



# The European Standard on osteopathy (EN16686)

## How was the Standard developed?

EN16686 was developed by CEN's Project Committee on 'Services for Osteopaths' (CEN/TC 414). Set up in late 2011 and bringing together healthcare professionals from across Europe, the Standard was initiated and led by the European Federation of Osteopaths and the Forum for Osteopathic Regulation in Europe. The Secretariat of the Project Committee was provided by CEN's member in Austria (Austrian Standards). The Standard was formally approved in July 2015, and was published at a national level by CEN members in 33 European countries at the end of 2015.



## Further information

If you have any questions about the *European Standard on Osteopathic Healthcare Provision* (EN16686), visit [www.efo.eu](http://www.efo.eu) or [www.forewards.eu](http://www.forewards.eu)

Copies of the European Standard are available from the national standardisation bodies which make up CEN's membership.



<sup>1</sup> *Osteopathic Healthcare Provision*. EN16686. European Committee for Standardization, July 2015.

<sup>2</sup> [www.cen.eu](http://www.cen.eu)

<sup>3</sup> The European Standard (EN16686) does not supersede national legislation in European countries where osteopathy is already regulated (as of May 2016 this includes Finland, France, Iceland, Malta, Portugal, Switzerland and the UK).



[www.efo.eu](http://www.efo.eu)



[www.forewards.eu](http://www.forewards.eu)



[www.cen.eu](http://www.cen.eu)



## Introduction

The *European Standard on Osteopathic Healthcare Provision* (EN16686)<sup>1</sup>, developed in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN)<sup>2</sup>, represents for the first time that pan-European standards of osteopathy have been agreed.

## What is EN16686?

Osteopathy is a primary contact healthcare discipline, with osteopaths providing care for patients all over Europe. However, with no consistent standards of education, training and practice, this has given free rein to unqualified practitioners to call themselves an osteopath and for schools to provide short weekend courses – ill-equipping individuals for osteopathic practice and posing a potential danger to patients.

The European Standard (EN16686) addresses this, by setting out formally in one document the standards expected for the delivery of high quality osteopathic care, education, safety and ethics in Europe<sup>3</sup>.

## Quality clinical care

Osteopaths share 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.

Within the European Standard osteopaths shall have an understanding of osteopathic models of health and disease, but also a critical awareness of relevant research and of principles and practice of relevant healthcare approaches in order to work with, and refer to, another healthcare provider where necessary.

## High standards of ethical and professional behaviour

Along with complying with any regulations or legal requirements in force in the country or jurisdiction in which they practise, osteopaths shall:

- Act in the patient interest
- Work in partnership with the patient
- Maintain public trust and confidence in the osteopathic profession
- Maintain, respect and protect patient information
- Work in partnership with healthcare providers.

## High standards of education and training

Essential to delivering quality care are high standards of education and training.

Within the European Standard two routes to osteopathic training are included: Type I (for those with little or no prior healthcare training, but with a high school education or equivalent) and Type II (those with prior training as healthcare professionals).

Typical Type I programme: minimum 4,800 hours, including at least 1,000 hours of supervised clinical practice and training.

Typical Type II programme: 2,000 hours over a minimum of four years, including minimum of 1,000 hours supervised clinical practice and training.

The common features of both types of training programme are also detailed, including the core competencies (such as basic, clinical and osteopathic sciences, and clinical skills) and essential elements of teaching, learning and assessment. What is important is that the osteopathic learning outcomes for both routes shall be the same.

According to the European Standard osteopaths shall also maintain and develop their knowledge and skills of osteopathic treatment and science through continuing professional development. Subject to national legal regulations this can be mandatory.

## Promoting mobility

With greater consistency in osteopathic qualifications across Europe following the implementation of the European Standard (EN16686), registering authorities will have more confidence in the competencies of osteopaths moving to work from one country to another. This can help to facilitate wider recognition of professional qualifications, thereby increasing the mobility of osteopaths working across Europe's borders.

## Closer cooperation and communication

The introduction of a European Standard and the dialogue it has fostered will also enhance the osteopathic profession's interaction with the European institutions and all its other European stakeholders.