

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL
Performance Management Report 2008/9

A. POLICY PRIORITIES

ITEM	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	PROGRESS
<p>1. Implementing Rule changes, Handbooks & Accreditation processes to introduce Independent Prescribing.</p>	<p>Liaise with GOC lawyers, DH solicitors and policy leads to draft Rules; Work with groups across Education Committee and Standards Committee to draft Handbook, which is compliant with new legislation; Consult with all potential stakeholders Make Rules and forward to Privy Council for approval</p>	<p>Director for Standards and Acting Director for Education</p>	<p>2008</p>	<p>1. GOC's rules to create the new independent prescribing specialty have been approved by the Privy Council, and came into force on 11th August 2008. The rules can be found at the following link, and we will update the consolidate versions of the rules on the GOC website. In the meantime, the rules can be found at the following link: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/pdf/uksi_20081940_en.pdf 2. At the July 2008 meeting of Council a new Handbook for Optometry Specialist Registration in Therapeutic Prescribing was agreed and published.</p>
<p>2. Preparing to consult on introduction of revalidation and the possibility of pilot schemes.</p>	<p>Work with the GOC Revalidation Working Group to prepare proposals for consideration by the DH according to the timetable laid down by the Non-medical Revalidation National Working Group</p>	<p>Director of Standards</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>3. The GOC's outline proposals for the Scheme were prepared prior to November 2008 Council and optical body views sought. 4. The outline proposal was approved by November 2008 for forwarding to the DH. The proposals were forwarded to the DH in January 2009, and have now been issued for further consultation with stakeholders; 5. Proposals for funding of a pilot scheme have been submitted to the DH as requested by 6 March 2009. 6. Actual piloting has been delayed due to delays at the DH National Group.</p>

<p>3. Agreeing changes to the Opticians Act and Rules to implement EU Directives, improve efficient and effective regulation of UK registrants and ensure the safety of the public in the sale and supply of eyewear.</p>	<p>Identify to the DH the legislative changes necessary and still outstanding;</p>	<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>7. The CHRE has been commissioned by the DH to identify with the UK Regulators what is currently outstanding or needed. The GOC responded to the CHRE in February and March</p>
<p>4. Working within a European framework, to ensure that development of GOC systems take into account agreement of UK Gov. to EU policies procedures.</p>	<p>Contributing to the updating of the Code of Conduct for the implementation of the EU Directive which competent authorities (including the GOC) must comply with;</p> <p>Contributing to the debate on the introduction of Codes of Conduct for registrants throughout the EU.</p> <p>Contributing to the Health Professionals Crossing Borders initiative.</p>	<p>Registrar; Director for Standards and A/Dir of Education Director for Communication and Information</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>8. The GOC has responded to DIUS on the several draft iterations of the Code for implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC; the first of which was submitted to the GOC Registration Committee at a meeting in 2008. The GOC acknowledges limitations imposed by EU case law on what it can require of applicants through the EU Directives.</p> <p>9. The GOC responded to ECOO on its consultation on an EU Code of Conduct (in January 2009) for opticians and optometrists across the EU. The GOC is aware that the EU Commission is encouraging the introduction of EU wide registrant codes of conduct. The GOC has raised with the CHRE the need for caution. The GOC is concerned to ensure that the UK Depts of Health are alive to this developing issue and have taken steps to ensure that they are not introducing into UK EU law which is at odds with public and patient safety and protection.</p> <p>10. The GOC participates in the meetings of the HPCB group (last meeting held in Dublin and attended by the Director for Comms and Info.)</p>

5. Reviewing the way in which core competences presented.	Re-present the GOC competences following the GOC June 2007 consultation on the competency presentation	Director of Standards	2008	11. The GOC has decided to adopt the WCO overarching framework following consultation in 2007. Further work was undertaken on the competencies with the College and ABDO in 2008, and a consultation was undertaken on proposed revisions to the competencies. The consultation closed in January 2009. The responses are currently being analysed. The Competencies Review Group will reconvene in May 2009 to finalise proposals for consideration by Standards Committee and Council.
6. Reviewing the GOC's Scheme for Student Registration	Identify and consider issues within the joint working group	Acting Director for Education	2008/09 Ongoing	12. Report presented to Education Committee at its Feb 09 meeting and actions arising through a protocol agreed with the Registration Department and College of Optometrists finalized. 13. Further consideration of student registration will be needed going forwards
7. Agreeing the GOC CET Scheme for implementation of any changes from 2010 onwards	Arrange extension to GOC contract with Vantage and Establish the process for integrating changes to legislation in line with legislation for revalidation	Director for Corporate Services and Acting Director for Education	2008	14. Extension to contract with Vantage achieved and announced to November 2008 Council meeting; 15. November 2008 Council meeting agreed re-establishment of the GOC CET Policy and Development Group to manage future CET contract negotiations.
8. Restructuring the GOC organisation to enable the effective and efficient delivery of the GOC's functions in the public interest. To include an appraisal of accommodation, staffing and	Review organizational structure in light of staff recruitment and resignations; Complete change management programme for staff; Involve staff in appraisal of accommodation; IT systems and reward systems; Update or introduce	Registrar, SMT and Director for Human Resources and Organizational Development	2008/09 ongoing	16. Proposals for change to organization structure following the departure of the Registrar, Director of Corporate Services and Registration Manager were presented to the Remuneration Committee in September 2008 and were approved 17. A Change Management Programme was established for 2008/09 by the Senior Management Team. Rolling programme, that encompasses continual review of performance within the GOC, ensuring that the most effective means of communication and structure are put into place. In 2008 this included the following: 18. In the spring of 2008, a number of focus groups were organised by an external facilitator appointed ¹ by the Senior Management Team. The focus groups invited all members of staff (except senior management) to participate in anonymised discussions asking the questions [a] 'what works well at the GOC?' and [b] what could be improved? The outcome of the focus groups were collated and anonymised and

¹ Fisher Consulting (organisational psychologists)

<p>systems</p> <p>9. changes required to support the new Council.</p>	<p>procedures and protocols</p>			<p>considered by the SMT and the then Chair of Council, Rosie Varley.</p> <p>19. The results from the focus groups then fed into a series of change workshops throughout the summer of 2008. In total, each member of staff participated in three workshops. These were facilitated by the same organisational psychologist used for the focus groups (Fisher Consulting) and looked at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Change Workshop 1: Moving Forward ii. Change Workshop 2: Getting the Best from Each Other iii. Change Workshop: Making things happen <p>20. The Change Workshops helped the organisation to create a strong sense of direction and gave staff the opportunity to voice not only their ideas, but concerns as well. This enabled staff to feel more engaged with the organisation and gained the necessary buy-in to move the modernization programme on.</p> <p>21. One of the outcomes of the workshops was for the organisation to form cross-departmental working groups to tackle some of the areas that had been highlighted as needing modernization or change. These included a buildings, a performance management, IT and change management working group. Staff had emphasised that information technology needed a dedicated member of staff, The resignation of the Registration/IT Manager presented the GOC with the opportunity to re-structure this area and to appoint a dedicated IT Officer. A review of the performance management process was undertaken and interim measures were put in place to improve the existing system. A full appraisal of this area will take place in 2009, after a job evaluation exercise.</p> <p>22. In addition to the above, regular staff meetings are held on a six weekly basis. Staff meetings have always featured at the GOC, but following the focus groups and workshops, the format was changed after consultation with staff, to make them more participative. Each department gives an update on their work and outlines any obstacles or any 'wins'. The Senior Management Team play a low key part in the meetings, with each one being organised by the Change Management Working Group. Staff are encouraged to put forward new ideas, or question existing policies and procedures. Copies of agenda's for these meetings are available on request.</p>
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				<p>23. Further work will continue in 2009, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Evaluation – Summer 2009 • Review of existing Performance Management system – summer/autumn 2009 • SMT development – spring/summer 2009 • New council development – throughout 2009/10 • Staff change management workshops – end summer/autumn 2009 • Review of building/needs assessment – Spring – end of summer (includes any implementation phase).
10. Improving information management systems further to the redesign and re-launch of the GOC website	Introduction of GOC Intranet	Director for Communications and Information	2009	<p>24. Intranet successfully launched in February 2009</p> <p>25. Dedicated information/project person, recruited spring/early summer 2009</p> <p>26. Improved Integra training for staff</p>
11. Developing GOC's Stakeholder Engagement	Writing of a GOC Consultation Framework	Director for Communications and Information	2009	<p>27. Framework presented to Council for approval March 2009.</p>

B. Implementation of the White Paper

Governance

1. Liaison with the Department of Health over the legislative change required to establish a smaller, more board-like, Council	Introduction into statute of a new GOC Constitution Order	Director of Standards	By 1 April 2009	28. The Constitution Order has now been laid in Parliament, and can be found at the following link: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/pdf/uksi_20090442_en.pdf
2. Preparing for the new Council proposals for an efficient Committee advisory and executive	Discussion within Council on GOC preferred Committee Structure going forward; Ensuring that GOC Committee Constitution Order introduced into statute	Director of Standards	By 1 April 2009	29. Changes to the GOC's Committee Constitution Rules, including the enablement of the populating by non-Council members, have received Privy Council Approval and will be brought into effect 1 April 2009.

Revalidation

1. Develop a revalidation scheme for dispensing opticians and optometrists	30. See point 2 above of A. POLICY PRIORITIES
2. Liaise with interested parties on the setting up of one or more pilot schemes	

<u>Registration</u>				
<p>1. To contribute to CHRE's work on establishing a common definition of 'good character'</p>	<p>Consider CHRE advice on single standard definition of 'good character'</p>	<p>Director for Standards</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>31. The White Paper tasked CHRE with identifying a single standard definition of 'good character.'</p> <p>32. GOC work on this project has been put on hold until CHRE have reported.</p> <p>33. CHRE final report has now been published.</p> <p>34. Consideration of their findings is required for embedding into GOC registration and revalidation requirements.</p>
<p>2. To ensure that any changes to the registration Rules reflect the requirements of the Vetting and Barring schemes</p>	<p>Consider the need for rule changes</p>	<p>Director of Communications and Information Director of Standards</p>	<p>By 1 April 09</p>	<p>35. Have attended meetings with the Independent Safeguarding Authority implementation team. Review of current position undertaken internally. Agreement reached at Registration Committee to delay implementation of any rule changes until the Scheme is fully rolled out (ie Oct 2014) to avoid complex transition arrangements.</p>

C. STATUTORY FUNCTIONS

Registration

<p>1. To continue to carry out the core registration functions.</p>	<p>Management of annual renewal process for both 'full' registrants (Jan-April) and student registrants (September)</p>	<p>Director of Communications and Information and Registration Supervisor.</p>	<p>2008/9</p>	<p>36. Fees level for 2009/10 agreed at November 2008 council meeting.</p> <p>37. November 2008 Council introduced penalty fees for payment of fees by full registrants after 15 March but before 31 March; and for students who delay payment to after 15 July but before 31 August and introduced restoration fee for students who fail to register after 1 September</p> <p>38. 2009 retention process commenced earlier to encourage all registrants to have renewed their registration by 15th March.</p> <p>39. Retention communications plan developed and being implemented.</p>
<p>2. Timely processing and batching of all registration fees received.</p>	<p>Daily banking of fees received during renewal process</p>	<p>Registrar/Director of Communications and Information and Registration Supervisor Finance Staff</p>	<p>Daily during renewal periods</p>	<p>40. Daily processing of retention applications and payments has continued throughout the retention period. Cheque, credit card and BACS payments are tallied up against batch reports. To end Feb, total payments received of £1,103,322.</p>
<p>3. Scrutiny of all registration forms for declarations on convictions, health and investigations, and PI insurance for Registrar's determination.</p>	<p>Review and update process for dealing with criminal and health declarations etc</p>	<p>Registrar/Director of Communications and Information Registration Supervisor. Director/Acting Director of FTP</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>41. The GOC has recently reviewed its internal approach to dealing with criminal and health declarations from registrants.</p> <p>42. Following an assessment of best practice methods from other regulators, the GOC has introduced a new system to ensure that: forms are processed in a timely manner; staff resources are used efficiently and effectively; decisions are consistent with existing guidelines/principles and are recorded to enable follow-through and analysis of trends.</p>

				<p>43. A dedicated member of the registration team is responsible for processing all applications which include a declaration in accordance with written protocols.</p> <p>44. All decisions are approved by the Registrar.</p> <p>45. Regular meetings are held which include the Registrar and a member of the FTP team to take decisions in relation to serious matters.</p>
4. Participation in 'student road shows' at all universities and colleges in September 2008.	Director for Comms and Information and support staff		2008	46. Completed
5. The introduction of requisite Rules changes and processes to ensure that membership of Vetting and Barring Schemes are a condition of GOC registration.	<p>Agree GOC approach to Vetting and Barring Scheme, particularly with relation to Fitness to Practise</p> <p>Liaise with the ISA</p>	<p>Director of Comms and Information</p> <p>Director of Standards</p> <p>Director of Legal and FTP</p>		47. See 28 above – no action required until 2010. Issue recorded in Registration Committee legacy report. Health Care and Associated Professions (Miscellaneous Amendments) Order 2008 amends Opticians Act to add inclusion on a barred list to the reasons that a person's fitness to practise may be considered impaired.
6. The registration and monitoring of professionals from the EU working in the UK on a temporary basis.	Ensure a process is in place for the registration of such individuals	Acting Director of Education and Director of Comms and Information	2008/09	48. No applications received via this route to date
7. Registration of EU professionals on the new registers.	Report data on registration to DIUS			
8. The ongoing day to day management of the CET Scheme	Regular reports to the Registration Committee	Acting Director of Education and GOC/CET Manager	2008/09	50. Completed 51.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

<p>1. Continuation of the visits programme to universities and colleges for the accreditation of courses.</p>	<p>Prepare and deliver a 5 year visit programme. Conduct visits to all new programmes. Conduct visits to Independent Prescribing programmes & assessment</p>	<p>A/Director of Education</p>	<p>2008/9</p>	<p>52. Completed. Visits were conducted in 2008/9 according to the visit programme. The Visit schedule for next 5 years has been produced. This programme includes visits to the new Independent Prescribing courses and assessment in 2009 and to other new programmes.</p>
<p>2. Leading on a review and updating of the CET Scheme for implementation of agreed changes to the Scheme from 2010 onwards.</p>	<p>Extend contract with Vantage Technologies for an additional 12 months in order to provide time for the GOC to develop its revalidation requirements which will feed future changes to the CET scheme.</p>	<p>A/Director of Education and GOC/CET Manager</p>	<p>2008/9 ongoing</p>	<p>53. Completed. At its meeting in November 2008 Council were informed that the contract with Vantage has been extended for an additional 12 months until 2011 with an optional additional 12 month further extension if required.</p>
<p>3. In collaboration with the Standards Committee, review the core competency statements;</p>	<p>Review and revise competencies. Consult with stakeholders on any changes. Republish updated competencies and include in updated Education Handbooks.</p>	<p>A/Director of Education and Director of Standards</p>	<p>2008/9</p>	<p>54. Completed. In March 2008 Council approved the revised Stage 1 Core Competencies for Optometry and these were published in the updated Optometry Handbook. In addition the updated Dispensing competencies were published in the revised Dispensing Handbook approved by Council and published in July 2008. A joint Standards and Education Competencies Working Group has been reviewing all of the GOC Competencies to ensure they are consistent for areas of overlap for example those competencies relating to contact lens practice and dispensing and so they use either 'understanding of' or 'ability to' phrases.</p>

<p>4. Review the GOC Handbook on the requirements for the Scheme for the Registration of UK Optometrists.</p> <p>5. Lead on a review of the GOC's Scheme for Student Registration.</p>	<p>Work with Education Committee to review and update the SFR Handbook, to ensure it accurately reflects the current Scheme for Registration.</p> <p>Consult with stakeholders on any changes.</p> <p>To work with Registration to review and identify any issues with the current Scheme for Student Registration.</p>	<p>A/Director of Education</p> <p>A/Director of Education and Director of Registration</p>	<p>2008/9</p>	<p>55. Completed.</p> <p>In 2008 all of the GOC's Education Handbooks including the Scheme for Registration Handbook were reviewed and republished. These are available on the GOC website:</p> <p>http://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/education_handbooks.cfm</p> <p>In Autumn 2008 a report was presented to Education and Registration Committees regarding the issues identified around the Scheme for Student Registration. These issues will be considered as part of a wider review of Registration.</p>
<p>6. Committee projects continued from 2007/8 as follows:</p>				
<p>Project ED01 - Professionals Crossing Borders/Bologna & ECOO Diploma.</p>	<p>To ensure continued compliance with EU Directive for recognition of professional qualifications.</p> <p>To advise Council on any necessary steps to amend its Rules and Regulations to enable it to pro-actively adopt principles of Bologna agreement.</p> <p>To consider applications from outside UK for GOC accreditation.</p>	<p>A/Director of Education</p>	<p>2008/9</p>	<p>56. Ongoing.</p> <p>An Education Committee panel has conducted visits to the ECOO Diploma and Hodgeschool Utrecht as part of the accreditation process.</p> <p>The group considers any developments in legislation that may impact on our processes and compliance and will report to Council as necessary.</p> <p>The group is currently seeking to develop a proposed policy of overseas accreditation in response to enquiries received from overseas institutions and regulators and this will be presented to new Council later in 2009.</p>
<p>Project ED02 - Entry Standards, Dispensing Opticians [ESDO];</p>	<p>To ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the 2005 Entry Standards for Dispensing Opticians.</p>	<p>A/Director of Education</p>	<p>2008/9</p>	<p>57. Completed.</p> <p>Following 3 years of Education Committee visits to dispensing programmes to ensure an effective transition to the new standards and revised final assessment, in 2009 all courses were transferred to full panel for consideration of their suitability for up to 5</p>

				years approval. These visits are being conducted between February and April 2009. Council will ask to approve these courses in due course following the Visits.
Project ED05 - Overseas Routes to UK Registration (OQ Sub-Committee).	<p>To review applications received under the Scheme for UK Registration for Non EEA qualified Optometrists or Dispensing Opticians & EU Directive to ensure the GOC complies with legislative requirements.</p> <p>To monitor and identify trends to ensure the GOC is pro-active in responding to trends and changes to ensure the process remains evolving and effective.</p>			<p>58. Ongoing.</p> <p>In 2008 the use of a portfolio was piloted as part of the Scheme for UK Registration for Non EEA qualified Optometrists. This was successful and has now been implemented as a permanent addition to the scheme.</p> <p>Applications received, success rates and trends will continue to be monitored to ensure the system is effective and compliant with requirements.</p>
Project ED08 – Review of the Visit /accreditation process.	<p>To review the current accreditation process to ensure it remains effective and reflects good practice.</p> <p>To implement the recommendations of the review.</p>	A/Director of Education	2008/9	<p>59. Completed.</p> <p>In 2008 a review of the visit and approval process was conducted. The outcome of the review was the development of an annual monitoring scheme. The scheme was successfully piloted at Bradford University in March 2009. The scheme will be fully rolled out to all optometry programmes in Winter 2009 and Dispensing programmes in Spring 2010. Council will receive its first report based on the annual monitoring submissions in March 2010.</p>
Project ED09 - Optometry Independent Prescribing Handbook.	To produce a handbook outlining the requirements of Independent Prescribing training and assessment in accordance with relevant legislation.	A/Director of Education	2008/9	<p>60. Completed.</p> <p>At the July 2008 meeting of Council a new Handbook for Optometry Specialist Registration in Therapeutic Prescribing was agreed and published. This is available on the GOC website:</p> <p>http://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/Publications/education_handbooks.cfm</p>

<p>1. Continuation of the visits programme to universities and colleges for the accreditation of courses.</p>	<p>Prepare and deliver a 5 year visit programme. Conduct visits to all new programmes. Conduct visits to Independent Prescribing programmes & assessment</p>	<p>A/Director of Education</p>	<p>2008/9</p>	<p>61. Completed. Visits were conducted in 2008/9 according to the visit programme. The Visit schedule for next 5 years has been produced. This programme includes visits to the new Independent Prescribing courses and assessment in 2009 and to other new programmes.</p>
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Fitness to Practise

<p>1. In house management of the investigation process of allegations made against registrants and referral to the Investigations Committee for consideration.</p>	<p>Review and Update FTP Investigations Protocol for consideration by Investigating Committee</p> <p>Review processes and consider computerized case management system</p>	<p>Director of FTP and Legal</p>	<p>By April 2009</p>	<p>62. Review of protocol completed</p> <p>63. Draft revised protocol sent to Investigating committee for consideration</p> <p>64. Further development to await newly appointed Director of FTP and Legal</p> <p>65. The FTP Summary Table is reviewed monthly by the Registrar and the Director or Assistant Director.</p> <p>66. The GOC receives monthly progress reports from our external solicitors as to the status and progress of all cases handled by them.</p>
<p>2. Providing legal advice to the members of the Investigation Committee, to assist in its deliberations on individual cases.</p>	<p>Legal members of the team attendance at Investigations Committee meetings</p> <p>To seek advice from external legal advisers where required</p>	<p>FTP Team</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>67. Completed</p>
<p>3. Developing the framework within which the Investigation Committee operates, specifically guidance on the circumstances in which cases should be referred.</p>	<p>Review FTP Investigations Protocol</p> <p>Prepare guidance on referral of cases from IC to FTP</p>	<p>Director for FTP and Legal</p>	<p>2009</p>	<p>68. The FTP Investigation Protocol has been reviewed and updated.</p> <p>69. The detail on referral of Interim Orders is now contained in sections 3.4 and 22 of the draft FTP Investigations Protocol. Those cases which are regarded as serious will then be reviewed with a view to applying for an interim order.</p> <p>70. Separate Draft guidance on referral of cases from IC to FTP has been prepared and is before the Investigation Committee for consideration prior to consultation.</p>

<p>4. Working alongside the Investigation Committee in setting up a panel of expert witnesses and performance assessors to act in individual cases.</p>	<p>Director for FTP and Legal</p>		<p>2009 ongoing</p>	<p>71. At its meeting of November 2008, the GOC approved Guidance to Registrants and Performance Assessors regarding performance assessments). Once the new Director of FTP is in post, it is intended that a panel of experts and performance assessors will be invited to a training course with BondSolon.</p> <p>72. As stated last year, this is in accordance with para. 17.1 of the Investigations Protocol.</p>
<p>5. Retaining in-house the advocacy at some FTP and other hearings.</p>	<p>Director of FTP and Legal</p>		<p>2009</p>	<p>73. Interim Order hearings, where practicable, are undertaken by the Investigations Manager. Since the departure of the previous Director of FTP and Legal further consideration will have to be given to this matter, particularly FTP hearings.</p>
<p>6. Management of Council's external legal advisers where decisions to refer to the FTP Panel are reached, and preparation for the hearings process.</p>	<p>Confirm management arrangements</p>	<p>Director for FTP and Legal Assistant Director of FTP and Legal</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>74. The process for the management of the Council's external solicitors are confirmed as follows:</p> <p>75. Where new instructions are sent to the GOC's external solicitors, the Assistant Director will review the case and provide a time frame in which the advice report and allegations should be prepared. It is expected that a report can be prepared in less than three months. Where the deadline can not be met, the GOC and its solicitors will discuss the required extension of time. It should be noted that external factors such as a delay in obtaining a witness statement or expert report can affect this time frame. The GOC undertakes a regular review of its cases to ensure timely referral</p> <p>76. The external solicitors prepare a monthly status report for internal review by the Director/Assistant Director in order to ensure timely progress of a case.</p> <p>77. A number of cases are now managed internally by the Assistant Director. The same standards apply for these cases.</p> <p>78. Where the GOC envisages that there might be an unnecessary delay in obtaining information, cases have been referred for a procedural hearing with a clear indication to the registrant and FTP committee</p>

				(hearing the procedural hearing) that specific papers have been requested and will be provided at the earliest opportunity. In this way, a case can be listed for hearing without further delay. The Director of FTP is consulted before such action is taken.
7. Management of Registration Appeals and Restorations on behalf of Council.	Director of FTP and Legal Affairs and Assistant Director of FTP			Both Registration Appeals and Restoration cases are managed internally, with external solicitors retained to present the cases. These cases number only a few in total however it should be noted that the number of restoration cases is likely to increase slowly.
8. Proactive briefings to registrants of the FTP function.	Director of FTP and Legal		2009/10	79. This is to be reviewed in the next financial year.
9. Investigation and referral, in accordance with agreed protocol, on decisions to proceed with criminal prosecutions.	Review the protocol on decisions to proceed with criminal prosecutions	Director of FTP and Legal	2009/10	80. This is to be reviewed in the next financial year.
10. Recording and responding to Freedom of Information requests.		Director of Communications and Information		81. A memo was sent out to all staff in November 2008 reminding all staff of the need to pass FoI and DPA requests to the Director of Comms and Info. 82. Following the ICO's publication of the new definition document for regulators, the GOC's FoI policies and website information was reviewed and updated in December 2008. A log was created for recording and managing requests.

11. The implications for the Council's fitness to practise processes of legislative changes.	Director of FTP and Legal		2009/10	83. The Fitness to Practise Rules have been amended to introduce the use of the civil standard of proof in Fitness to Practise Hearings. The amendments came into force in November 2008. In addition, a review of the code of conduct will result in changes to the way that members, advisors, etc. are appraised and will include guidance on grievance and disciplinary procedures.
<u>Standards</u>				
1. Develop a revalidation scheme for dispensing opticians and optometrists.	84. See point 2 above of A. POLICY PRIORITIES			
2. Review the competencies of those seeking registration as a dispensing optician or optometrist	The GOC Standards Committee (under Section 12 of the Opticians Act) has responsibility for setting standards of competence as well as standards of conduct. The Act requires the GOC to review the competences and to take stakeholders views into account.	Director of Standards and Head of Education	2008/09	85. A consultation on the content of the standards of competence is currently underway. 86. The presentation of the Standards of competence have been reviewed with the intention of mirroring the World Council of Optometry (WCO) presentation of competences for the two professions internationally.
3. Establish a regulatory framework for the independent prescribing of medicines	87. See point 1 above of A. POLICY PRIORITIES			

<p>4. Review the Sale of Optical Appliances Order 1984</p>	<p>Complete a review of the Sale of Optical Appliances Order, and have timetable agreed with DH on implementing changes</p>	<p>Director of Standards</p>	<p>Postponed</p>	<p>88. The sale and supply of spectacles by non-registered person to those under 16 or who are not visually impaired is governed by the Sale of Optical Appliances Order 1984.</p> <p>89. This Order sets out the conditions under which such sales can be made. The Order pre-dates the onset of internet sales etc.</p> <p>90. In 2008, the GOC approached the DH of Health to explore whether it would be willing to revisit the Order to take into account recent developments.</p> <p>91. The DH made it clear that any proposals from the GOC re amendments to the Order would have to be evidence-based, showing how the current regulations put patients at risk, before the Department would be willing to take these forward. The Department also stated that there was a risk that opening up this issue could result in further de-regulation.</p>
<p>5. Undertake a strategic review of the Codes of Conduct and work with other Uk health professional regulatory bodies and those in Europe to introduce harmonisation where ever possible.</p>	<p>Director of Standards</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>92. A consultation on amendments to the Code of Conduct for Individual Registrants and the Code of Conduct for Business Registrants is currently underway. The consultation closes in April 2009. A stakeholder event is also being planned for 16th April.</p> <p>93. The GOC has collaborated with the European Council for Optometry and Optics (ECOO) to introduce Code and Competences across the EU which are synonymous with our Code of Conduct and standards of competences. The GOC is the only EU optical competent authority that involves itself in ECOO's ground breaking initiatives and we are actively driving the initiatives to enhance and clarify standards across the EU and more widely.</p> <p>94. The GOC is working with ECOO on the Code in order to influence the outcome. The GOC has responded to the ECOO Code consultation from which the GOC has recognized the dangers of ECOO establishing a code which is at odds with that of the GOC in the UK and has commented on the matter of commonality between the ECOO Code and the GOC Code.</p> <p>95. The GOC is identifying this as an area of risk which it has</p>	

			request the CHRE to raise with the DH.
6. Keep under review the guidance issued by the professional bodies	Director for Standards and Assistant Director of Standards	2008/09	<p>96. In the past year, both the College and ABDO have updated their guidance at the GOC's request to take into account the CHRE publication <i>Clear Sexual Boundaries between Healthcare Professionals and Patients: Responsibilities of Healthcare Professionals</i>. The GOC's Standards Committee reviewed the changes made, and was satisfied with the steps taken by the College and ABDO.</p> <p>97. The College of Optometrists has also produced detailed guidance for optometrist independent prescribers (changes to the medicines legislation and GOC's rules introduced a new independent prescribing specialty for optometrists in 2008). The GOC's Standards Committee reviewed this guidance, and was satisfied that it was fit for purpose.</p>
7. Commission research on the relationship between the mode of supply of contact lenses and adverse effects	Director for Standards	Postponed	<p>98. Little research has been undertaken to establish whether there is any link between adverse effects arising from contact lens wear and the mode in which contact lenses are supplied – in particular whether internet supply correlates with any increased incidents of adverse effects.</p> <p>99. Research in the US and very recently in Australia has pointed towards this. The CLEER Project in Europe is looking to see whether there is any correlation between regulated and unregulated supply and incidences of contact lens related eye disease, taking data from across the European Union. Standards Committee has considered whether the GOC should commission some UK-based research.</p> <p>100. It is proposed that the existing research, and out the outcomes of the CLEER Project once this is completed, are reviewed before considering further the need for research</p>

Business Services

<p>1. Management , control, analysis and reporting of all income and expenditure.</p>	<p>Registrar</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>101. The Council has experienced difficulties in maintaining budget objectives in the 2007/08 financial year. The Executive has reset the budget objectives for the current financial year.</p> <p>102. Since August 2008, a new monthly review of actual expenditure has been introduced, giving an understanding of variances to enable timely and appropriate action.</p> <p>103. The Executive and Members have worked together to identify a 7% saving on current year expenditure to recover the savings while maintaining effective delivery of the GOC's functions and responsibilities. This has been achieved by a number of initiatives, for example, reducing the number of meetings, using teleconferencing and proper use of reserves.</p> <p>104. Since August 08, an enhanced process for business planning has been introduced to enable the delivery of future strategic plans to realise the GOC's vision. Working with the Chair of Council, Members and Committees, the senior management team has taken control of writing the GOC's business plan for 2009/10. This had identified the need for the GOC to raise its 2009/10 registration fee by 29% in a challenging financial climate.</p> <p>105. The Executive has worked with its internal and external stakeholders to explain the reasons for this increase. The Executive has opened its decision-making to external scrutiny and in so doing has gained the trust and support of stakeholders. It has enabled stakeholders to speak knowledgeably with the optical taxpayers to explain the reasons for the increase in fees and the GOC communications team has produced a leaflet giving these explanations which have been sent out to all registrants.</p>
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2. Management of all office services contracts, including office premises and equipment.	Director for HR and OD	Ongoing	<p>109. The changes to the organisational structure that took place in early November have only just allowed the organisation to implement an internal review of all processes and procedures within the business services area. This includes reviewing all contracts, including the existing lease to 41 Harley street, to ensure value for money and modernity, while ensuring that the business needs of the organisation are met (e.g. insurance cover). An audit of all equipment is also included within this review, such as IT Hardware and Software, and depreciation of fixed assets. This review is still underway but will be completed by the end of April 2009.</p>
3. Advice on the tendering of all service an support tender processes and contracts.	Seek advice on extension of CET Administrator contract	Director of Corporate Aervices	<p>110. Completed</p>

4. Management of comprehensive risk register, including insurances.	Deputy Registrar		Feb 2009	<p>111. A comprehensive risk register has been produced for scrutiny by the GOC Audit Committee.</p> <p>112. From this has been identified major areas of Financial Risk which has been used to create a risk based reserve which has been scrutinized by the F&P Committee and identified as an appropriate method of agreeing the level of reserves.</p> <p>113. A review of the insurances held by the GOC took place in March 2009.</p> <p>114. Health and Safety Risk Assessor's to be trained on the 31 March 2009.</p>
5. Monitoring the Hearings Panel membership to ensure - sufficient representation for all FTP hearings - provision of training for panel members	Director of HR & OD Hearings Manager		2008/09	115. A change to the committee constitution rules which became effective on 5 January 2009 has enabled the Hearings Manager to use fewer panel members at procedural, interim order and review hearings thus ensuring that there are sufficient members available to complete all hearings. One optometrist member and one dispensing optician member is currently suspended following a complaint being raised against them in their professional lives and one lay member, who was a chair-trained member, resigned in January 2009 for career advancement reasons. The Hearings Manager has not experienced any problems through the loss of those members. Two general training sessions were held in 2008 – April for all members and July for Chair members – and a training session was held in September for all members to address the change in the standard of proof which became effective in November 2008.
6. Contract management of the CET programme with Vantage Technologies Ltd		A/Dir of Education CET Manager	2008/09	116. Six weekly meetings held with Vantage to agree actions
7. Management of the contract with OCCS for the consumer complaints mediation service		Director of HR & OD Acting Director of FTP and Legal	Ongoing	117. Ongoing

FTP Hearings

Following the separation of the prosecution and disciplinary functions in 2005, the management of the hearings process and the Fitness to Practise Committee is now established as a separate function of Council.

1. A schedule of hearing dates for 2008/9 which will consist of at least one week per month (excluding August).	Hearings Manager		2008/09	118. Successfully actioned
2. Budgetary control of FTP Panel members' fees and expenses for attending hearings.			Ongoing	119. Successfully managed by Hearings Manger
3. Venue arrangements and FTP Panel member availability.			Ongoing	120. Successfully Managed by Hearings manager
4. FTP Panel member training and appraisals.			Ongoing	121. Scheduling successfully managed by the Hearing Manger. 122. Budget overspend on FTP Panel appraisals.
5. Management of legal/clinical advisers to the panel, and transcription services.			Ongoing	123. Successfully managed
6. Notification of determinations for publication on Council's website			Ongoing	124. Successfully managed by Hearings Manager
7. Preparation for the possible transfer of the hearings process to another body.	Ongoing liaison with OHPA	Director for Standards Director for FTP and Legal	Start of process in 2008/09 With a view to completion 2011/12	125. Directors have had initial discussions with OHPA and Director of Standards attends the project board meetings.

Communications

The overall objective for the communications function is to support the Council's mission and objectives through effective internal and external communications.

<p>1. Ongoing work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • media and parliamentary monitoring • proactive and reactive media relations on a range of topics • provision of information to a range of stakeholders • attendance at relevant optical events and student road shows to promote key messages • publication of the Annual Report • three editions of the GOC newsletter, <i>Bulletin</i>, per year. 	<p>Director of Comms and Info with Comms Team</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>126. Between Jan- Dec 08:</p> <p>19 press releases sent out achieving 257 mentions in printed and online press</p> <p>Published 3 editions of <i>Bulletin</i>, distributing 54,000 copies</p> <p>Published 8 editions of <i>IC-GOC</i>, 48 weekly news digests and 40 public affairs briefings</p> <p>Produced a commemorative 12 page publication to celebrate the GOC's 50th anniversary</p> <p>In collaboration with BCLA, produced a leaflet on buying contact lenses</p> <p>2007-8 Annual Report published in August</p> <p>Achieved 1.5m page views of the website, and a 24 per cent increase in visits since 2006.</p> <p>Events – attended/organised student roadshows and Scottish national regulation event, plus participated in joint events with the Eye Health Alliance</p> <p>Completed corporate identity manual and editorial style guide</p>
<p>2. Particular communications support is anticipated for the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing Education and Training • Renewal of registration (including students) • Roll-out of equality and diversity monitoring • White Paper implementation • Regulation of sale and supply of optical appliances 	<p>Preparation of Comms plans for each area</p> <p>Implementation of Comms Plans</p>	<p>Comms Team and responsible executives</p>	<p>2008/09</p>	<p>127. CET Comms Plan for final year of current scheme prepared and presented to Registration Committee at its February 2009 meeting</p> <p>128. Comms Plan for Renewal of registration including students prepared and adhered to. Leaflet and website information prepared and distributed to support increase in registration fee.</p> <p>129. The GOC's equality and diversity monitoring process for registrants is now being rolled out. Monitoring forms were distributed with 2009/10 retention forms. Data will be collated, analysed and reported after the end of the retention cycle in April. Following a review of best practice the GOC has now amplified its monitoring programme to include monitoring</p>

				<p>of FTP complainants.</p> <p>130. Comms Plan for White Paper implementation prepared (attached) and adhered to.</p> <p>131. Regulation of sale and supply of optical appliances put on hold. Joint leaflet published with BCLA (see above).</p>
3. Developing plans to implement the GOC's Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.	Director of Communications and Information Communications Officer		Ongoing	<p>132. Supported Standards department consultations on competencies and codes of conduct, and helped to develop open consultation on revalidation.</p> <p>133. Developed consultation framework, brought to March 09 Council for approval.</p>
4. Further development of the GOC website, including migration of the intranet to the new Content Management System (CMS) and improvements to content and functionality.	Communications Manager Communications Officer		2009	<p>134. Intranet successfully launched February 2009</p>
5. Support for the 50th anniversary celebrations, including commemorative publication.	Director for Comms and Information		July 2008	<p>135. Successfully achieved.</p>

<u>IT Services</u>			
1. Evaluation and recommendations for an on-line registration and payment facility for registrants	Director for Comms and Information Registration Supervisor IT Officer Management Accountant	2009	136. Included within Registration department workplan for 2009-10
2. Evaluation of secure remote access to the network for staff use, incorporating a secure firewall protection	Head of HR & OD IT Officer	2009	137. Undertaken in February 2009, with recommendation for security and remote access to be implemented in April 2009 (budgetary constraints do not allow an earlier start time).
3. Evaluation of the capacity of the existing Microsoft Small Business Server and p.c. network capacity		2009	138. Completed February 2009.
4. Create a configuration database of all IT equipment and renewal/replacement cycle recommendations		2009	139. Audit carried out January/Feb. 2009. Depreciation policy and procedure set up with equipment depreciated over three years. Next year 17 PC's will be replaced.
5. Update computer usage policy to include handheld devices.		2009	140. New policy drafted, implementation April 2009.

Dian Taylor
Registrar
March 2009