

To interested parties

Westward House  
Lime Kiln Close  
Stoke Gifford  
BRISTOL  
BS34 8SR

0117 931 7305

[www.officeforstudents.org.uk](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk)

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## Open letter consultation: proposed new name for AECC University College

AECC University College has applied to the Office for Students (OfS) to change its name to 'Health Sciences University'. This open letter invites views on whether the proposed new name is, or has the potential to be, confusing or misleading.

The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 amended relevant legislation to give the Office for Students (OfS) the power to approve the use of the word 'university' in a registered higher education provider's name.<sup>1</sup>

The OfS has published guidance for registered higher education providers that wish to use either 'university' or 'university college' as part of their name ('university title' or 'university college title').<sup>2</sup> In that guidance, the OfS states that it will consult on a provider's proposed new name and assess the extent to which the proposed name is confusing or misleading.<sup>3</sup>

AECC University College (<https://www.aecc.ac.uk>), also known as AECC, is an OfS-registered higher education provider.<sup>4</sup> It has applied to the OfS for university title and proposes to change its name to 'Health Sciences University'.

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<sup>1</sup> See section 77 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and section 39 of the Teaching and Higher Education Act 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Regulatory advice 13: How to apply for university college and university title (OfS 2019.08): [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-13-how-to-apply-for-university-college-and-university-title/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-13-how-to-apply-for-university-college-and-university-title/).

<sup>3</sup> See Regulatory advice 13, paragraph 16: [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-13-how-to-apply-for-university-college-and-university-title/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-advice-13-how-to-apply-for-university-college-and-university-title/).

<sup>4</sup> See [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/).

AECC University College has stated that the new name would better reflect the increased breadth of disciplines across its health sciences provision. This includes more than 25 accredited health sciences degree courses; apprenticeships and research degrees, primarily in allied health and related professions; a wide range of medical and non-medical Continuing Professional Development provision; a diverse portfolio of Care Quality Commission-registered clinical and rehabilitation services, and a growing multi-professional research portfolio.

As part of this growth, and with the aim of further expanding its health sciences provision, AECC University College is currently discussing a potential merger with the University College of Osteopathy, based in London. The intention would be that the UCO School of Osteopathy would sit under the 'Health Sciences University' title alongside its existing schools.

The purpose of this open letter is to consult, in line with Regulatory advice 13, on whether AECC University College's proposed name 'Health Sciences University' is, or may be, confusing or misleading. We are inviting views on the following questions:

1. Considering AECC University College's proposed new name of 'Health Sciences University', in your views is it, or does it have the potential to be, confusing or misleading?
2. Please explain why you think this and provide any evidence to support your view.

### **Who should respond to this consultation?**

We welcome responses from anyone with an interest in the proposed new name for AECC University College.

We are particularly (but not only) interested in hearing from:

- Existing or potential future students of AECC University College
- Other providers of education based in the same geographic area
- Professional organisations and local employer groups that work with AECC University College
- Local, regional or other bodies with similar names to the proposed name 'Health Sciences University'
- Local emergency services to AECC University College
- Higher education membership groups.

### **How to respond**

The consultation closes at midday on 21 March 2024.

Please submit your response by completing the online form at <https://survey.officeforstudents.org.uk/s/UTVJS3/>.

If you require this document or the online form in an alternative format, need assistance with the online form, or have questions about this consultation, please contact us on 0117 931 7305 or at [regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk).

### **How we will treat your response**

The OfS will process any personal data received in accordance with all applicable data protection laws (see our privacy policy).<sup>5</sup>

We may need to disclose or publish information that you provide in the performance of our functions, or disclose it to other organisations for the purposes of their functions. Information (including personal data) may also need to be disclosed in accordance with UK legislation (such as the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection Act 2018 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

Yours sincerely

**Jean Arnold**  
**Deputy Director of Quality**

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<sup>5</sup> Available at [www.officeforstudents.org.uk/ofs-privacy/](http://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/ofs-privacy/).