

Education Visitors' Report

Recognition of a Satellite Programme

This form is to be completed by the panel secretary following an approval visit to an institution.

Name of Educational Institution	McTimoney College of Chiropractic (MCC) – Madrid
Programme Name	Master of Chiropractic
Start Date of Programme	October 2022
Date of Visit	12 June 2024

Panel Chair	Rabia Ahmed
Panel Members	Mark Webster
Observers	Penny Bance
Panel Secretary	Elizabeth Austin

Introduction

MCC opened its Madrid campus in October 2022, delivering its existing four-year full-time Master of Chiropractic programme. After several discussions with the GCC during 2023, MCC submitted documentation in March 2024 for consideration through the [GCC satellite recognition process](#).

MCC completed the Stage 2 Outline Business Case template and the Stage 3 mapping document, focusing primarily on Section 2 of the Education Standards. The Approval Panel consisted of Rabia Ahmed and Mark Webster, who supported MCC with the implementation of the new Education Standards. They were familiar with the programme, having undertaken a comprehensive review of the programme in March 2024.

Following a desk top analysis, a visit to the satellite campus was arranged for 12 June 2024 to tour facilities and meet with staff and students.

The University of Ulster undertook an oversight visit to Madrid in the spring of 2023 to review a wide range of academic matters, including resources, staffing and student-related issues.

Staff members, groups, facilities and resources seen			
	Yes	No	N/A
Principal	✓		
Representative(s) from validating institution			✓
Senior management responsible for programme resources.	✓		
Programme Leader	✓		
Faculty staff	✓		
Students	✓		
Patients			✓
Clinic facilities	✓		
Learning Resources (e.g. IT, library facilities)	✓		
Other	Please specify		

How areas of concern were addressed

Panel meeting with Senior Management Team (SMT)

Overview of Higher Education in Spain

The SMT provided the Panel with an overview of the Spanish Higher Education system. They shared that there are two awards in Spain: official awards and propio awards. Official awards are recognised by the government and allow graduates the opportunity to progress to postgraduate study, while propio awards are not recognised by the government and are self-certificated. There are two other institutions in Spain delivering chiropractic education which are self-certificated propio awards.

The MCC MChiro degree programme is classed as an official award as it is a validated UK degree. The SMT shared that delivering its Master of Chiropractic programme in Spain is a way of strengthening chiropractic education through delivery of an official award and thereby providing a route towards the profession's recognition.

The SMT also shared that chiropractic is a private profession in Spain, and not recognised by the government. Just as the chiropractic profession in the UK was managed prior to regulation, the Spanish Chiropractic Association (AEQ) is the "gatekeeper" to the profession in terms of maintaining a chiropractic register and upholding standards of qualification and CPD. The AEQ is the representative of the profession in Spain to the European Chiropractors Union. To attain membership of the AEQ, chiropractors must have a qualification approved either by the GCC or the ECCE.

The Panel was informed that the College has established a close relationship with AEQ, including funding a bursary for students wishing to start the programme.

Programme Delivery and Quality Assurance

The Panel was informed that in line with its experiences in developing its first satellite campus in Manchester over 10 years ago, the Madrid campus is based on centralised administrative functions, integrated use of existing teaching staff to ensure equivalency of delivery, and increasing employment of local teaching and administrative staff as the programme develops.

Operating the model used to start and establish the Manchester campus, the College is currently utilising dedicated local staff as well as staff from Abingdon and Manchester to teach the curriculum. The Principal shared that this model ensures the quality of delivery is comparable across multiple delivery sites, as well as providing the platform to establish and grow local staff for the future.

There are currently two full-time, bilingual, senior lecturers on site, with one acting as course co-ordinator. There is also a local part time technique instructor and two part-time clinic supervisors. Nine members of staff from the UK also teach across the years, with the current programme lead based in Abingdon.

A student support / liaison officer will be full time in Madrid from September 2024 and two more technique instructors have been appointed for the next academic year.

The Principal shared that this ensures the content is fully covered by experienced faculty and supports not only programme quality assurance but also interaction and engagement between staff in different locations.

The Panel was informed that the degree programme is delivered in English and all students' coursework and exams are completed in English. However, according to Spanish law, patient records must be written in Spanish.

The Panel was informed that all quality assurance processes, including policies and procedures encompassing recruitment, admissions, student support etc are the same as those in force in the United Kingdom.

Likewise, students on this programme complete the same assessments, at the same time as students in the UK to ensure equivalency of outcomes and are subject to the same criteria for progression and appeals. Assessment review takes place across all programmes and is implemented across all programmes if changes are made.

The SMT shared that all clinical training will follow the policies and procedures of the student community clinics in Abingdon and in Manchester. The Clinic Manager in Manchester has responsibility in Madrid for training new clinic supervisors, overseeing the equivalency of clinical training between campuses and also for oversight of the establishment of the new clinic.

Recruitment

The Panel asked about risk mitigation should recruitment numbers be undersubscribed. The Principal informed the Panel that the Board of the College has a 10 year commitment to the programme. While the maximum student intake per year is capped at 20, the programme remains viable with a minimum of six student enrolments per year. The Principal does not anticipate any difficulties recruiting the minimum number of students to the programme.

Tour of the Campus

The Principal shared with the Panel that the College rents the premises which they believe provides sufficient resources for the current cohorts and are adequate to support the growth of the campus for the next three years, based on anticipated annual intake.

The Panel observed there are three classrooms of varying sizes for both theory and practical learning. There is a small communal space and a study room which doubles as a small library. A number of hard copy books are available in the library.

The Panel learned that the students have full access to the College's online learning resources including databases and electronic books. Students in Madrid also have access to Anatomy TV. The Panel was informed that local relationships are being established and an agreement has been reached with the faculty of the School of Medicine of Complutense University for use of cadaver labs.

The Panel was informed that as the College grows, there is space to expand the facilities within the current building or into nearby vacant properties.

Clinic facilities

The Panel observed that within the premises there is a two-room private chiropractic clinic which offers students an opportunity to observe professional interaction with clinicians that are both chiropractors and faculty members. The chiropractor is also a Doctor of Medicine and students are able to observe his medical consultations.

The Panel was informed that students will complete their internal observation requirements in the College's own clinic environment and will fulfil external observations with field chiropractors and other healthcare professionals.

The Panel observed the College's clinic training facilities which are being developed at the adjacent osteopathic centre. Currently other practitioners including a nutritionist, a sports therapist and a physiotherapist use the clinic and the College expect this to encourage interdisciplinary practice.

Currently, the College rents one clinic room but has established an agreement to extend to multiple clinic rooms, including a small rehab room, when student capacity warrants the expansion.

The Panel was informed that the student clinic will be fully established next year, in advance of its requirement for the first cohort of Madrid students in September 2025. The Principal shared that Spanish students enrolled at the Manchester campus fulfilled some of their clinical training in Madrid to ensure the College's policies and procedures were in place and sufficiently tested prior to full implementation. The Principal confirmed that when the clinic is up and running the Spanish version of 'Practice Hub' will be used.

Meeting with the Course Delivery Team

The Panel met with nine members of the course delivery team, six in person and three virtually from the Abingdon campus.

The Panel questioned how the programme delivery and provision is overseen and quality assured. The programme lead confirmed that she works closely with the programme co-ordinator in Madrid to ensure local staff are recruited and deployed. She explained that the QA process for Madrid is the same as for the Manchester campus and the programmes are coordinated to ensure that assessments are taken on the same day at the same time, bar the one hour time difference. The marking of assessments follows the same procedures as in the UK; initial marking by the tutor, followed by second marking and moderation and then review by exam boards and external examiner. The team shared they will soon publish research demonstrating consistency of delivery and outcomes across all three campuses.

The team informed the Panel that teaching is predominantly delivered locally, with very little on-line teaching. The team confirmed the programme is taught in English, but during the exam period, students are provided with questions in both English and Spanish. However, all answers must be completed in English.

The Panel queried how students are supported if English or Spanish is not their first language. The team explained that the entry requirements are the same for all students applying to study at MCC if English is not their first language. Students must provide certified proof of ability in spoken and written English to at least IELTS 6.0. Student's Spanish proficiency is also checked using the Common European Framework. Once on the course, if students wish to improve either their English or Spanish proficiency levels, the College has a relationship with the local language school and offers discounted rates to MCC students.

The Panel queried how relevant legislative, regulatory policy and healthcare differences between Spain and the UK are taught and assessed. The team shared that lecture content and assessment for all modules mirrors the UK delivery. Students are provided with policies and legislation related to the UK but are then also provided with the relevant information for Spain. The Panel was informed that it has formed close links with the AEQ who have visited the campus and spoken to the students around ethics and how to practice in Spain. All students are members of the AEQ.

The Panel queried how the programme that is delivered is evidence based. The Panel was informed that the Director of Research reviews and disseminates critically appraised evidence monthly to staff across all campuses to embed into their teaching if appropriate. The Senior Lecturer gave examples of students' discussions around research and literature and ways they identify factors that limit the interpretation of findings.

The Panel was informed that there is one personal tutor for the current cohort of 16 students, based in Abingdon. The personal tutor stated that she visits Madrid at least once a month, but recently has been there weekly. The Panel was informed that although there is one official personal tutor, students regularly speak to the two full time members of staff and the student liaison officer for support and signposting.

Regarding enrichment and summer school opportunities, the team informed the Panel that students in year one and two participate in the Manchester summer school, which allows them to meet peers and use technology such as anatomage tables. Pre clinic and clinic year students attend the Ulster summer school. Attendance is compulsory and grants are available to cover travel and accommodation costs for all students who apply to the fund.

Meeting with the clinic team

The Panel met with the Clinic Manager, the Clinic Supervisor and the Senior Practical Tutor.

The Clinic Manager, who is GCC registered, confirmed to the Panel that she has responsibility in Madrid for training new clinic supervisors, overseeing the equivalency of clinical training between campuses, and for oversight of the establishment of the new clinic.

The Panel was informed that when the clinic is established, the ratio of staff to students in Madrid will be approximately 1:6. Students will complete four hour shifts twice a week as a minimum and students will complete 48 weeks in clinic.

Once the clinic is open, students from the lower years of the programme will undertake observations and participate in activities such as producing 'shadow record cards'. Year three students will shadow the year four students for several months before entering their clinic year.

The Panel was informed that all case presentations will be conducted in English, but patient records will be written in Spanish as directed by law. The team envisage that Spanish will be spoken in the clinic setting between students and their patients. Both the clinic supervisor and senior practical tutor are bilingual.

Regarding building a patient base, the clinic team informed the Panel that they will use friends, family and groups who use the building as a starting point. A relationship has already been built with the President of the Spanish Chiropractic Patients Association which will be used to promote the student clinic more widely to the local community. Staff and students will also market the clinic to local businesses and health clubs in the area.

Students are expected to see a minimum of 30 new patients per student and 250 patient contacts per student.

The Panel was informed that there are plans to establish a patient engagement group and to involve patients in teaching to mirror the UK.

Regarding opportunities for placement provision, the clinic team explained that this will be planned at the start of the pre clinic year and standardised quality assurance checks will be undertaken, as they are in the UK.

Regarding accommodation of the clinic, the team shared that they would need to review the space as student numbers increased with the programme but were confident this should be sufficient for three years.

Meeting with students

The Panel met with six students from year one and two of the programme.

Four of the students shared with the Panel that they had initially enrolled at other chiropractic institutions in Spain but transferred to MCC Madrid due to the official status of the degree programme. The students came from various nationalities including Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Costa Rica.

When asked by the Panel about student support arrangements, the students reported that they were well supported with staff on site having 'open door' policies. They commented that they could easily access their personal tutor and student liaison officer when needed.

Regarding the facilities, the students mentioned they had improved over this past academic year and were very happy with the newly established library. They appreciated that they could use the facilities at the weekends for studying and that they were provided with refreshments during the day. Although the Panel noted the lack of a dedicated social space, the students said they used the lobby of the College to socialise as well as the outside space next to the College.

Students confirmed that they could access a local language school at a discounted rate if they wished to further improve their language proficiency, however, most have requested informal help from the bilingual lecturers when needed. Students also told the Panel that being able to speak to support staff in Spanish was a positive, especially when discussing personal issues.

Students spoke positively about attending the Manchester summer schools and forming part of the organising event for the World Congress of Chiropractic Students (WCCS) convention. They confirmed that trips and accommodation are funded by the College which has allowed them to feel part of the wider McTimoney community. One student commented that compared to previous experiences of higher education it 'feels as if we are at a 'human' university where we are not just a number'.

Meeting with staff responsible for student support / academic administration

The Panel met with the Director of Student Engagement, the Director of Academic Affairs and the Student Liaison Officer.

The Student Liaison Officer explained that her role is to engage with students and staff to provide a point of contact for information sharing and raise issues that require action. She liaises between the UK and Madrid and, starting from September 2024, will be based permanently in Madrid to support the growing cohort of students. She shared that while students have an assigned personal tutor they can speak to any staff members for signposting.

The Panel was informed that students have access to counsellors in the UK or can access local Spanish support to discuss issues in their native language. Student support, including safeguarding processes and policies, is the same as those in force in the UK. A Formative Committee meets three times per year to discuss issues raised and apply necessary interventions. A safeguarding officer and safeguarding lead are in place in Madrid.

The Director of Student Engagement informed the Panel that students were aware at the time of application that the programme is taught in English, and Spanish is likely to be spoken in the clinic year with patients. Study support processes mirror those in the UK and details were shared with the Panel. Local language support is also available.

The Student Liaison Officer informed the Panel that students have started to build relationships with others through interactions with WCCS, which held a regional event at the College, and the International Federation of Sports Chiropractic (FICS).

Account of verbal summary given to the institution

During the final meeting with the Senior Management Team, the Panel Chair stated that its indicative recommendation to the Education Committee is to:

- recommend approval of the programme with conditions

It was agreed that the approval report would be shared with the College for fact checking by 24 June 2024 for return to the GCC by 28 June 2024. The report will be presented to the Education Committee at its July meeting. If it is agreed that the programme meets all the Education Standards, the Committee will recommend to the Council of the GCC that the programme should be approved.

The Council of the GCC considers and decides whether to accept the recommendation of the Education Committee. The decision of the Council to recognise a new programme is then progressed to the Privy Council, if required, for its approval.

The Panel Chair concluded that subject to approval, the Panel looks forward to returning to the campus once the first student cohort has graduated.

Recommendation to Education Committee	
1. Approve <u>without</u> conditions	
2. Approve <u>with</u> conditions	✓
3. No approval (insufficient evidence due to serious deficiencies)	

Conditions for the institution with reasons and timeframes in which they are to be met.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand spaces and develop resources appropriately as the cohort grows (review at the end of Year 3) 2. Expand and develop clinic spaces appropriately as the cohort grows (review at the end of Year 3)

Recommendations for the institution
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide private spaces for study which are easily accessible 2. Provide on-site dedicated student social spaces 3. Make IT devices available on site and for loan to students

Commendations to the institution
<p>The panel would like to commend:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent development of community with the Madrid campus, students feel valued and listened to. They value the relationships they have formed with staff and feel well supported. 2. Financial support to students to engage with learning and wider enrichment activities related to the profession. 3. Development of relationships with key stakeholders including for the forward planning for expansion.

Signed

Rabia Ahmed

Panel Chair

Date: 24/06/24