

**REVISED  
CORE ELEMENTS  
FOR  
NATUROPATHIC  
EDUCATION**

**The General Naturopathic Council Ltd.  
2009  
[www.gncouncil.com](http://www.gncouncil.com)  
[info@gncouncil.com](mailto:info@gncouncil.com)**

**Adopted September 2009**

**© GNC Ltd. 2009**

**Categories and minimum SEEC equivalent levels for the Core Elements document - details of the level descriptors can be found at:  
[www.seec.org.uk/docs/resources.htm](http://www.seec.org.uk/docs/resources.htm)**

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Anatomy & Physiology                                   | 4         |
| 2. Biochemistry   | 4         |
| 3. Pathophysiology & Pharmacology                         | 5         |
| 4. Naturopathic Therapeutics:                             |           |
| ▪ Naturopathic Principles & Philosophy                    | 4         |
| ▪ Assessment and Clinical Evaluation                      | 5 & 6     |
| ▪ Core Therapeutics                                       | 5         |
| - Naturopathic Nutrition                                  | 5         |
| - Detoxification Techniques                               | 4         |
| - Physical Therapy  | 5         |
| - Hydrotherapy  |           |
| - Psychotherapeutic Skills                                | 5         |
| - Healthy Lifestyle Advice                                | 4         |
| - Naturopathic Therapies                                  | 4, 5 or 6 |
| 5. Professional Development, Ethics & Practice Management | 5         |
| 6. Research   | 5 & 6     |
| 7. Clinical Practice                                      | 4, 5 & 6  |

## **Anatomy & Physiology**

### **Level 4**

---

#### **Aims**

*To provide:*

1. Knowledge and understanding of anatomy and physiology essential to the understanding of the foundation of health and disease as understood by conventional medicine and relevant to naturopathic practice.
2. An understanding of the naturopathic concept of the web-like interaction of physiological processes.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

*By the end of the course, the student will be able to:*

- 1) Explain the basic physical terms used in the study of anatomy and physiology and locate key surface landmarks and structures within the body.
- 2) Describe the structure and functions of normal organelles, cells, tissues and organs of the body.
- 3) Explain the cellular basis of genetics and the patterns of inheritance.
- 4) Explain key homeostatic mechanisms within the body.
- 5) Describe the structure and function of the major physiological systems of the body including their integration within the body.

## **Biochemistry**

### **Level 4**

---

#### **Aims:**

*To provide:*

- Knowledge and understanding of the function of water, key macro and micronutrients and their metabolic processes and interactions.

#### **Learning Outcomes**

*By the end of the course, the student will be able to:*

- 1) Describe the structure and functions of carbohydrates, lipids, proteins, enzymes and nucleic acids.
- 2) Describe the metabolism of carbohydrates, lipids, proteins and their control and integration and energy production within cells.
- 3) Describe the structure and function of micronutrients, such as vitamins, minerals and trace elements.
- 4) Explain the interactions of micronutrients at the cellular level.
- 5) Describe bonding and molecular interactions.
- 6) Explain the role of buffers in biological systems and of enzymes in key metabolic pathways.

## **Pathophysiology and Pharmacology**

### **Level 5**

---

#### **Aims:**

*To provide:*

1. An understanding of how dysfunction may lead to disease processes and degeneration and the factors involved.
2. Comprehension of the aetiology, clinical features and evaluation of a broad range of common diseases in all bodily systems.
2. The knowledge to engender a critical awareness of 'red flag' symptoms and develop an understanding of the limits of your own therapeutic capabilities and thereby enhance the skills for appropriate referral.
3. An understanding of the actions and side effects of the major classes of medications and how to access information about pharmaceuticals.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

- 1) Explain the differences between sub-clinical dysfunction and disease.
- 2) Explain human disease processes including cell mutations, neoplasia, tissue injury, inflammation and repair.
- 3) Demonstrate an understanding of common disease affecting the musculoskeletal, integumentary, nervous, endocrine, cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, reproductive and urinary systems.
- 4) Describe how the neurological and endocrine systems and metabolic processes respond to ageing, stress and tissue injury.
- 5) Discuss the theories of infection and immunity in the disease process.
- 6) Recognise potential 'red flag' signs and symptoms and recognise when to recommend patients for orthodox medical assessment.
- 7) Understand common conventional diagnostic procedures and their clinical applications.
- 8) Describe and identify information from standard reference sources about possible interactions between drugs and naturopathic prescriptions.
- 9) Discuss the major classes of medical and recreational drugs, their general actions and possible side effects.

- 10) Demonstrate knowledge of the uses, precautions and interactions of naturopathic prescriptions.

## **Naturopathic Principles and Philosophy**

### **Level 4**

---

#### **Aims:**

*To provide:*

1. An historical overview of the development of naturopathic medicine and key naturopathic pioneers.
2. An understanding of the naturopathic principles and philosophy of health and disease.
3. The knowledge and understanding of key concepts of conventional medicine and naturopathic medicine.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

- 1) Describe the historical origins and evolution of naturopathy including the UK, German, Australian and the American models.
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge of the key naturopathic pioneers.
- 3) Demonstrate knowledge of naturopathic philosophy, core principles and definitions.
- 4) Discuss the key similarities and differences between the conventional medical model and naturopathy.

## **Assessment and Clinical Evaluation**

### **Levels 5 & 6**

---

## **Aims**

1. To understand and identify the multiple causative factors which are creating functional disturbance and disease processes.
2. To competently apply and evaluate assessment and diagnostic methods.
3. To recognise how structural, biochemical, mental/emotional, spiritual, genetic and environmental factors may all contribute to the patient's condition.

## **Learning outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

1. Take a case history and interpret patients' signs and symptoms of dysfunction.
2. Evaluate key symptoms enabling a naturopathic assessment and diagnosis.
3. Perform a physical assessment and clinical examination including an assessment of the vitality or "potential for health" of the patient, using such methods as constitutional evaluation.
4. Assess the "organ function" and "toxic encumbrance" of the patient.
5. Evaluate the impact of patients' lifestyles and environment on their health.
6. Interpret and evaluate assessment and diagnostic results in relation to the individual.
7. Recognise the cumulative effect of predisposing factors and a final excitatory trigger factor.
8. Assess the appropriateness of the patient's condition for a naturopathic approach.
9. Prioritise the significance of clinical findings, taking into account the patient's needs and abilities.
10. To employ the use of functional assessments and tests.
11. Critically assess the limitations of conventional and naturopathic diagnostic methods.

## **NATUROPATHIC THERAPEUTICS**

**For each therapeutic modality, students must be aware of the relevant indications and of the absolute and relative contra-indications.**

**Naturopathic Nutrition  
Level 5**

Naturopathic Nutrition emphasises the use of wholefoods for the prevention of dysfunction, the maintenance and restoration of health. It incorporates traditional naturopathic knowledge with an evidence-based approach to nutrition, recognising biochemical individuality and environmental factors. An understanding of the use of nutritional supplements and phytonutrients should be incorporated within a naturopathic context.

**Aims:**

1. To provide the knowledge of traditional naturopathic nutritional approaches.
2. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the naturopathic context of nutrition and diet as a means to maintaining good health and addressing disease.
3. To provide a naturopathic perspective on the scope of use of food supplements.
4. To develop skills to enable practitioners to advise on and modify diets appropriately.

**Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

- 1) Explain the influence of soil health and organic farming on the nutritional content of food and food processing on nutrition.
- 2) Explain the effects of environmental factors and food processing on-nutrition.
- 3) Understand the holistic perspective of lifestyle factors and nutrition.
- 4) Explain the evolutionary aspects of human nutrition.
- 5) Understand whole food from a holistic and vitalistic perspective.
- 6) Incorporate traditional naturopathic knowledge with an science-based approach to nutrition.
- 7) Demonstrate an understanding of individual dietary evaluation.
- 8) Understand the appropriate application of a variety of naturopathic therapeutic diets\* for the maintenance of health and addressing disease, including the application of foods with specific functions within the overall diet.
- 9) Discuss dietary requirements through the life cycle.
- 10) Apply knowledge of the detoxification/cleansing process to enable the use of dietary approaches, including fasting, respecting individuality.
- 11) Demonstrate an understanding of food allergies and intolerances and their various forms of management.

\*The following dietary approaches are possible examples of those to be studied.....

Alkaline-forming, rotation, exclusion, vegan, low purine, macrobiotic, raw food, to correct labile blood glucose regulation, metabolic typing, etc. etc.

## **Detoxification techniques Level 5**

---

### **Aims:**

1. To promote the understanding of the concept of detoxification of the internal environment.
2. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the physiology of eliminatory pathways and of their interrelationship.
3. To provide knowledge of various detoxification techniques.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

1. Explain the physiological processes involved in the elimination and detoxification pathways of skin, liver, kidneys, lungs and bowel.
2. Explain how a toxic internal environment may result from the influence of diet, lifestyle and environment.
3. Identify individual situations where the application of detoxification techniques may be appropriate or contra-indicated.
4. Understand the principles and the appropriate application of a variety of naturopathic techniques to support and/or enhance effective detoxification and elimination.
5. Understand potential detoxification reactions and their appropriate management.

## **Physical Therapy Level 4**

---

Physical therapy is appropriate forms of exercise and/or manipulative or non-manipulative bodywork that helps to restore vitality and normalise physiology.

### **Aims:**

1. To recognise the importance of structure, movement and posture on the health of the individual
2. To understand the use and application of basic bodywork\* techniques and exercise within a naturopathic context.

### **Learning outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

1. Recognise the systemic effects of stress on structure and posture.
2. Discuss the impact of posture on physiology.
3. Describe the physiological mechanisms that underpin the principles of bodywork and exercise.
4. Demonstrate the ability to implement basic bodywork\* skills for the purpose of enhancing wellbeing.
5. Explain the importance of exercise and non-sedentary lifestyle on general wellbeing and advise on exercise as appropriate for the individual.

\*bodywork could include the following: naturopathic total body adjustment routine, basic massage, Bowen technique, Shaitso, Aromatherapy massage, Manual Lymphatic drainage, all studied at NQF level 4 or above.

## **Hydrotherapy Level 5**

---

Naturopathic hydrotherapy emphasises the thermotherapeutic effects of the application of water, either externally or internally. It aims to address disease and maintain health through its constitutional, holistic and local methods of application.

### **Aims:**

1. To provide the knowledge of both historical and traditional uses of hydrotherapy externally and internally.
2. To recognise the importance of the thermal effects of hydrotherapy.
3. To understand the use and application of hydrotherapy within a naturopathic context.

### **Learning outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

- 1) Describe the unique properties of water as a therapeutic modality.

- 2) Understand the different methods by which water may be applied.
- 3) Describe the physiological mechanisms that underpin the principles of hydrotherapy.
- 4) Demonstrate, perform or describe to a patient how the relevant hydrotherapy is carried out.

### **Naturopathic Psychosocial skills**

#### **Level 5**

---

#### **Aims**

- To provide an understanding of the role of emotions in health and disease processes.
- To provide a theoretical and practical knowledge of various approaches and consultation skills for addressing emotional issues.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

- 1) Evaluate the role of the mind, emotions and social interactions in health and disease.
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate therapeutic skills to support the emotional health.
- 3) Identify situations for the appropriate use of techniques such as relaxation, breathing exercises, exercise, diet and communication skills in support of emotional health.
- 4) To identify when to refer a patient on to a specialist practitioner.

### **Healthy Lifestyle Advice**

#### **Level 4**

---

#### **Aims**

- To emphasise the importance of the basic lifestyle requirements for health.
- To provide an understanding of the impact of the environment on health and disease.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

- 1) Describe the basic requirements for health such as good nutrition, sunlight, clean air and water, adequate rest and relaxation, and appropriate exercise and activity levels.
- 2) Identify the impact of social environment and lifestyle factors on health in order to personalise lifestyle advice.
- 3) Advise on healthier ways of living and products and services to assist this e.g. juicers, ionisers, water filters, environmentally friendly household products.
- 4) Discuss key public health issues.

## **Naturopathic Therapies Levels 4, 5 or 6**

---

An awareness of at least 2 of the following 5 natural health disciplines must be provided:  
Herbalism, Chiropractic, Osteopathy, Homoeopathy, Acupuncture.

It is the responsibility of training providers to ensure the delivery of an adequate level of competence for the level of practice.

Students must learn when to refer to another qualified practitioner.

*The following aims and learning outcomes are the minimum and should be interpreted in relation to each chosen modality and upgraded according to the level at which it is taught.*

### **Aims**

1. To provide knowledge of the philosophy of the modality.
2. To ensure an understanding of the principles and practise of the modality.

### **Learning outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

1. Discuss the historical context of the development of the modality.
2. Discuss the practical application of the modality.

3. Understand the effects, safety and limitations of the practical application of the modality.
4. Recognise the limits of competency and when to refer to another relevant qualified practitioner.
5. Recognise the main over-the-counter natural remedies which a patient may be taking and why they may be taking them.

### **Professional Development, Ethics and Practice Management Level 5**

---

#### **Aims:**

1. To ensure that students have a full understanding of and can apply the ethical, legal and professional requirements of good practice.
2. To promote student self-development to ensure effective professional communication.
3. To engender methods of reflection for the continual development of the student and professional practitioner as a life-long learner.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

1. Discuss moral and ethical values relevant to professional practice.
2. Discuss the legal and legislative obligations to patients, the public in general and the naturopathic profession as a whole.
3. Practise in accordance with the regulatory body Code of Professional Conduct.

4. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of their limits of competence and when and how to make referrals.
5. Discuss the meaning of implied and informed consent and the application thereof.
6. Identify and access sources of advice, guidance and continuing professional education that will enable their growth and development as a professional naturopathic practitioner.
7. Evaluate knowledge and practical skills and use reflective practice as a means of personal and professional development.
8. Evaluate the complexities of the client-practitioner relationship.
9. Explore the scope and limitations of communication in the context of the therapeutic setting and the patient's needs.

## **Research Levels 5 & 6**

---

### **Aims:**

1. To promote research-awareness within the context of naturopathic practice, reflecting and analysing in a systematic and critical way.
2. To introduce principles and practice of research as a critical process of enquiry within the context of healthcare in general and naturopathy in particular.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will be able to:*

1. Know how to access evidence that is relevant to naturopathic practice.
2. Demonstrate the skills of reviewing and critically analysing relevant research literature.
3. Understand the principles of evidence-based medicine and its possible importance or limitations when used to inform clinical decisions in naturopathic practice.
4. Discuss the current status of research in relation to the complementary and natural health care professions and naturopathy in particular.

## **Clinical Practice Levels 4, 5 & 6**

---

### **Aims**

1. To develop competently and practice naturopathic assessment, evaluation and treatment skills within a supervised clinical environment.
2. To ensure practitioners meet First Aid and Health and Safety and professional ethical competencies.

### **Learning outcomes:**

*By the end of the course the student will confidently be able to:*

1. Understand the application of naturopathic principles and philosophy within a clinical environment
2. To plan, evaluate and apply a naturopathic strategy integrating an appropriate combination of modalities according to the practitioners' competencies.
3. To apply each treatment modality individually and in combination with other treatment modalities employing naturopathic principles.
4. To understand the safety of each treatment modality for the individual.
5. To make modifications to the naturopathic strategies used as the patients' condition changes.
6. To competently practice patient/practitioner relationship skills by establishing good contact and building confidence and trust, using time management and providing clear information.
7. To understand, and apply if necessary, First Aid in a clinical environment.
8. To understand current Health and Safety requirements.

END