars, webinars, workshops, etc., related to professional practice approved by the Cyprus Osteopathic Association.

VAT

There is no VAT on osteopathic consultations in Cyprus.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are covered by most insurance companies. Depending on the insurance policy some cover fully and some cover partly.

If you need further information, please contact:



Evangelos Evangelou, DO
President Cyprus Osteopathic Association, COA
Member of the Registration Board
Telephone Number: +357-99 444252
Email: aphrodite5@cytanet.com.cy



Regulation in Denmark



Based on information received by the national osteopathy association, Danske Osteopater.

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Denmark has a population of 5.8 million, and 220 registered osteopaths in the national association. Almost all osteopaths in Denmark are members of the national association, Danske Osteopater (DO). Beside Danske Osteopater there is another small fraction of osteopaths, who do not currently hold a professional license to practice osteopathy in Denmark.

Beside the practicing osteopaths there are about 150 osteopathy students in total in Denmark, and 32 of them hold student membership of Danske Osteopater.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopaths in Denmark have been recognised as a first contact healthcare profession since the legislation passed 15 May 2018, by unanimous vote in the Danish Parliament. Osteopathy has officially been regulated in Denmark since 1 July 2018.

Authorisations (official license to practise as osteopaths) are issued by *Styrelsen for Patientsikkerhed*, the Patient Safety Authority, who are the national regulator of all 19 recognised healthcare professions in Denmark. It is the Patient Safety Authority who evaluates each individual educational level, and issues an official license to practice as an osteopath, if the applicant meets the official qualification. The title “Osteopath” is protected. Practitioners are only allowed to use terms indicating that they are a osteopath offering osteopathy, if they are a licensed osteopath.

Link to the official register of osteopaths:

There is an official register, on The Patient Safety Authority website, of all healthcare professionals in Denmark, holding a Danish license to practice within their profession, including osteopaths. You can find the link to the register of licensed osteopaths here:

<https://autregweb.sst.dk/authorizationsearch.aspx>

Link to the national legislation on authorisation on osteopaths:

The legislation describing the Danish regulation of Osteopaths ‘Bekendtgørelse om autorisation af osteopater’ can be found here:

<https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/ta/2018/981>

You can find a certified translation to English of the legislation, “The Executive Order on the Authorisation of Osteopaths”, on Danske Osteopater’s website here:

<https://www.danskeosteopater.dk/autorisation/>

Read more about the Danish law on regulation of osteopaths, on page 39.

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession in Denmark is a primary contact healthcare profession, with no restrictions to scope of practice and patients can self-refer. Osteopaths in Denmark work currently only in private practices. The national law and baseline for the educational level for obtaining an official license to practise as an osteopath has been adapted from the WHO Benchmarks for Training in Osteopathy and The European CEN standard.

Educational Level & Programmes

There are no accredited Danish educational programmes, but two Type II, or part-time, educational programmes, on top of prior healthcare profession, are offered in Denmark by: The International Academy of Osteopathy, IAO, and The European School of Osteopathy, ESO. The IAO program leads to both a DO degree and a Master of Science in Osteopathy, accredited by the Buckinghamshire New University. The ESO program leads to a DO degree. A bachelor’s degree or equivalent to bachelor level, which corresponds to level 6 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is required to obtain a license to practise Osteopathy in Denmark. The total amount of hours should be no less than 4200, incl. 1000 hours of supervised clinical practice (adopted from The WHO Benchmarks).

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There are currently no mandatory requirements for Continuing Professional Development – CPD, but there are plans to implement CPD in the future.

VAT

Osteopathy services are exempt from VAT.

Insurance

About 15 insurance companies reimburse osteopathic treatment, partly or fully, and more are on their way due to increased demand by the public.

If you need further information, please contact:



Hanna Tómasdóttir
President Danske Osteopater
hanna@danskeosteopater.dk
+45 2625 5699

Regulation in Finland

Based on information received from the national association, Suomen Osteopaattiliitto ry/Finlands Osteopatförbund rf (Finnish Osteopathic Association).



Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Finland has a population of 5.5 million inhabitants, and it is estimated there are around 530 practicing osteopaths. About 200 of those are members of the national association, Suomen Osteopaattiliitto.

In addition to the practicing osteopaths there about 200 osteopathy students in Finland, and 50 of them hold student membership of the association.

There are no osteopathic physicians practising within the association, but there are known to be 3 osteopathic physicians practising outside the association in Finland.

There is another osteopathic association in Finland, Suomen ortopediset osteopaatit ry (Soory), an association for orthopedic osteopaths with around 140 members.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy has been officially considered a Healthcare Profession in Finland since 1994, and the title 'Osteopath' is protected.

Links to the National Law

Health care law since 1994. Decree on health care professionals

<http://www.finlex.fi>

Healthcare act

www.finlex.fi/en/laki/kaannokset/2010/en20101326_20131293.pdf

A link to the regulator website:

Valvira, National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health

<https://www.valvira.fi/>

The National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health (Valvira) grants, upon application, the right to practice as a licensed or authorised healthcare professional and authorises the use of the occupational title of healthcare professional.

Valvira supervises and guides healthcare professionals and medical facilities both in private and public sector. With supervision and guidance, Valvira ensures the adequacy of services different healthcare professionals and medical facilities provide.

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact health profession in Finland and patients can self-refer.

There are no restrictions to scope of practice.

Members of the Finnish Osteopathic Association need to be accepted to the national Valvira registry as authorized osteopaths prior to the acceptance as a full member. Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), the European standard for osteopathic practice and training is utilized by the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health, Valvira, to assess the educational criteria for registering as an osteopath following their graduation.

Osteopaths in Finland are all working in private practice.

Educational Levels & Programmes

The level of education required to practice osteopathy in Finland is either a 240 ECTS University of Applied Sciences diploma, Type I education or equal requirements, Type II education, 4 years part-time.

About 60% or 120 osteopaths in the Finnish Osteopathic Association are Type I educated, and about 40% or 80 osteopaths in the association are 2 Type II educated.

Both Type I and Type II educational programmes audited according to the CEN-standard are offered in Finland:

- Type I at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, of Healthcare (Osteopathy) in Helsinki.
- Type II at Osteopatiakoulu Atlas in Espoo.

Student members of the Finnish Osteopathic Association are currently students of these two institutions.

Master's Degree Programme in Osteopathy (EQF European Qualifications Framework, Master's level competencies, level 7) is offered at the Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. The language of the degree programme is English. The programme is open to osteopaths with at least 2 years of professional experience.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There are currently no mandatory requirements for Continuing Professional Development – CPD, but the FOA offers high quality CPD for its members.

VAT

There is no VAT on osteopathic consultations in Finland.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are currently covered by a couple of private insurance companies. There is a possibility to be re-imbursed when presenting a doctor's referral. Osteopathy may be offered as part of occupational healthcare.

If you need further information, please contact:



Laura Lee Kampilla
President
Suomen Osteopaattiliitto/Finlands Osteopatförbund
puheenjohtaja@osteopaattiliitto.fi
+358 40 743 1030

Regulation in France



Based on information received by from the national osteopathy association, Association Française d'Ostéopathie, AFO, (French Association of Osteopathy).

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

France has a population of 67 million, and there are estimated to be around 12,600 qualified osteopaths, of which 700 are members of the AFO.

About 13,000 physiotherapists and physicians who offer osteopathic services are registered on their own directory (Répertoire partagé des professionnels de santé - RPPS).

In addition to the practicing osteopaths, there are between 8,000 and 10,000 osteopathy students in France, and 500 of them hold student membership of the Association Française d'Ostéopathie, AFO.

According to a 2018 survey of the osteopathic profession (emost): 40% of osteopaths are also healthcare professionals (11,715 in 2018), among them are a small number of physicians – this roughly corresponds to the numbers given above.

A reasonable estimate of osteopathic physicians in France would be between 1,000 and 2,000, of which 700 are with the association for osteopathic physicians, Ostéos de France.

There are several associations of osteopaths in France. The best established are AFO, CNO, ROF, SFDO, and UFOF/ODF, and some smaller ones. They represent in total some 4,000 members amongst the 25,000+ registered practitioners.

There are also many associations reserved for osteopaths who are also healthcare professionals (physicians, physiotherapists).

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy is not recognised as a healthcare profession in France, but patients can consult an osteopath without a medical prescription, unlike physiotherapists. The terms 'osteopathic treatment and diagnosis' are written in law. The 4th of March, 2002, Article 75 of the law 2002-303 on patients' rights and the quality of the health system gave birth to the professions of osteopath and chiropractor.

Since 2003, AFO has participated in working groups, aimed at supervising osteopathy, within the Ministry and the Regional Health Agencies. AFO lobbied the Conseil d'Etat (the highest administrative authority) in 2005 to have the decrees implementing the March 2002 law passed. AFO also lobbied to ensure the teaching of cranial and visceral osteopathy was reintroduced by the Conseil d'Etat, as well as CADA (Commission of access to administrative documents) to make public report of IGAS (General Inspectorate of Social Affairs) on school compliance checks.

At the end of 2014 the guidelines (activities, skills and training) applicable to the profession were issued after 20 months of consultation between the Administration and the professional organizations.

The directory ADELI (Automation of Lists) is held by Regional Health Agencies to register professionals related to health.

The directory classifies into 4 categories:

- The paramedical professions
- Professions of the apparatus
- Professional title use: Osteopath, Psychotherapist, Chiropractor
- Professions of the social field: Assistant of social service, Psychologist

To be able to practice osteopathy, an osteopath must register his degree or diploma from an approved school in the Adeli Directory and be covered by a professional CPR.

Name of Regulatory Body:

Ministry of Health

DGOS : Direction générale de l'offre de soins, which provides the secretariat for the national advisory approval commission placed with the Minister responsible for health, receives and validates the files submitted by the establishments for examination by the commission.

ARS : Agence Régionale de Santé (Regional Health Agencies) responsible for regional management of the national health system. They reflect the national policies of the Ministry of Health.

Link to National Register:

Osteopaths wishing to practice osteopathy must submit a request to the ARS to be registered in the Adeli professional directory.

Formulaire de demande

[Read more about the French law on regulation of osteopaths, on page 43.](#)

Recognition & Standards for Practice

The osteopathic profession is regulated in France and patients can self-refer. However, osteopathy is recognised as an alternative practice to traditional medicine by the general public and the media, less by standard health bodies which still have many difficulties in integrating osteopathy into the course of care of patients.

The Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), the European standard for osteopathic practice and training is not used by the French administration. Only a few association bodies have used the standard to develop a code of ethics.

Osteopaths only practice in private clinics or private maternity hospitals, usually being volunteers. Some physiotherapists and also osteopaths may practice osteopathy within the National Health Services but not under the title of osteopath.

Educational Levels & Programmes

The level of education required to practice osteopathy in France, since 2014, publication of decrees defining:

- A training framework
- 4,860 hours for high school graduates
- 1,894 hours for physiotherapists
- 700 hours for physicians

Here are the texts published since September 2014 which are binding on osteopaths:

- Un nouveau cadre réglementaire pour une formation officielle dès la rentrée 2015
- Décret 2014-1043 du 12 septembre 2014 Agrément des établissements de formation en ostéopathie
- Arrêté du 12 décembre 2014 Formation en ostéopathie
- Arrêté du 12 décembre 2014 Dispenses d'enseignement susceptibles d'être accordées

Osteopathic programmes are only accredited by the Ministry of Health. The training has no university equivalence. Some schools have had their training validated in the National Directory of Professional Certifications (RNCP), which gives an estimate of the value of professional experience (British A-level +5 years, 300 ECTS).

31 schools are approved. See the list on our website:

<https://www.afosteo.org/>

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There are not yet any mandatory requirements for Continuing Professional Development – CPD. The code of ethics co-produced by professional associations and supervised by AFNOR recommends a minimum of 42 hours over a period of three years of continuous training but there is no control body.

VAT

There is no VAT on osteopathic consultations in France.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are covered by 80% of private insurance companies.

The level and the number of refunds depend on an individual contract, most of time about three treatments a year are refunded.

If you need further information, please contact:



Marie-Hélène SALA
President Association Française d'Ostéopathie, AFO
To-loan SALA, Secretary
Thomas LOCHER, Vice-President

AFO Association Française d'Ostéopathie
French Association of Osteopathy
3 rue Ribot 34000 Montpellier France
+33 6 72 72 65 00

Regulation in Iceland



Based on information received from the national osteopathy association, Osteópatafélag Íslands (The Icelandic Osteopathic Association).

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Iceland has a population of 368,000 inhabitants, and there are a total of 8 practicing osteopaths. Three osteopaths are members of the professional association, Osteópatafélag Íslands.

Beside the practicing osteopaths there are between 6 and 10 osteopathy students in Iceland, but none of those hold student membership as association statutes do not currently permit student members. The statutes will be changed soon to allow student membership.

There are no osteopathic physicians within the national association, and no official data of any osteopathic physicians practising in Iceland.

Osteópatafélag Íslands is the only osteopathic association in Iceland.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy has been regulated by law as a Healthcare Profession in Iceland since 2005. The title 'Osteopath' (the Icelandic professional name is 'osteópati') is protected (paragraph 2 in the osteopathic regulation).

The National Law number is 1131/2012 (formerly 229/2005):

www.reglugerd.is/

www.government.is/media/velferdarraduneyti-media/media/health-reg/Regulation-No-1131-2012---osteopaths.pdf

The regulation is issued by the Ministry of Health:

www.government.is/ministries/ministry-of-health/

But it is overseen by the Directorate of Health:

www.landlaeknir.is/english/

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact healthcare profession in Iceland, and patients can self-refer. There are no restrictions to the scope of practice.

Osteopaths in Iceland only work in private practices. There is a national register of osteopaths, which is found here: www.osteopatia.is/

Educational Levels & Programmes

The minimum level of education required to practice osteopathy in Iceland is a Bachelors degree in osteopathy.

All three osteopaths in Osteópatafélag Íslands are Type I educated.

No educational osteopathy programmes are offered in Iceland.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There are no mandatory requirements for Continuing Professional Development – CPD, for osteopaths in Iceland.

VAT

Services offered by healthcare workers in Iceland are VAT excluded.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are not covered by private insurance companies. But almost all trade unions pay a part of osteopathic treatment for their members.

If you need further information, please contact:



Haraldur Magnússon
President Osteópatafélag Íslands
hallimagg@gmail.com



Regulation in Italy



Based on information received from the **Registro degli Osteopati d'Italia, ROI**.

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Italy has a population of 60.4 million inhabitants, and it is estimated there are approximately 12,000 practicing osteopaths. About 4,000 of those are members of the professional association, Registro degli Osteopati d'Italia, ROI.

In addition, there are approximately 5000 osteopathic students in Italy. An unknown number of those hold student membership of ROI, but the data will be available soon.

There is currently no data available on the number of osteopathic physicians who are practising within the Registro degli Osteopati d'Italia, ROI, but the data will be available soon.

There are other osteopathic associations in Italy, with unknown numbers of members. The major ones are :

- Fesios
- APO

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Italy is currently in the process of being regulated and osteopathy is now recognised as a healthcare profession. The law is in place, but we are awaiting the implementing decrees. The title 'osteopath' is therefore not yet protected.

Link to the National Law 3/2018. Please note, that the law will not be effective until the end of the regulatory process:

Law 3/2018 www.gazzettaufficiale.it

Useful links:

Ministry of Health www.salute.gov.it/portale/home.html

Ministry of University www.mur.gov.it/it/home

An official national register of practicing osteopaths will be created at the end of the regulatory process.

Standards for Practise

Italy is still in the process of regulation, so more details about the status of the osteopathic professional standards will be provided when in place.

The professional profile that has just been approved does not allow osteopaths to use internal and invasive techniques.

Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), the European standard for osteopathic practice and training has been presented to the ministry during the discussions about recognition.

Osteopaths in Italy are all working in private practice.

Educational Levels & Programmes

Due to the ongoing regulation process no requirements have been set as yet, but it will change to university degree (BSc equivalent) when regulation is implemented.

Both Type I and Type II educational programmes are currently offered in Italy, but on regulation, only Type I university programmes will be offered. There are more than 40 educational institutions right now, some are validated by foreign universities (e.g. UCO, BNU).

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There are currently no mandatory requirements for Continuing Professional Development – CPD.

VAT

VAT is currently charged at 22% on osteopathic consultations in Italy, however, when the regulation process is complete, VAT will no longer be charged on osteopathic consultations.

Insurance

Some private insurance companies cover osteopathic treatments.

If you need further information, please contact:



Paola Sciomachen
President Registro degli Osteopati d'Italia, ROI



Giacomo Consorti MSc, DO
Registro degli Osteopati d'Italia, ROI
giacomo.consorti@roi.it
+39 3405204077

Regulation in Luxembourg



Based on information received from the national osteopathy association, Association Luxembourgeoise des Osteopathes, ALDO.

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Luxembourg has a population of 626,000 inhabitants, and it is estimated there are approximately 250-300 practicing osteopaths. About 190 of those are licensed to practice as osteopaths, and 83 are members of the professional association, Association Luxembourgeoise des Osteopathes, ALDO.

It is not known how many osteopathic students there are in Luxembourg, and less than 5 hold student membership of ALDO.

There are no osteopathic physicians within ALDO, and no official data on how many physicians there might be practising outside ALDO, but there are known to be between 5-10 osteopathic physicians practising in Luxembourg.

Beside ALDO there is one, not officially established, osteo-physio association, a combined mixture of physical therapy and osteopathy, with around 20 members.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy has been regulated as a Healthcare Profession in Luxembourg since 23 September 2018, but the profession was recognised from 28 August 2018. The title 'Osteopath' is protected to a certain extent.

Links to the National Law:

- 1) Recognition of the profession: Loi du 28 août 2018 portant modification de la loi modifiée du 26 mars 1992 sur l'exercice et la revalorisation de certaines professions de santé: data.legilux.public.lu
- 2) Regulation: Règlement grand-ducal du 23 septembre 2018 portant réglementation de la profession d'ostéopathe, n) 873 du 27 septembre 2018: data.legilux.public.lu/

While there is no official register of osteopaths, the regulatory body is Conseil Supérieur de Certaines Professions de Santé.

A link to the regulator website: www.cscps.lu

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact health profession in Luxembourg, and patients can self-refer.

There are two restrictions to the scope of practice:

- No High Velocity Thrust (HVT) on the Cervical Spine without a medical screening;
- No HVT Manipulations on infants (cervical spine, vertebral column and cranium) less than 6 months.

ALDO has been using the Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN) standard for osteopathic practice and training to establish membership criteria, and the CEN Standard was proposed to the Ministry of Health during preliminary discussions to the regulation process, as a reference. Some elements of the CEN standard were adopted by the Ministry.

Osteopaths in Luxembourg work mainly in private practice. They could also, in theory, practice in the National Health Service, but as there is no formal compensation through the National Health Service (CNS), there are only anecdotal accounts of this actually occurring.

Educational Levels & Programmes

The level of education required to practice osteopathy in Luxembourg is either a Master's degree in Osteopathy (Type I – fulltime education), or with a previous healthcare professional's degree, e.g. Physical Therapist, with an additional 2,000 hours of training in Osteopathy (Type II - Part-time education).

About 30 osteopaths in the ALDO are Type I educated, and around 50 are Type II educated.

There are no educational osteopathy programmes offered in Luxembourg.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There is a legal obligation to complete 40 hours each year of Continuing Professional Development – CPD. The process if this is not achieved has not been specified.

VAT

There is no VAT on osteopathic consultations in Luxembourg.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are covered by five private insurance companies, and most of them cover 80% of the treatment costs.

If you need further information, please contact:



Jean Bofferding
President
Association Luxembourgeoise des Osteopathes, ALDO
jean.bofferding@osteo.lu

Regulation in Malta



Based on information received by the national osteopathy association, Malta Association of Osteopaths.

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Malta has a population of 500.000 and 10 registered osteopaths in the Malta Association of Osteopaths (MAO). There is only one national association in Malta, but there 5 more osteopaths who practice outside the national association.

There are currently two Schools offering osteopathy education in Malta. These schools were formerly established in Italy and due to changes in Italian legislation, they opted to seek a license to operate in Malta in order to continue serving their students. It is projected that most of the students would go back to Italy to practice after graduation.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy is regulated by national law in Malta and the terms “Osteopath”, “osteopathy” and “Osteopathic treatment” are all protected. Regulation was in place even before osteopaths were actually working in Malta. Historically, the regulation became in place after lobbying by the Chiropractic professionals. The president at the time, saw fit to also regulate osteopathy if chiropractic were to be regulated.

A link to the official Regulatory Body in Malta:

Council for the Professions Complementary to Medicine
deputyprimeminister.gov.mt

Benchmarks for education and practice have now been published and are available by contacting the CPCM registrar, Mr. Brady Saliba on cpcm.health@gov.mt

Law

Article 21 (a) (b) (d) and the First Schedule (Art 6) of the Health Care Professions Act (Cap 464)

464. 1. CHAPTER 464. HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS ACT. To regulate the practice of health care professions in Malta. 21st November, 2003. ACT XII of 2003

[chapter 464 health care professions act - Laws of Malta justiceservices.gov.mt](http://chapter464healthcareprofessionsact-laws-of-malta.justiceservices.gov.mt) ›
DownloadDocument

justiceservices.gov.mt/

Reference is made to the code of practice and is available for download here:
deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/regcounc/cpcm/Documents/Osteopathy%20Code%20fo%20Practice.pdf

A link to the Malta Osteopathy Register is available here:

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/regcounc/cpcm/Documents/Osteopathy%20Register.pdf>

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession in Malta is a primary contact healthcare profession, with no restrictions to scope of practice and patients can self-refer. Osteopaths in Malta work in private practice and there are no jobs in the National Health Services available to date. The European standard for osteopathy CEN standard is being used both for education of patients, other professionals and government institutions. Reference is made to the CEN standard when an application to join the register is processed.

Educational Levels and Programmes

Bachelor of Science with Honours (MQF Level 6) is required to practice osteopathy in Malta. The educational programs offered in Malta are accredited by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE). License is required both for the institution itself and for the courses. The institution (ICOM) does not have a University status, therefore, the degree is issued by an external University (University of Kingston, UK).

Malta ICOM Osteopathy Educational Ltd	Full Licence	Undergraduate	Malta ICOM	Level 5	60 ECTS
		Higher Diploma in Osteopathy	Educational Ltd		
Malta ICOM Osteopathy Educational Ltd	Full Licence	Short Cycle	Malta ICOM	Level 5	120 ECTS
		Qualification in Osteopathy	Educational Ltd		
Malta ICOM Osteopathy Educational Ltd	Full Licence	Bachelor of Science (Honours in Osteopathy	Malta ICOM Educational Ltd	Level 6	120 ECTS

Source: NCFHE Website: <https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/register/Pages/register.aspx>

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

CPD is not mandatory in Malta but is encouraged. Malta Association of Osteopaths will make it mandatory for membership.

VAT

Osteopathy services are exempt from VAT without credit.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are covered by insurance companies, depending on the policy. Most companies cover by they differ according to the individual policy. This is an area yet to be explored further. Costs are again fully or partially covered, depending on the policy the patient holds. The majority of cases, osteopathy services are capped at a rate of 30-35 Euros. The argument by insurers is that this is what physiotherapists charge.

If you need further information, please contact:



Robert Grech
President Malta Association of Osteopaths
president@osteopathy.org.mt

Marco Coccia
Secretary Malta Association of Osteopaths
secretary@osteopathy.org.mt



Regulation in Norway



Based on information received from the national osteopathy association, Norsk Osteopatforbund (NOF).

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Norway has a population of 5.5 million inhabitants, and there are estimated to be around 425 practicing osteopaths. About 375 of those are members of the professional association, Norsk Osteopatforbund (NOF).

In addition, there are approximately 150 osteopathy students in Norway, with about 50 of them holding student membership of NOF.

There are no osteopathic physicians within NOF, and no official data on how many physicians there might be practising outside NOF.

There is one other osteopathic association in addition to NOF, which is not active and only comprises a handful of members.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

On the 3 December 2020, the Norwegian parliament voted in favour of regulating osteopathy as a first contact primary healthcare profession. It is expected this process will be completed during 2021.

Osteopaths will be included in Health personnel law, see link: lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1999-07-02-64

This law is universal for all regulated health professions in Norway. There will also be supporting documents describing level of qualification i.e. education. These will be a result of proceedings expected to be fulfilled during 2021.

When regulation is in place, the profession will be regulated by the common regulatory body for all healthcare professions in Norway, Helsedirektoratet: www.helsedirektoratet.no/english/authorisation-and-license-for-health-personnel

Until the regulation is complete, there is a low threshold register for VAT exemption for osteopaths. It is currently linked with membership of NOF but will expire when the osteopathic profession in Norway is fully regulated: w2.brreg.no/altbas/organisasjon

When regulation is fully in place, all licensed osteopaths will need to be on this register: register.helsedirektoratet.no/Hpr

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact healthcare profession in Norway, and patients can self-refer. There are no restrictions to the scope of practice. When the profession is fully regulated, and the legislation takes affect, the title 'osteopath' will be protected and will consequently ensure that only qualified osteopaths can deliver osteopathy/osteopathic treatment. However, it will not be necessary to be a qualified osteopath to deliver osteopathic techniques, as the term "techniques" cannot be

protected. All health personnel need to be able to provide documentation of the qualifications for the service they deliver. When fully regulated, it will be a criminal offence to present and practice as an osteopath without a license.

Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), the European standard for osteopathic practice and training levels of education is included in membership criteria. It is also an important reference in the ongoing regulatory process.

Osteopaths mostly provide their services as private practitioners, so there are very few working within the NHS. With regulation in place, it is expected this will change.

Educational Levels & Programmes

Legal requirement to practice will follow the CEN Standard, which is minimum 4 years fulltime education, or similar. Same criteria apply for membership of NOF.

There is a well established and accredited Type I education offered in Norway. It is a fulltime 4 year course, from Kristiania University College, www.kristiania.no/en/. The programme is accredited by NOKUT, a national institution for higher education, and follows the Bologna convention standards.

About 200 osteopaths in NOF are Type I educated, and around 175 are Type II educated.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

NOF recommend a minimum number of hours of CPD (48hrs, over three years), however, when regulated, CPD will not be mandatory. The legal framework states that you need to continuously update and refresh your knowledge to be a safe practitioner and it is individual's responsibility to ensure this is undertaken in a relevant way. In other words, as long as an osteopath can deliver safe and qualitative good practice, they will keep their license. In reality, this will mean osteopaths undertake CPD activities, but not a specified number of hours or types of areas. This way of regulating health personnel is similar throughout the whole Nordic region.

VAT

There is no VAT on osteopathic consultations in Norway.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are covered by several major companies, about 5 or 6 out of 10 companies cover osteopathy. There are still a few who do not cover it and this is a work in progress. The coverage varies, as coverage is a private agreement.

If you need further information, please contact:



Tomas Collin
President Norsk Osteopatforbund
leder@osteopati.org
+47 913 284 30

Regulation in Portugal

Based on information received from the national osteopathy association, **Associação dos Osteopatas de Portugal (AOST)**.



Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Portugal has a population of 10.1 million inhabitants, and there are estimated to be around 2,050 practicing osteopaths in total. About 250 of those are members of the professional association, Associação dos Osteopatas de Portugal, AOST.

Beside the practicing osteopaths there are about 400 osteopathy students in total in Portugal. AOST recently changed their statutes, so students can now become members of the association. It is mandatory to be students of undergraduate courses in Osteopathy in Higher Education Institutions that offer validated osteopathy programs (BSc Hons). These members do not have the right to vote or be elected to the Association's Board.

There are no osteopathic physicians practising within the AOST, and there are no data on osteopathic physicians practicing in Portugal.

There are four other osteopathic associations in Portugal:

1. Associação de Profissionais de Osteopatia
2. Associação Portuguesa de Osteopatia Clássica
3. Associação Independente de Osteopatia
4. Associação Portuguesa dos Profissionais em Osteopatia

Note: Of these other associations above, the second and fourth are as far as we know training centre associations or linked to a CPD training osteopathic centre, and the associates are in essence students of these training centers. The third admits associates from a wide range of backgrounds: professionals or not, with or without official osteopathic ballot. The first is not linked to any kind of training centre, and admits only osteopaths with a BSc in Osteopathy, and currently has no associates.

It is impossible for us to estimate accurately the number of members of the organisations above. Perhaps in all 4 associations there are about 100 to 150 members, and not all are registered osteopaths.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy has been officially considered as a Healthcare Profession in Portugal since 2003, by Act 45/2003. The title 'Osteopath' is protected by law (Act 71/2013, and Government Ordinance No.207-B/2014), and the practice of osteopathy performed by non-osteopaths, is punishable by Law: Act 2/2021 (limits access to the regulated profession, or its exercise)

[Read more about the Portuguese law on regulation of osteopaths, on page 46.](#)

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact healthcare profession in Portugal and patients can self-refer.

There are no restrictions to scope of practice. Osteopaths, by law, are autonomous and independents in their exercise of clinical practice. However, only osteopaths accredited

and registered in the Portuguese Central Administration of the Health System/ Ministry of Health, can exercise Osteopathy in Portugal.

Currently, the only mandatory requirement to be a member of our association, or to practice osteopathy in our country, is to be registered as an Osteopath in Central Administration of the Health System, I.P (ACSS)/ Ministry of Health, and to have the respective professional ballot issued by ACSS.

We are trying to get involved in standardization, especially in terms of teaching and practicing osteopathy, in order to shape and unify the content of teaching standards and osteopathic practice in the European Union.

Osteopaths in Portugal are all working in private practice.

Educational Levels & Programmes

The level of education required to practice osteopathy in Portugal is BSc Hons, Graduate Level, 4 years full time – 240 ECTS.

About 90% of all osteopaths in AOST are Type I educated, and about 10% are Type II educated.

Higher education in osteopathy, BSc Hons, has existed in Portugal since 2016. Currently there are eight higher osteopathic education programs in osteopathy, BSc Hons., approved by the Portuguese Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation Agency, and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. These courses are running in eight higher health schools across the country.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

There are no mandatory requirements for Continuing Professional Development – CPD.

VAT

No. Osteopathic treatments performed exclusively by osteopaths are exempt from VAT, by law (Act. Nr. 1/2017).

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are currently partly covered, by three major private insurance companies in Portugal.

If you need further information, please contact:



Rui Coelho
President AOST – Associação dos Osteopatas de Portugal
Av. 5 de Outubro, 89-9º
1050-050 Lisboa, Portugal
+351 918112406



Luis Andrade
AOST – Associação dos Osteopatas de Portugal

Regulation in Switzerland



Based on information received from the national association, la Fédération Suisse des Ostéopathes (FSO-SVO).

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

Switzerland has a population of 8.6 million inhabitants, and it is estimated there are around 1,300 practicing osteopaths. About 1,000 of those are members of la Fédération Suisse des Ostéopathes (FSO-SVO). There is no data of numbers of osteopathic physicians practising in Switzerland.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopaths in Switzerland are recognised as a first contact healthcare profession, and the title “Osteopath” is protected.

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact health profession in Switzerland and patients can self-refer. There are no restrictions to scope of practice. Osteopaths in Switzerland are all working in private practice.

Educational Levels & Programmes

The level of education required to practice osteopathy is a master degree (bachelor level is 190 ECTS, and then master + 90 ECTS) and only full-time education, or Type I, is offered.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

The members are required to do 30 hours of CPD per year.

VAT

There is no VAT on osteopathic consultations in Switzerland.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are covered by private insurance companies.

If you need further information, please contact:

Secrétariat Général de la
Fédération Suisse des Ostéopathes (FSO-SVO)
secretariat@fso-svo.ch
www.fso-svo.ch

Regulation in the United Kingdom



Based on information received by the national osteopathy association, Institute of Osteopathy, iO.

Country Population, Numbers of Osteopaths & National Association

The United Kingdom (UK) has a population of 68 million, and 5,500 registered osteopaths. Some two thirds are members of the sole professional association, the Institute of Osteopathy (iO). There are a number of specialist groups that focus on specific aspects within the osteopathic profession in the UK, as well as over 30 regional groups who meet for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which is mandatory.

Beside the practicing osteopaths there are about 1,100 osteopathy students in total in the UK, and about 900 of them are student members of the iO.

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Osteopathy has been regulated in the UK under the Osteopaths’ Act, since 1993, and the profession is officially considered as a Healthcare Profession by the same National Law and the title ‘Osteopath’ and related terms are protected.

The official register of osteopaths is operated by the UK regulator, the General Osteopathic Council, (GOsC). www.osteopathy.org.uk.

The Osteopaths’ Act and many other regulatory documents are freely available on the GOsC website www.osteopathy.org.uk. The iO is focussed on developing osteopaths as a mainstream health profession, in particular by establishing a close working relationship with the National Health Service. In 2017 the iO was recognised as the representative body for osteopaths by the NHS, and osteopaths have been recognised in England as Allied Health Professionals. We have many documents we can share around building recognition with the health system and other health professions.

First Contact Healthcare Profession & Standards for Practise

The osteopathic profession is a first contact health profession in the UK, with no restrictions to scope of practice. Patients can self-refer. Both the iO and GOsC contributed to the formulation of the Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN), the European standard for osteopathic practice and training, and UK education standards are consistent with the CEN standard.

Osteopaths in the UK work mainly in private practice, but they do also fulfill a variety of roles, from first contact to specialist secondary care, up to consultant and senior management levels, in the National Health Service. Since 2017 NHS England has recognised osteopaths as Allied Health Professionals, and actively encouraged the profession to engage in health service transformation, and most recently in COVID-19 crisis teams.

Educational Levels & Programmes

Students can study osteopathy either as a part-time or fulltime qualification. The minimum degree level for osteopaths in UK is a Bachelors degree although over 90% of students are on an integrated Masters level programme at present (MOst).

All educational programmes in the UK are validated or offered directly by accredited universities, and quality assessed by the regulator and by the Office for Students.

Continuing Professional Development – CPD

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is mandatory to practise osteopathy in the UK. CPD requirements are specified by the regulator, and are generally 30 hours study per year on average, with a particular focus on addressing key osteopathic practice standards.

VAT

No VAT is charged.

Insurance

Osteopathic treatments are covered by all insurance Companies, but coverage varies depending on type of scheme.

If you need further information, please contact:



Maurice Cheng
Chief Executive Institute of Osteopathy, iO
maurice@iosteopathy.org

Appendix 1

Danish law on regulation

Executive Order on the Authorisation of Osteopaths

Pursuant to section 2(2), section 3(1) and section 70b(4) of the Act on the Authorisation of Health Professionals and on Health Professions, cf. Consolidated Act no. 990 of 18 August 2017, as amended by Act no. 727 of 8 June 2018, the following is laid down by order: (A certified translation to English)

www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lt/2018/981

Purpose

Section 1. The purpose of the Executive Order is to describe the conditions to be met to obtain authorisation as an osteopath.

Section 2. Only persons who have been granted authorisation as an osteopath have the right to use the title 'osteopath', cf. section 70b (2) of the Act on the Authorisation of Health Professionals and on Health Professions.

Persons covered

Section 3. This Executive Order covers persons who apply for a Danish authorisation as an osteopath (the applicant) and who are:

- (i) Trained in osteopathy in Denmark.
- (ii) EU/EEA nationals trained in osteopathy in an EU/EEA country other than Denmark.
- (iii) EU/EEA nationals trained in osteopathy in a non-EU/EEA country, and whose diploma is recognised in another EU/EEA country and who can demonstrate at least three years' professional experience as an osteopath in the EU/EEA country concerned.
- (iv) EU/EEA nationals trained in osteopathy in a non- EU/EEA country, but who are not covered by para (iii).
- (v) Non-EU/EEA nationals trained in osteopathy in an EU/EEA country other than Denmark or in a non-EU/EEA country.

Conditions for obtaining an authorisation as an osteopath

Section 4. On application, the Danish Patient Safety Authority grants authorisation as an osteopath to the persons referred to in section 3(1), para i), when the Danish Patient Safety Authority assesses that the applicant complies with the requirements of sections 7-9.

Section 5.

- (1) On application, the Danish Patient Safety Authority grants authorisation as an osteopath to the persons referred to in section 3(1), paras (ii) and (iii), when the Danish Patient Safety Authority assesses that the applicant complies with all requirements of the Executive Order on access for EU and EEA citizens to practice as an authorised healthcare professional. In assessing the applicant's training, the requirements for training in osteopathy laid down in sections 7-9 apply.
- (2) No aptitude test under the Executive Order mentioned in subsection (1) is conducted, as there is no publicly regulated training in osteopathy in Denmark.

Section 6. On application, the Danish Patient Safety Authority grants authorisation as an osteopath to the persons referred to in section 3(1), paras iv) and v), when the Danish Patient Safety Authority assesses that the applicant complies with all requirements of the Executive Order on the authorisation of certain healthcare professionals who are nationals of and/or trained in non-EU/EEA countries. In assessing the applicant's training, the requirements for training in osteopathy laid down in sections 7-9 apply.

Level of training

Section 7.

- (1) The applicant must have completed healthcare training in osteopathy corresponding to the level of a professional bachelor's degree.
- (2) A professional bachelor's degree level means:
 - (i) A training programme of three and generally four years' duration as full-time training, consisting of theory and practice and forming an independent training course, cf. section 5(1) of the Act on vocational academy programmes and professional bachelor programmes.
 - (ii) A post-secondary education programme of at least three and not more than four years' duration or of an equivalent duration on a part-time basis, which may also be expressed as an equivalent number of ECTS points, at a university or establishment of higher education or another establishment providing the same level of training as well as the professional training which may be required in addition to that post-secondary course, cf. the Executive Order on access for EU and EEA citizens to practice as authorised healthcare professionals, cf. Article 11 (d) of Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications.
- (3) A professional bachelor's degree programme may be organised as an independent superstructure of education based on a vocational academy programme, cf. section 6(1) of the Act on vocational academy programmes and professional bachelor programmes.
- (4) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the applicant can meet the requirements for the level of training by having completed training in osteopathy as a superstructure of another healthcare training programme at a level equivalent to a professional bachelor's degree or another healthcare-related middle-range training programme supplemented by theory and methods of science at diploma level or equivalent.

Duration of the training programme

Section 8.

- (1) The training programme completed by the applicant, cf. section 7, must contain a minimum of 4,200 hours of instruction in the academic elements and with the weighting mentioned in Annex 1.
- (2) For applicants with the level of training mentioned in section 7(4), the hour requirement in subsection (1) is met by an overall assessment of the healthcare training at a level corresponding to the professional bachelor level and the superstructure in osteopathy.

Section 9.

- (1) The applicant must have completed at least 1,000 hours of clinical practice (clinical training).
- (2) Clinical training means that part of the training programme where the student is in direct contact with healthy or sick individuals or groups of people and learns to plan, provide and assess overall osteopathic treatment; but see subsection (4).
- (3) Clinical training must be provided under the supervision and guidance of an osteopath.
- (4) Selected elements of the clinical training may to a limited extent and, for example, in preparation for patient contact be organised in a skills laboratory or simulation laboratory, but cannot replace direct patient contact in the clinical department or institution.

Advisory Forum

Section 10. The Danish Patient Safety Authority sets up an advisory forum for the authorisation of osteopaths, the purpose of which is to advise the Danish Patient Safety Authority as needed in matters relating to:

1. (i) the assessment of whether the applicant's training meets the substantive requirements;
 2. (ii) the assessment of foreign education and training; and
- (iii) the need to adapt the contents of Annex 1.

Section 11.

- (1) The Advisory Forum consists of no less than six nor more than eight members appointed by the Danish Patient Safety Authority for a term of four years with the possibility of reappointment.
- (2) The Advisory Forum consists of members appointed by professional organisations, associations, relevant authorities and possibly employers and educational institutions.
- (3) The Danish Patient Safety Authority draws up terms of reference for the Advisory Forum. The terms of reference and membership composition are published on the Danish Patient Safety Authority's website.

Entry into force and transitional provisions

Section 12. This Executive Order enters into force on 1 July 2018.

Section 13. For applicants who have started training in osteopathy on or before 1 July 2018, the superstructure mentioned in section 7(4) may be completed before or concurrently with another healthcare training programme at a level equivalent to the level of professional bachelor.

Section 14. For applicants who already perform osteopathic treatment in Denmark on 1 July 2018, supervised clinical training completed in connection with another healthcare training programme equivalent to a professional bachelor's degree or another healthcare-related middle-range training programme may be taken into account when assessing whether the condition in section 9(1) is met, if the clinical training was aimed at manual treatment techniques.

Danish Patient Safety Authority, 28 June 2018

Anne-Marie Vangsted / Birgitte Drewes

Appendix 2

French law on regulation

Links to the National Law

2002

Loi 2002-303 du 4 mars 2002 (article 75)

2007

Arrêté du 25 mars 2007 (dossier DRASS et épreuves d'aptitude)

Décret 2007-435 du 25 mars 2007 (actes et exercice)

2007-2011

Décret 2011-1120 du 19 septembre 2011 prorogeant les agréments des établissements de formation

Décret 2007-435 version consolidée du 1er avril 2010

Décret 2010-344 du 31 mars 2010 tirant les conséquences de la loi HPST

Loi HPST modifications des textes concernant l'ostéopathie

Loi 2009-879 du 21 juillet 2009 (Loi HPST – Bachelot)

Décret 2008-1441 du 22 décembre 2008 (modifiant le décret 2007-435)

Décret 2007-1564 du 2 nov 2007 (modifiant le décret 2007-435)

Arrêté du 25 mars 2007 (formation & commission agrément écoles)

Décret 2007-437 du 25 mars 2007 (formation & agrément écoles)

2014

Durant une vingtaine de mois, les travaux au sein du ministère de la santé avec la participation des organisations socio-professionnelles représentatives de la profession ont permis de redéfinir la profession d'ostéopathe et sa formation.

Référentiel activités et compétences

Référentiel de formation

Un nouveau cadre réglementaire pour une formation officielle dès la rentrée 2015

- Décret 2014-1043 du 12 septembre 2014 Agrément des établissements de formation en ostéopathie
- Arrêté du 12 décembre 2014 Formation en ostéopathie
- Arrêté du 12 décembre 2014 Dispenses d'enseignement susceptibles d'être accordées

2016

La fin du secret médical

Décret 2016-994 du 20 juillet 2016 du CSP aux conditions d'échange et de partage d'informations entre professionnels de santé et autres professionnels des champs social et médico-social et à l'accès aux informations de santé à caractère personnel.

Article L1110-4 du CSP

2020

Les écoles doivent représenter un dossier d'agrément tous les 5 ans.

Décret n° 2020-518 du 4 mai 2020 modifiant le décret n° 2018-90 du 13 février 2018 relatif à l'agrément des établissements de formation en chiropraxie et portant fusion de commissions administratives à caractère consultatif

Recognition & Standards for Practice

The osteopathic profession is regulated in France and patients can self-refer. However, osteopathy is recognised as an alternative practice to traditional medicine by the general public and the media, less by standard health bodies which still have many difficulties in integrating osteopathy into the course of care of patients.

There are some restrictions to scope of practice as defined in Décret 2007-435 du 25 mars 2007 (actes et exercice)

Les praticiens justifiant d'un titre d'ostéopathe sont autorisés à pratiquer des manipulations ayant pour seul but de prévenir ou de remédier à des troubles fonctionnels du corps humain, à l'exclusion des pathologies organiques qui nécessitent une intervention thérapeutique, médicale, chirurgicale, médicamenteuse ou par agents physiques. Ces manipulations sont musculo-squelettiques et myo-fasciales, exclusivement manuelles et externes. Ils ne peuvent agir lorsqu'il existe des symptômes justifiant des examens paracliniques.

Pour la prise en charge de ces troubles fonctionnels, l'ostéopathe effectue des actes de manipulations et mobilisations non instrumentales, directes et indirectes, non forcées, dans le respect des recommandations de bonnes pratiques établies par la Haute Autorité de santé.

Art. 2. – Les praticiens mentionnés à l'article 1er sont tenus, s'ils n'ont pas eux-mêmes la qualité de médecin, d'orienter le patient vers un médecin lorsque les symptômes nécessitent un diagnostic ou un traitement médical, lorsqu'il est constaté une persistance ou une aggravation de ces symptômes ou que les troubles présentés excèdent son champ de compétences.

Art. 3. – I. – Le praticien justifiant d'un titre d'ostéopathe ne peut effectuer les actes suivants :

1° Manipulations gynéco-obstétricales ;

2° Touchers pelviens.

II. – Après un diagnostic établi par un médecin attestant l'absence de contre-indication médicale à l'ostéopathie, le praticien justifiant d'un titre d'ostéopathe est habilité à effectuer les actes suivants :

1° Manipulations du crâne, de la face et du rachis chez le nourrisson de moins de six mois;

2° Manipulations du rachis cervical.

Educational Levels & Programmes

Official list of approved establishments - Government website:

- Liste des établissements agréés au 1er septembre 2015 pour 5 ans (Téléchargement)
- Liste des établissements ayant obtenu un agrément provisoire à la rentrée de 2015 (Téléchargement)
- Liste des établissements agréés au 1er septembre 2016 pour 5 ans (Téléchargement)
- Liste des établissements agréés en 2015 et ayant obtenu une augmentation (Téléchargement)
- Décret n° 2014-1505 du 12 décembre 2014 Formation en ostéopathie
- Article 4
- La formation se décompose en unités d'enseignement dans les domaines suivants :
 - 1° Sciences fondamentales ;
 - 2° Sémiologie des altérations de l'état de santé ;
 - 3° Sciences humaines, sciences sociales, gestion et droit ;
 - 4° Ostéopathie : fondements et modèles ;
 - 5° Pratique ostéopathique ;
 - 6° Méthodes et outils de travail ;
 - 7° Développement des compétences de l'ostéopathe.

La maquette de formation, le référentiel de formation incluant les unités d'enseignement et la formation pratique clinique ainsi que leur contenu sont définis par arrêté conjoint des ministres chargés de l'enseignement supérieur et de la santé.

Appendix 3

Portuguese law on regulation

Regulation, Regulator & Links to Official Documents Related to Regulation

Link to National Law:

Act 45/2003

Framework law for non-conventional therapies

<https://dre.pt/pesquisa/-/search/656122/details/maximized>

Regulated by Act 71/2013

<https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa/-/search/499569/details/normal?q=Lei+n.%C2%BA%2071%2F2013>

Also by Government Ordinance No.207-B/2014 (it regulates characterization and functional content of the osteopathic profession)

<https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa/-/search/58217869/details/normal?q=Portaria+207-%2F2014+de+8+de+outubro>

And by Government Ordinance N°. 172-E/2015 (it regulates the general requirements that must be satisfied by the cycle of studies leading to a degree in Osteopathy)

<https://dre.pt/web/guest/pesquisa/-/search/58217869/details/normal?q=Portaria+207-%2F2014+de+8+de+outubro>

Link to Regulator Body:

Administração Central do Sistema de Saúde, I.P. (ACSS, I.P.) – (Central Administration of the Health System/Ministry of Health) - <http://www.acss.min-saude.pt/>

Link to the National Register:

Yes. Central Administration of the Health System, I.P. - <http://www.acss.min-saude.pt/>

Educational Levels & Programmes

Only Type I programs are offered in Portugal, at Higher Educational Institutions:

CESPU – ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE DO VALE DO AVE (Vila Nova de Famalicão)

ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE ATLÂNTICA (Oeiras)

ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE DA CRUZ VERMELHA PORTUGUESA (Lisboa)

ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE JEAN PIAGET DE VILA NOVA DE GAIA (Porto region)

ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE NORTE DA CRUZ VERMELHA PORTUGUESA (Oliveira de Azemeis)

ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE RIBEIRO SANCHES (Lisboa)

ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE JEAN PIAGET DE SILVES (Algarve)

INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DO PORTO – ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE SAÚDE (Porto)

Only the above programs at the Higher Educational Institutions are allowed to offer osteopathic education, and are accredited by the A3ES - Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (Higher Education Assessment and Accreditation Agency) and by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.



The European Federation & Forum for Osteopathy promotes standards, regulation and recognition for osteopaths in Europe.

www.effo.eu

Follow us on Social Media:

