

## 2-year DIPLOMA in OSTEOPATHY

### **Introduction to the Course**

The Diploma in Osteopathy (D.O.) is a 2-year course reserved to Medical Doctor and Physiotherapists. The course is designed to enable the professionals to acquire a set of core competencies that guide them in the diagnosis, management and treatment of their patients and form the foundation for the osteopathic approach to healthcare. The course is validated by iTHRUST ACADEMY BULGARIA - EU, founded and directed by Dr. Giovanni Bonfanti DO.F.

Teaching and learning strategies comprise classroom-based lectures and seminars; practical osteopathic skills sessions; Virtual Learning Experiences such as online lectures, practical demonstration of osteopathic technique and clinical examination; and Problem Based Learning group tutorials. Upon completion of the course, students will have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to integrate osteopathy, in a safe and informed way, in their existing clinical practice.

### **Osteopathy**

Osteopathy was founded in 1874 by Andrew Taylor Still, an American physician; osteopathic medicine (or osteopathy) is a system of manual diagnosis and treatment for a range of musculoskeletal and non-musculoskeletal clinical conditions. It is distinguished from other health care professions by the fact that it is practised according to an articulated philosophy (Seffinger, 1997). Its claimed unique philosophy of health care is supported by current medical practice with an emphasis on the unity of the body, interrelationship between structure and function, and an appreciation of the body's self-healing mechanisms (Seffinger, 1997; McPartland and Pruit, 1999). One of its defining characteristics is the emphasis placed on the musculoskeletal system as an integral part of patient care (Rogers et al., 2002). Osteopaths utilize a wide range of therapeutic techniques to improve function and support homeostasis that has been altered by somatic dysfunction (WHO, 2010). Somatic dysfunction is described as the altered or impaired function of skeletal, arthrodial, and myofascial components of the somatic (body) framework and their related vascular, lymphatic, and neural elements (DiGiovanna, 2005).

Since its inception, in 1874, osteopathic medicine has developed into two distinct forms of clinical practice. Whereas in the USA, osteopaths have full medical practice rights; in the UK, in Australia and

some European countries, osteopaths have a limited scope of practice with an emphasis on the provision of manual therapy (Hartup et al., 2010). In these countries, osteopaths operate as primary contact practitioners and follow a four or five-year academic programme of study. At the point of graduation, students are required to possess a clinical competence profile which enables them to effectively operate as autonomous health care practitioners. Although osteopathic curricula share commonalities with allopathic medical curricula, as a reflection of the osteopathic philosophy, osteopathic curricula emphasise the application of manual methods of patient examination and treatment. Notwithstanding this, students at the point of graduation are required to possess clinical reasoning capabilities similar to those of a graduating medical student. Clinical reasoning is widely recognised as the essential element for competent autonomous health care practice (e.g., Higgs and Jones, 2000; Jones and Rivett, 2004).

### **References**

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- Rogers, F. J., D'Alonzo, G. E., Jr., Glover, J. C., Korr, I. M., Osborn, G. G., Patterson, M. M., Seffinger, M. A., Taylor, T. E. and Willard, F. (2002). Proposed tenets of osteopathic medicine and principles for patient care. *J Am Osteopath Assoc*, 102(2), 63-5.

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### Aims

The course will enable health professionals to further develop their pre-existing capabilities to integrate osteopathy, in a safe and informed way, in their existing clinical practice. Students will be exposed to a student-centred learning environment to promote the critical acquisition, development and integration of clinical knowledge and osteopathic evaluative and treatment skills, within the context of their pre-existing professional knowledge, skills, values and norms. This is underpinned by a critical understanding of osteopathic concepts. Specifically, the aims of osteopathy programme are:

1. To provide a teaching and learning environment that promotes a culture of critically, self-managed and life-long learning which enables students to operate within the context of clinical uncertainty.
2. To enable students to develop the professional capabilities required to integrate osteopathy with their existing professional clinical practice.

### Course Director

Dr. Giovanni Bonfanti DO.F (Ost. FR)

Principal of BULGARIAN SCHOOL of OSTEOPATHY

C.E.O. iTHRUST ACADEMY

After an experience of 7 years in the Italian Military Special Forces, in 2000 he obtained the Diploma (Bac + 3) in Osteopathy at THE RORI – Richard Osteopathic Research Institute Lyon (FR) | Milan (IT) led by Raimond Richard and in 2003 the Certified Graduate in Business Process Management at ALTIS – UNI Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Subsequently, he obtained the Diploma of Higher Education in Osteopathy (Bac+ 5) and the Certificats d'Études Spécialisées en Ostéopathie Pédiatrique at EFSO - Ecole Française Supérieure d'Ostéopathie – Paris (FR). He worked for many years in Italy in Milan as an osteopath and lecturer in post- graduate courses reserved for doctors and physiotherapists, as coordinator at EFSO - Ecole Française Supérieure d'Ostéopathie - Paris (FR) and lecturer at ICOM College Italia.

In 2018 he founded the iTHRUST ACADEMY project based on post- graduate training courses for Doctors, Physiotherapists, Osteopaths and Chiropractors in HVLA manipulation techniques which leads him to be present today in 38 countries where he has trained over 3,000 professionals from more than 40 countries.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Critically appraise the osteopathic conceptual philosophy of clinical practice and its role in patient evaluation, treatment and management;
- Demonstrate an integrated knowledge of normal and altered human structure and function applied to the process of clinical decision making;
- Demonstrate an integrated knowledge concerning the impact of environmental, psychological and social conditions in the development of illness and disease;
- Demonstrate well developed clinical evaluative skills and decision-making processes required for complex and unpredictable clinical situations;
- Select, implement and monitor osteopathic intervention by means of highly developed clinical reasoning in a manner that is safe, efficient and effective;
- Demonstrate competence in the selection and application of a range of manual techniques ranging from soft-tissue techniques to high velocity low amplitude thrust techniques;
- Select and apply a limited range of cranial, visceral, and functional techniques;
- Communicate effectively and appropriately with patients, carers, colleagues and other members of the healthcare team;

### Entry Requirements

To apply for our Diploma in Osteopathy Program, applicants must have a minimum of N or O Level qualifications. Relevant experience in the healthcare and wellness industries will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If you are unsure whether you meet the entry criteria or believe your background may be relevant, we encourage you to reach out. Our admissions team will be happy to discuss your qualifications and explore available options with you. Once we receive your application, it will be reviewed by our admissions team. Your personal statement, qualifications, and any relevant experience will be carefully assessed as part of the election process.

## Course Structure

### Duration

- 24 months

### Timetable

Diploma in Osteopathy 2025

#### Year 1

- 2nd to 8th December 2025
- 30th March to 5th April 2026
- 6th to 12th August 2026

#### Year 2

- 24th to 30th November 2026
- 5th to 11th April 2027
- 28th June to 4th July 2027
- Anatomy and physiology examination (at end of Year 1)
- Final examination (discussion of the thesis and clinical case)

Graduation ceremony: 5th July 2027 Online and face-to-face lectures, tutorials and meetings and group discussions

## Structure of the Training Course

The 2-Years Diploma in Osteopathy complies with the provisions of the Benchmarks for Training in Osteopathy, World Health Organization (WHO) 2010 relating to training in Type II Osteopathy reserved for operators with previous health qualifications in Medicine and Physical Therapy.

The 2-Years Diploma in Osteopathy provides a total of 1,100 hours, totaling 710 hours of training and 390 hours of clinical thyrocinium.

- Frontal teaching 336 hours
- Specific texts and elaborates, study of clinical cases and reports 114 hours
- Study and preparation for the examination of anatomy and physiology 100 hours
- Personal commitment of the student and thesis 250 hours
- Exercise / practical activity on patient 300 hours (certified by the school).

## **Teaching modality**

### **Frontal Lessons**

With the help of professional osteopathic teachers, the student participates in lectures, in order to understand the basics of each topic covered, addressing subjects such as anatomy, biomechanics, physiology and pathology.

### **Interactive Lessons**

The lessons include the combination of classroom handouts and on-demand technological support, so as to be able to review the lessons learned at will.

### **Practical Lessons**

During the practical part, which will be about 80% of each seminar, the student will be followed step-by-step in order to learn every detail of the manual techniques, a fundamental part of osteopathic practice.

### **Clinic Practical**

The osteopathic clinic will follow a complete osteopathic approach, through a teach training able to develop a clinical reasoning by students.

### **Structure of the Training Course**

3 days for each seminar (about 24 hours), 7 seminars for each year (about 168 hours), two years of course (about 336 hours).

### **Principal topics of the Training Course**

Fascial osteopathy, structural osteopathy, cranial osteopathy, visceral osteopathy, stomatognathic approach, pediatric osteopathy, osteopathy in sports.

### **Curricular Content**

During the 14 seminars in 2-years, 4 learning modules will be developed:

MODULES	STUDENT CONTACT TIME
<b>Osteopathic Concepts and Criticality</b>	20 hours lectures; 20 hours seminars and practicals;
<b>Developing Knowledge for Osteopathic Practice</b>	40 hours lectures; 40 hours seminars and practicals;
<b>Clinical Skills for Osteopathic Practice 1</b>	30 hours lectures; 78 hours seminars and practicals;
<b>Clinical Skills for Osteopathic Practice 2</b>	30 hours lectures and seminars; 78 hours seminars and practicals;

## **MODULE 1 - Osteopathic Concepts and Criticality**

### ***Module Overviews***

This module enables students to develop an in-depth and critical understanding of osteopathic concepts and models of evaluation and treatment and to relate those to existent healthcare models of health, illness and disease, as means of informing their clinical reasoning and decision-making processes. The module also provides the foundation for the development of students' practical osteopathic evaluation and treatment skills, enabling them to apply and make sense of those skills; emphasis is placed on palpation and clinical observation skills. Whilst developing new knowledge and skills concerning the conceptual basis for osteopathic clinical practice, students will be encouraged to critically evaluate its underpinning rationale, plausibility, and evidence base.

#### ***Module Aims***

The aims of this module are:

- To enable students to develop a critical understanding of osteopathy as a healthcare profession, its founding principles, its current status worldwide, and the key influencing factors on its development as a profession.
- To enable students to develop a critical understanding of the osteopathic conceptual philosophy of clinical practice, whilst contrasting it to their own current model of professional practice.
- To enable students to critically evaluate contemporary models of osteopathic diagnosis and clinical practice with regard to their plausibility and underpinning evidence.
- To enable students to develop palpation and clinical observation skills.
- To enable students to start developing their own sense of osteopathic cultural identity and competence including their own model of clinical practice through discussion and reflection.

#### ***Module Learning Outcomes***

On completion of this module students should be able to:

1. Discuss the concept of osteopathy as an autonomous healthcare profession, its history, development and current status.
2. Critically appraise the osteopathic conceptual philosophy of clinical practice, including the role of structure and function interrelationship and the biopsychosocial model of care in patient evaluation, treatment and management.
3. Evaluate the plausibility of current models of osteopathic evaluation and patient management taking into account their underpinning theories and available research evidence.
4. Describe the theoretical and practical basis of palpation and observation and how they underpin osteopathic evaluation.

#### ***Module Contents***

- History of osteopathy and its development
- Regulation of osteopathy
- Healthcare models of health, illness and disease – a critical evaluation



- Osteopathic concepts in clinical practice – health, illness and disease, structure-function interrelationship, adaptation and compensation
- Somatic dysfunction – a critical evaluation
- Osteopathic models of evaluation and treatment: historical developments, plausibility and evidence base
  - The structural or biomechanical model
  - Tensegrity
  - Neurological model
  - Biopsychosocial model
  - Respiratory-circulatory model
  - The total osteopathic lesion concept
- Evidence base supporting osteopathic intervention
- Introduction to Clinical Reasoning in Osteopathy
- Patient Examination skills - conducting observation in the standing, sitting and recumbent positions
- Palpation and Touch
  - Neurophysiology of touch
  - Diagnostic Palpation – reliability, subjectivity and limitations
  - Motionless palpation: a) skin, b) muscles, c) bony points, d) fascia.
  - Mobility palpation: a) skin, b) muscles, c) bony points, d) joints.

#### ***Teaching and Learning Strategies (including assessment)***

A range of teaching and learning strategies are used to promote the development of knowledge, skills and professional and personal values, which enable students to become critical, reflective and evidence-informed practitioners. The adopted teaching and learning strategies include online and face-to-face lectures to deliver core knowledge and promote discussion, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) small group tutorials centred on the discussion of clinically based problems, and tutor and student-led seminars. Regarding clinical skills, the theory, principles and procedures are presented followed by a practical demonstration, where students will practise the techniques. Following practise, students critically reflect and discuss on their own practise of the technique demonstrated,

which is reviewed by the whole group. Students are encouraged to continue to practise and consolidate their understanding of the knowledge and skills outside of the skills laboratory context.

## **MODULE 2 - Developing Knowledge for Osteopathic Practice**

### ***Module Overviews***

This module enables students to apply their existing knowledge and skills of human structure, function, dysfunction and disease, and to develop the knowledge and skill of osteopathic evaluation and patient management critically applying these in the context of patient care. This module enables students to develop the competencies required to critically evaluate each patient with an osteopathic focus from the outset, and to develop a plan of care which is consistent with the conceptual basis of osteopathy, best practice and patient safety.

### ***Module Aims***

The aims of this module are:

- To enable students to build upon their existing clinically applied understanding of human structure, function and dysfunction, and disease whilst integrating current evidence relevant to osteopathic practice. Students will develop the ability to critically apply their understanding of the relationship between disease and the physical, psychological, social and environmental domains and how this changes in relation to context and aging.
- To enable students to develop a robust and critical understanding of current models of pain processing and management, including the biopsychosocial model, in order to inform their clinical decision-making.
- To enable students to formulate robust and informed patient-centred osteopathic evaluation and management strategies, supported by an understanding of conceptual, theoretical and practical osteopathic knowledge and skills.

### ***Module Learning Outcomes***

On completion of this module students should be able to:

1. Apply knowledge of anatomy, physiology, human development, biomechanics and pathology of the neuromusculoskeletal system in patient evaluation and treatment.

2. Critically evaluate the role of osteopathic concepts such as structure-function interrelationship in clinical management.
3. Critically evaluate the influence of psychological, socio-cultural, economic and occupational factors on health and illness behaviour.
4. Discuss current models of pain processing and management, including the biopsychosocial model.
5. Demonstrate the ability to formulate robust and informed osteopathic evaluation and management strategies, supported by an understanding of conceptual, theoretical and practical osteopathic knowledge and skills that is appropriate to the patient individual needs.

#### **Module Contents**

- Review of the concepts of health, illness and disease
- What is pathology? Maladaptation, dysfunction and disease
- The role of the osteopath in relation to pathology
- Dysfunction, disease and their significance in osteopathic practice
- Medical evaluation and management of common conditions
  - Clinical guidelines, triage and management
- Movement, dysfunction and disease
  - Regional and local functional consequences, clinical presentation and management
    - Lower extremity
    - Lumbar spine and pelvis
    - Thorax
    - Upper Extremity
    - Head and neck
- Human development and aging
  - How changes in capacity and agency may predispose to pathology and disease
  - Implications for the neuromusculoskeletal system
- Pain management in osteopathic practice
  - Historical developments leading to current theories of pain
  - Research evidence supporting pain management strategies
  - Pain processing (neuroscience of pain)
  - Clinical aspects of pain
  - Cognitive and non-cognitive factors

- Osteopathic Patient Management
  - Complexity and clinical uncertainty
  - Evidence based rationale for osteopathic care
  - Osteopathic evaluation: summary statement and summary of dysfunction
  - Prognosis, short-, medium- and long-term plans
  - Osteopathic treatment and adjuvant modalities
  - Dealing with complex patients
  - An integrated approach to patient management

#### ***Teaching and Learning Strategies (including assessment)***

A range of teaching and learning strategies are used to promote the development of knowledge, skills and professional and personal values, which enable students to become critical, reflective and evidence-informed practitioners. The adopted teaching and learning strategies include online and face-to-face lectures to deliver core knowledge and promote discussion, Problem-Based Learning (PBL) small group tutorials centred on the discussion of clinically based problems, and tutor and student-led seminars.

### **MODULE 3 - Clinical Skills for Osteopathic Practice 1**

#### ***Module Overviews***

This is the first of two modules that provide students with opportunities to develop osteopathic specific clinical knowledge and skills which will enable them to effectively evaluate and manage their patients. In this module, students will develop practical clinical skills of osteopathic evaluation and technique. Initially, problem-based learning activities provide students with an opportunity to integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills in the context of patient evaluation and care.

#### ***Module Aims***

The aims of this module are:

- To enable students to develop clinical osteopathic evaluation and examination skills and critically apply and integrate them in the context of patient evaluation and care.

- To enable students to develop an understanding of the principles and concepts, indications and contraindications of a range of osteopathic techniques including soft tissue and muscle energy, mobilisation/articulation and High Velocity Low Amplitude (HVLA) thrust.
- To enable students to develop diagnostic palpation capabilities whilst appreciating its critical role in osteopathic evaluation and the application of technique.
- To enable students to become proficient in the application of soft tissue and muscle energy, mobilisation/articulation and HVLA techniques, whilst caring for the needs of their patients and themselves as the operator.
- To enable students to develop competence in osteopathic clinical decision-making by being able to formulate appropriate, effective osteopathic management and treatment plans taking into account the role of multidisciplinary care.

### ***Module Learning Outcomes***

On completion of this module students should be able to:

1. Examine a patient using a range of appropriate clinical and osteopathic examination techniques and evaluate their subjective and objective clinical findings within the context of their patient presentation.
2. Formulate a range of hypotheses for the aetiology of a patient's clinical presentation, and generate short, medium and long-term management plans for the patient, based on both objective and subjective clinical information.
3. Select and demonstrate, after critically evaluating the needs of the patient, soft tissue and muscle energy, mobilisation/articulation, and HVLA techniques in all patient positions and areas. Justify their chosen technique in the context of indications, contraindications, patient presentation and morphology. Justify the components of the technique and tissue states under consideration using palpation while performing the technique.
4. Demonstrate effective and sensitive patient care through the use of well-developed practical skills, whilst caring for themselves.

#### **Module Contents**

- Osteopathic evaluation
  - Case-based diagnostic reasoning, case history taking, clinical examination and osteopathic evaluation, interpretation of clinical investigations focusing on the following regions:
    - Lower extremity
    - Lumbar spine and pelvis
    - Thorax
    - Upper Extremity
    - Head and neck
- Osteopathic technique
  - Soft tissue techniques: mechanism of action, indications, contraindications, longitudinal, cross fibre, inhibition and effleurage. Application considering: rhythm, force, direction, moments, couples, tissue response, depth, amplitude, use of levers, use of applicators, use of contact point, tissue reaction, patient response, care of self, patient sensitivity.
  - Muscle energy technique: mechanism of action, indications, contraindications and limitations.
  - Passive articulation/mobilisation techniques: mechanism of action, indications, contraindications. Application considering: rhythm, force, direction, moments, couples, fulcrums, tissue response, tissue tension, end feel, amplitude, quality of movement, use of levers, use of applicators, use of contact point, tissue reaction, patient response, care of self, patient sensitivity.
  - High Velocity Low Amplitude (HVLA) techniques: mechanism of action, indications, contraindications. Application considering: force, direction, fulcrums, tissue response, tissue tension, end feel, use of levers, use of applicators, use of contact point, tissue reaction, patient response, care of self, patient sensitivity.

#### **Teaching and Learning Strategies (including assessment)**

Students completing this module will be given the opportunity to attend online and face-to-face lectures and seminars, problem-based group tutorials, practical skills sessions and to engage in self-

directed learning activities. Practical sessions will enable application of the underpinning theory and interpretation of their value to them as future osteopaths; and the development of their manual therapeutic clinical skills. Problem-based learning activities provide students with an opportunity to integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills in the context of patient evaluation and care.

#### **MODULE 4 - Clinical Skills for Osteopathic Practice 2**

##### ***Module Overviews***

This is the second of two modules that provide students with opportunities to develop osteopathic specific clinical knowledge and skills which will enable them to effectively evaluate and manage their patients. To this end, students will consolidate practical clinical skills of osteopathic evaluation and soft tissue and muscle energy, mobilisation/articulation and HLVA technique; and will further develop their clinical skills in the areas of cranial, visceral and functional technique. Existing and newly acquired knowledge and skills are applied and integrated in their clinical practice through well-developed clinical reasoning capabilities. This is facilitated by means of classroom-based problem-based learning activities and supervised clinical practice in the module Osteopathic Clinical Practice.

##### ***Module Aims***

The aims of this module are:

- To enable students to consolidate clinical osteopathic evaluation and examination knowledge and skills and critically apply and integrate them in the context of patient evaluation and care.
- To enable students to critically appraise the principles and concepts, indications and contraindications of a range of osteopathic techniques including cranial, visceral and functional.
- To enable students to become competent in the application of soft tissue and muscle energy, mobilisation/articulation and HVLA techniques, whilst caring for the needs of their patients and themselves as the operator.
- To enable students to develop capabilities in the application of cranial, visceral and functional, whilst caring for the needs of their patients and themselves as the operator.

##### ***Module Learning Outcomes***

On completion of this module students should be able to:

1. Informed by a good clinical reasoning, conduct a contextually relevant clinical examination and appraise both subjective and objective clinical findings.
2. Select and demonstrate, after critically evaluating the needs of the patient, competence in the application of soft tissue and muscle energy, mobilisation/articulation, and HVLA techniques in all patient positions and areas. Justify and critically evaluate the selection and application of the technique together with the use of palpation to monitor it.
3. Select and demonstrate, after critically evaluating the needs of the patient, a limited range of cranial, visceral, and functional techniques to the level of late novice, taking into account patient presentation and formulated management plan.

#### ***Module Contents***

- Osteopathic evaluation
  - Case-based diagnostic reasoning, developing competence in case history, clinical examination and osteopathic evaluation, and interpretation of clinical investigations.
- Osteopathic technique
  - Cranial techniques: critical appraisal of their principles and concepts, mechanism of action, indications, contraindications. Developing capability in the application of cranial techniques.
  - Visceral techniques: critical appraisal of their principles and concepts, mechanism of action, indications, contraindications. Developing capability in the application of visceral techniques.
  - Functional techniques: critical appraisal of their principles and concepts, mechanism of action, indications, contraindications. Developing capability in the application of functional techniques.
  - Achieving competence in soft tissue and muscle energy techniques, passive articulation/mobilisation techniques, and High Velocity Low Amplitude (HVLA) techniques

#### ***Teaching and Learning Strategies (including assessment)***

Students completing this module will be given the opportunity to attend online and face-to-face lectures and seminars, problem-based group tutorials, practical skills sessions and to engage in self-directed learning activities. Practical sessions will enable application of the underpinning theory and interpretation of their value to them as future osteopaths; and the development of their manual



therapeutic clinical skills. Problem-based learning activities provide students with an opportunity to integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills in the context of patient evaluation and care.

## Teaching and Learning methods

### Overview of Teaching and Learning methods

The course will use a variety of teaching and learning methods designed to:

- help students develop active learning techniques;
- help students attain the learning outcomes for the course;
- encourage students to integrate and apply their learning to osteopathy;
- increase students' enjoyment of the learning process.

Lectures are used to convey information and knowledge where it is not easily accessible in text books or research papers. They are also used to introduce topics, giving students a broad overview of the area before they begin their independent study or to clarify issues which we know students find difficult when undertaking independent study. In each case, students must undertake the pre- or post-lecture reading to benefit from the session.

Practical Sessions/Stations are a key part of osteopathic education because students must develop a repertoire of osteopathic skills, many of which require substantial motor ability. Students also need to know what it feels like to be on the receiving end of osteopathy and so in the practical sessions they will not only act as an osteopath but will also spend a considerable percentage of their time as a model. We use these practical sessions to introduce students to osteopathic skills whilst at the same time relating the practical work to associated theory so that they become aware of how practise is inextricably linked to theory. During practical technique sessions, typically students will be given the opportunity to discuss the theory underpinning the technique and then the tutor in charge will demonstrate the technique on a student model. They will then be given the opportunity to practise the technique on their peers. Students will be encouraged to practise on several peers, to develop their understanding of different subjects and where is the norm. After practising the technique, students will be invited to critically reflect on their experiences individually and as a group to further enhance and refine their skills.

Tutorials can take several forms but often consist of a small group of students working together with a lecturer. Tutorials are an ideal opportunity for students to discuss areas which they find challenging

or to explore controversy. Whatever the form of the tutorial, i.e. 1-1, face-to-face or online, students will be expected to bring ideas to the group and to actively participate in the activities.

Discussions and Debates may be an integral part of one of the other small group learning sessions, or debates may be held in their own right. As students' progress through the course they will find that the theoretical grounding for osteopathy is not always straight forward and there is often controversy over approaches to intervention. Debates will either be student led or we may invite lecturers to participate in the discussion and the students will be required to rationally assess the arguments.

Much of the teaching and learning on this course will be Problem-Based. Problem-Based learning (PBL) is an educational approach that is centred on the discussion and learning that originates from a clinically based problem. It is a method which encourages independent learning and gives students practise in solving difficult situations and identifying their own gaps in knowledge and understanding in the context of relevant clinical problems, hopefully making it more likely that they will be able to recall the material later in the clinical setting. As a characteristic of PBL, learning is student centred and occurs in small groups with one allocated member of the teaching staff that acts as a facilitator. All students are expected to actively participate in the discussions surrounding the case scenario, and must be willing to give and accept constructive criticism, be willing to identify their learning issues and to undertake the necessary independent study to contribute effectively to the group effort.

### **Assessment Strategy**

The assessment includes:

- Continuous assessment
- 90-minute Short Answer Question and Multiple-Choice Question paper
- Group presentations with structured feedback from members of faculty and students.
- Practical assessments during seminars
- One practical clinical exam at the end of the course
- To graduate, students must have passed all assessments. In the event of failure of an assessment, students will be given the opportunity to resit that assessment (same format). If they fail the same assessment twice, they will be given the opportunity to retake the course.