

Education and training requirements for GOC approved qualifications

Overview

This consultation seeks your views on our proposals to update our requirements for GOC approved qualifications leading to registration as an optometrist or a dispensing optician.

What are we seeking your views on?

We are seeking your views on;

- Our proposed **Outcomes for Registration**, which describe the expected knowledge, skills and behaviours a dispensing optician or optometrist must have at the point they qualify and enter the register with the GOC.
- Our proposed **Standards for Approved Qualifications**, which describe the expected context for the delivery and assessment of the outcomes leading to an award of an approved qualification.
- Our proposed **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method**, which describes how we propose to gather evidence to decide whether a qualification leading to registration as either a dispensing optician or an optometrist meets our Outcomes for Registration and Standards for Approved Qualifications, in accordance with the Opticians Act.
- Our **outline impact assessment**, which describes our assessment of the impact of our proposals to update our requirements for GOC approved qualifications.

What will our proposals replace?

Together, these documents will replace our Quality Assurance Handbooks for optometry (2015) and dispensing opticians (2011), including the list of required core-competences, the numerical requirements for students' practical experiences, education policies and guidance contained within the handbooks, and our policies on supervision and recognition of prior learning which are published separately. You can read the documents we are proposing to replace, here; **Optometry Handbook 2015** <user_uploads/optometry_handbook_2015_87326_pdf--17-.pdf> ; **Dispensing Handbook 2011** <user_uploads/dispensing_handbook_2011_pdf--6-.pdf> .

Why are we consulting?

We would like to hear your views on the proposals in the consultation to help us update our requirements for education and training requirements for GOC approved qualifications to ensure that the qualifications we approve are fit for purpose.

Our proposals mitigate the risk that our current requirements (contained within our Quality Assurance Handbooks) become out of date.

The proposed 'Outcomes for Registration,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' together will ensure the qualifications we approve are responsive to a rapidly changing landscape in the commissioning of eye-care services in each of the devolved nations. They respond to the changing needs of patients and service users and changes in higher education, not least as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, as well as increased expectations of the student community and their future employers.

What have we consulted on previously?

These proposals are based on our analysis of key findings in our Concepts and Principles Consultation published in 2017-2018 and feedback from our 2018-2019 consultation on proposals stemming from the Education Strategic Review (ESR). For more information please visit the **ESR policy development and research page** <<https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/esr-policy-development-and-research.cfm>> .

What are we not consulting on?

We also approve two post registration qualifications; dispensing opticians, contact lens qualifications; and for optometrists, therapeutic prescribing qualifications. Our requirements for these qualifications were published in 2007 and 2008 respectively. Work to update our requirements for contact lens qualifications and therapeutic prescribing qualifications will commence in Autumn 2020 and will be consulted upon separately.

We are not consulting on whether or not we should approve degree apprenticeships. All qualifications we approve, including any proposals for degree apprenticeships that might arise, will have to meet all of our proposed outcomes and standards, which are significantly more stretching than our current requirements in our Quality Assurance Handbooks. For more information about degree apprenticeships please see our **statement here** <https://www.optical.org/en/news_publications/news_item.cfm/goc-position-on-proposed-apprenticeship-standard> .

How have we developed our proposals?

Our proposals have been guided by evidence-based policy making and draw upon best practice from other regulators, professional and chartered bodies. You can read our research, background and briefing papers **here** <<https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/esr-policy-development-and-research.cfm>> .

In preparing this document we were advised by two Expert Advisory Groups (EAGs) with input from the Quality Assurance Agency and feedback from a range of stakeholder groups including our Education Visitors, our Advisory Panel (including the Education Committee) the optical sector and sight-loss charities.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to help us develop our proposals to ensure our proposed 'Outcomes for Registration,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' protects and benefits the public, safeguards patients and helps to secure the health of service-users.

You can read the EAGs' terms of reference and membership [here](#)

<<https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/expert-advisory-groups.cfm>>

What do I need to do?

If you are a member of the public, a patient or service user, you may only be interested in reading our proposed 'Outcomes for Registration' and answering a few questions focused on your experience as a patient or service-user. (Section 1, which should take about five minutes to complete in addition to reading the document.)

If you are a GOC Registrant, a student or an employer of GOC Registrants, you may only be interested in reading our proposed 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and answering questions about our proposals as a whole. (Section 2, which should take about 10 minutes to complete in addition to reading the documents.)

If you are an academic, a researcher or a supervisor, or you are responding on behalf of an provider of a GOC approved qualification, a professional membership or third sector body, or another organisation or regulator, we suggest you read our proposed 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' as well as our proposed 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' and answer our Technical Questionnaire, in addition to answering questions about our proposals as a whole. (Section 3, which will take about 30 minutes to complete in addition to reading the documents.)

We recognise our proposals are detailed, with a range of impacts on different stakeholder groups, so if you wish to answer all the questions in each section of the questionnaire, please do so.

Towards the end there are some questions for everyone to answer about the impact of our proposals. (Section 4, which will take about five minutes to complete.)

Consultation data will be securely shared with our research partner for this work, **Enventure Research** <<https://www.entrventure.co.uk/>> , for independent analysis and reporting. We will be receiving data on a regular basis and will adjust our approach to engagement with the sector as guided by Enventure Research.

Privacy Statement

The information you provide to us, the GOC (as data controller), will be processed and used in line with our statutory purpose under the Opticians Act as a public task in order to set standards for

optical education and training, performance and conduct. For more information regarding how we process your data please see the full privacy statement on our website.

Right to Erasure

Article 17 of the General Data Protection Regulations provides data with the right to erasure; this is known as the right to be forgotten. Right to erasure requests should be sent to the Data Protection Officer (FOI@optical.org) and will be responded to within one calendar month of receipt.

Data Controller

We are registered as a data controller with the Information Commissioner's Office, registration number Z5718812. We are committed to maintaining robust information governance policies and processes to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Any information you supply will be stored and processed by us or on our behalf, by approved and verified third parties, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

Introduction

It is helpful for us to know a little bit about you. If you do not wish to provide your name and email address you can leave Q1 and Q2 blank.

1 What is your name?

Name

2 What is your email address?

If you would like to receive further updates about our proposals please provide your email address.

Email

About you

In order to ensure we ask you the right questions, we would like to know a little more about you.

1 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No

About your organisation

1 On behalf of which organisation are you responding?

Please answer (Required)

2 Which of the following categories best describes your organisation?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Provider of GOC approved qualification(s) Optical professional body
 Optical business registrant Other optical employer
 Current CET or CPD provider Optical defence/representative body
 Optical insurer Commissioner of optical care Healthcare regulator
 Other (please specify)

If you selected 'other', please specify

About you (continued)

1 Knowing who you are helps us to ask you the right questions. Which category best describes you?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Member of the public Patient/ service user (or their carer) Optical patient
 Optometrist Dispensing optician Optometry student
 Dispensing student Other (please specify)

If you selected 'other', please specify

Section One

Public, patient or service user

If you are a member of the public, a patient or service user, or a carer, you may only be interested in reading our proposed '**Outcomes for Registration**' <user_uploads/esr-consultation-outcomes-for-registration-4.pdf> and answering a few questions focused on your experience as a patient or service-user. This section will take around five minutes to complete in addition to reading the document. However, if you wish to answer all the questions, including our Technical Questionnaire, please do so. Please also remember that we are asking all respondents to complete section 4 as well.

1 Have you read the 'Outcomes for Registration,' before answering these questions?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No

2 Is there anything in the criteria in the 'Outcomes for Registration' that is missing or should be changed?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No Don't know

Please explain your response

3 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the education and training of future optometrists and dispensing opticians?

Please answer

Section One: Information for Respondents

Thank you for responding to Section 1 of this consultation. Your response will help to inform our proposals on the education and training requirements for GOC approved qualifications.

1 Would you like to continue to Section 2 of this survey and answer questions about our proposed 'Standards for Approved Qualifications'?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No - Go to Section 4 (Impact of our proposals)

Section Two

Section 2 will take around 10 minutes to complete, after you have read the relevant documents **Outcomes for Registration** <user_uploads/esr-consultation-outcomes-for-registration-5.pdf> , and **Standards for Approved Qualifications** <user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-8.pdf> .

Respondents please note

GOC Registrant, Student Registrant or an employer of GOC Registrants

If you are a GOC Registrant, a student or an employer of GOC Registrants, you may only be interested in reading our proposed 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and answering questions about our proposals as a whole. However, if you wish to also answer our Technical Questionnaire, please do so in Section 3.

Academic, researcher or supervisor, provider of a GOC approved qualification, professional membership or third sector body or other organisation or regulator

If you are an academic, a researcher or supervisor, a provider of a GOC approved qualification, a professional membership or third sector body or other organisation or regulator, in addition to answering questions about our proposals as a whole in Section 2, we suggest you answer our Technical Questionnaire in Section 3.

1 Have you read the 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' before answering these questions?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No

2 What impact, if any, will introducing the proposed 'Outcomes for Registration' have on the expected knowledge, skill and behaviour of future optometrists?

Please select only one item

Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

3 What impact, if any, will introducing the proposed 'Outcomes for Registration' have on the expected knowledge, skill and behaviour of future dispensing opticians?

Please select only one item

Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

4 Is there anything in the criteria in the 'Outcomes for Registration' that is missing or should be changed?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No Don't Know

If you ticked 'yes' please tell us what you think is missing or should be changed.

5 What impact, if any, will introducing the proposed 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' have on the expected knowledge, skill and behaviour of future optometrists and dispensing opticians?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

6 Is there anything in the 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' that is missing or should be changed?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No Don't know

If you ticked 'yes' please tell us what you think is missing or should be changed.

7 The 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' include a proposal to integrate what is currently known as pre-registration training within the approved qualification (which must be either a regulated qualification (by Qfqual or equivalent or an academic award listed on one of the national frameworks for higher education qualifications for UK degree-awarding bodies). What do you think the impact of this proposal will be on the expected knowledge, skill and behaviour of future optometrists and dispensing opticians?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers of integrating what is currently known as pre-registration training within the approved qualification for future optometrists and dispensing opticians could create.

Section Two: Information for Respondents

Thank you for responding to Section 2 of this consultation. Your response will help to inform our proposals on the education and training requirements for GOC approved qualifications.

If you are an academic, a researcher or a supervisor, or you are responding on behalf of an provider of a GOC approved qualification, a professional membership or third sector body, or another organisation or regulator, we suggest you answer our Technical Questionnaire in Section 3.

Please note: Section 3 will take around 30 minutes to complete, in addition to reading the relevant documents.

1 Would you like to continue to Section 3 of this consultation and answer technical questions about our proposals?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No - Go to Section 4 (Impact of our proposals)

Section Three: Part A - Replacing Quality Assurance Handbooks

Technical Questionnaire

We suggest you read our proposed '**Outcomes for Registration**' <user_uploads/esr-consultation-outcomes-for-registration-6.pdf> and '**Standards for Approved Qualifications**' <user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-9.pdf> as well as our proposed '**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method**' <user_uploads/esr-consultation-quality-assurance-and-enhancement-method-2.pdf> to answer our Technical Questionnaire below, (Section 3).

This section will take around 30 minutes to complete, not including reading the relevant documents.

1 Have you read the 'Outcomes for Registration,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' before answering these questions?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No

2 Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to replace our Quality Assurance Handbook for optometry and related policies with the proposed 'Outcomes for Registration,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method?'

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree
 Strongly disagree Don't know

Please explain your response

3 Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to replace our Quality Assurance Handbook for dispensing optician qualifications and related policies with the proposed 'Outcomes for Registration,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method?'

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree
 Strongly disagree Don't know

Please explain your response

Section Three: Part B - Standard 1

Now we would like to ask you some questions about each **Standard for Approved Qualifications** [<user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-10.pdf>](user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-10.pdf) . There are five Standards in total.

Standard 1 - Public and Patient Safety.

Standard 1 states, 'Approved qualifications must be delivered in a context which ensures public and patient safety' and includes four criteria which must be met if qualification is to be approved by us.' We want to ask you some questions about criteria S1.1, S1.2 and S1.4, and about the standard as a whole.

1 Please consider criterion S1.1 'There must be policies and systems in place to ensure students understand and adhere to GOC's Standards for Optical Students and Standards of Practice.' Do you agree or disagree that both the GOC's Standards for Optical Students and Standards of Practice should be included in this criterion?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Agree – it should be both the GOC's Standards for Optical Students and Standards of Practice
- Disagree – it should be the GOC's Standards for Optical Students only
- Don't know/ Not sure

2 Please consider S1.2 – ‘Concerns about a student’s fitness to train must be investigated and where necessary, action taken and reported to GOC. (The GOC acceptance criteria and related guidance in Annex A should be used as a guide as to when a fitness to train matter should be reported to GOC.)’ What impact, if any, will this criteria and the guidance in Annex A have on student’s continuing fitness to train?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact
- Positive impact
- No impact
- Negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers of using the GOC acceptance criteria and related guidance in Annex A to the standards as a guide as to when a fitness to train matter should be reported to GOC could create.

3 The GOC is unique amongst healthcare regulators in registering students, and whilst we may consult on whether we should continue to register students at a later date, we anticipate continuing to register students for the time being. Please consider criterion S1.4 'Students on admission and at regular intervals thereafter must be informed it is an offence not to be registered as a student with the GOC at all times whilst studying on a programme leading to an approved qualification in optometry or dispensing optician.' What impact, if any, will this criterion have upon providers and their students studying approved qualifications for optometry and dispensing opticians?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers this criterion could create for providers of approved qualifications and their students.

4 Looking at the proposed standard 1 and supporting criteria, are our expectations clear and proportionate in your/your organisation's view?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes No Don't know

Section Three: Part C - Standard 2

Standard 2 – Admission of Students

Standard 2 <user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-11.pdf> states, 'Recruitment, selection and admission of students must be transparent, fair and appropriate for admission to a programme leading to registration as an optometrist or dispensing optician.' We want to ask you some questions about criterion S2.1 and about the standard as a whole.

Please consider S2.1 – 'Selection and admission criteria must be appropriate for entry to an approved qualification leading to registration as an optometrist or dispensing optician, including relevant health, character and fitness to train checks, and for overseas students, evidence of proficiency in the English language of at least Level 7 overall (with no individual section lower than 6.5) on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) scale or equivalent.'

- 1 Our research has shown that all UK healthcare regulators have a English language requirement for overseas students applying to for admission to programmes in the UK that they approve. What potential improvements or barriers, if any, might this criterion create for providers of approved qualifications and their students?

Please answer

- 2 Looking at the proposed Standard 2 and supporting criteria, are our expectations clear and proportionate in your/your organisation's view?
(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes No Don't know

Section Three: Part D(i) - Standard 3

Standard 3 – Assessment of Outcomes and Curriculum Design

Standard 3 <user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-12.pdf> states, 'The approved qualification must be supported by an integrated curriculum and assessment strategy that ensures students who are awarded the approved qualification meet all the **outcomes** <user_uploads/esr-consultation-outcomes-for-registration-7.pdf> at the required level (Miller's triangle; knows, knows how, show how & does).'

We want to ask you some questions about criterion S3.11 and S3.18 and about the standard as a whole.

Please consider criterion S3.11 – 'The approved qualification must be listed on one of the national frameworks for higher education qualifications for UK degree-awarding bodies (The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland), or a qualification regulated by Qfqual, SQA or Qualifications Wales.' This is a new requirement that is not currently included in our Quality Assurance Handbooks.

- 1 We think it's important that we specify that the qualifications we approve must either be a regulated qualification or an academic award listed on one of the national frameworks for higher education qualifications to ensure that approved qualifications sit within an external quality controlled and regulated academic framework. What impact, if any, will this criterion have for providers of approved qualifications and their students?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers this criterion could create for providers of approved qualifications and their students.

2 Please consider criterion S3.18 – ‘Equality and diversity data and its analysis must inform curriculum design, delivery and assessment of the approved qualification. This analysis must include students’ progression by protected characteristic. In addition, the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion must be embedded in curriculum design and assessment and used to enhance student’s experience of studying on a programme leading to an approved qualification.’ This is a new requirement not currently included in our Quality Assurance Handbooks and builds on the intention explored in previous consultations for a greater emphasis on evidencing a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion by providers of approved qualifications. What impact, if any, will this criterion have upon providers of approved qualifications and their students?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers this criterion could create for providers of approved qualifications and their students.

Section Three: Part D(ii) - Standard 3

Standard 3 describes our expectations around assessment strategy, choice and design of assessment items, standard setting and quality control, and includes the ‘common assessment framework.’ **Standard 3** [<user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-13.pdf>](#) includes several new requirements not currently included in our Quality Assurance Handbooks.

- approved qualifications must have a clear assessment strategy for the award of an approved qualification (criterion S3.1) This strategy must describe how the **outcomes** [<user_uploads/esr-consultation-outcomes-for-registration-8.pdf>](#) will be assessed, how assessment will measure student’s achievement of outcomes at the required level (Miller’s triangle) and how this leads to an award of an approved qualification.
- an approved qualification must be taught and assessed in a progressive and integrated manner so that the component parts, including academic study and clinical experience and professional experience are linked into a cohesive programme of (using Harden’s model of a spiral curriculum), introducing, progressing and assessing knowledge, skills and behaviour until the outcomes are achieved. (criterion S3.2)
- curriculum design, delivery and the assessment of outcomes must involve and be informed by feedback from a range of stakeholders such as patients, employers, placement providers, members of the optometry team and other healthcare professionals (criterion S3.4).
- the outcomes must be assessed using a range of methods and all final, summative assessments must be passed. This means that compensation, trailing and extended re-sit opportunities within and between modules where outcomes are assessed is not generally permitted (criterion S3.5)
- all assessment (including lowest pass) criteria must be explicit including an appropriate and tested standard-setting process and at the level necessary for safe and effective practice (criterion S3.7)

Standard 3 is supported by requirements around quality control of assessments included in the next standard, standard 4. The remaining criteria within standard 3 specify matters to do with the validity and reliability of assessments, reasonable adjustments, recording student’s achievement of the outcomes and a requirement for regular and timely feedback to students on their performance.

1 Please consider the criteria which support standard 3. What impact, if any, will they have upon the measurement of student's achievement of the outcomes leading to the award of the approved qualification on providers of approved qualifications and their students?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers the criteria in Standard 3 could create for providers of approved qualifications and their students.

Section Three: Part E - Standard 4

Standard 4 – Management, Monitoring and Review of Approved Qualifications.

Standard 4 <user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-14.pdf> states, 'Approved qualifications must be managed, monitored, reviewed and evaluated in a systematic and developmental way, through transparent processes which show who is responsible for what at each stage.' We want to ask you some questions about criterion S4.1, S4.2, S4.3, S4.4 and S4.5 and about the standard as a whole.

Standard 4 uses the term 'Single Point of Accountability (or SPA for short) to describe a provider of a GOC approved qualification. The criteria within standard 4 (criterion S4.1-S4.5) specifies that a SPA must be:

- legally incorporated (criterion S4.3)
- have the authority and capability to award the approved qualification (*which must be either a regulated qualification (by Qfqual, SQA or Qualifications Wales) or an academic award listed on one of the national frameworks for higher education qualifications for UK degree-awarding bodies*) (criterion S4.1)
- has a named contact who will be the primary contact for the GOC (criterion S4.5)

This is a significant enhancement upon our current Quality Assurance Handbook requirements. Our proposal is that providers of approved qualifications (SPAs) must be legally incorporated and hold the authority to award either a regulated qualification or an academic award listed on one of the national frameworks for higher education qualifications for UK degree-awarding bodies.

1 Please consider the criteria which support this standard. What impact, if any, will these criteria have for providers of approved qualifications and their students?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers the criteria in Standard 4 could create for providers of approved qualifications and their students.

Section Three: Part F - Standard 5

Standard 5 – Leadership, Resources and Capacity

Standard 5 <user_uploads/esr-consultation-standards-for-approved-qualifications-15.pdf> states, 'Leadership, resources and capacity must be sufficient to ensure the outcomes are delivered and assessed to meet these standards in an academic, professional and clinical context.' We want to ask you some questions about criterion S5.1, S5.2, S5.3, S5.4 and S5.5 and about the standard as a whole.

Please consider criterion S5.1, S5.2, S5.3, S5.4 and S5.5. We have specified a range of appropriately qualified and experienced people required to teach and assess the outcomes, including supervision. The Expert Advisory Groups, after very careful consideration, decided not to retain the highly specific numerical resourcing requirements contained within the current Quality Assurance Handbooks. Instead, the emphasis is on the provider of the approved qualification to evidence they have a sufficient and appropriate level of ongoing resource to deliver the outcomes to meet the standards, including human and physical resources that are fit for purpose, an appropriately qualified and experienced programme leader who is supported to succeed in their role; and an Staff to Student Ratio (SSR) which is benchmarked to comparable provision.

1 Please consider the criteria which support Standard 5. What impact, if any, will they have for providers of approved qualifications and their students?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer, thinking about what potential improvements or barriers the criteria in Standard 5 could create for providers of approved qualifications and their students.

Section Three: Part G(i) - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method

We would like to ask you some questions about our proposed **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method** <user_uploads/esr-consultation-quality-assurance-and-enhancement-method-3.pdf> .

What are we proposing to change?

Our current Quality Assurance Handbook for dispensing optician qualifications was published in 2011 and contains education policies and guidance for the quality assurance and approval of qualifications for dispensing optician qualifications. Our current Quality Assurance Handbook for optometry qualifications was published in 2015 and similarly, contains education policies and guidance for the quality assurance and approval of qualifications for optometry qualifications, albeit more up to date than those listed in the older Quality Assurance Handbook for dispensing optician qualifications.

Our proposal - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method

We propose to update our Quality Assurance Handbook policies and guidance for the quality assurance and approval of qualifications for dispensing opticians and optometrists with the proposed 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' (along with the 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications').

The proposed 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' describes how we propose to gather evidence to decide whether qualifications leading to registration as either a dispensing optician or an optometrist meet our 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications,' in accordance with the Opticians Act.

Together, we will use the proposed 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method,' along with the 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' to decide whether to approve a qualification leading to registration as a dispensing optician or an optometrist.

We propose to strengthen our current approval and quality assurance (A&QA) process (as described in our two Quality Assurance Handbooks) to support our outcomes-orientated approach. Our proposal moves away from seeking assurance that our requirements are met by measuring inputs to an emphasis on evidencing outcomes, establishing a framework for gathering and assessing evidence to inform a decision as to whether to approve a qualification. Our proposal sets out four methods of assurance and enhancement which together will provide evidence as to whether a qualification meets our outcomes and standards;

- Periodic review (of SPAs and approved qualifications)
- Annual return (of SPAs and approved qualifications)

- Thematic review (of standards).
- Sample-based review (of outcomes).

In addition, the framework describes our proposed multi-stage method for a risk-based consideration of applications for approval of new qualifications, as well as our process for managing serious concerns and the type and range of evidence we might consider to support this process.

1 What impact, if any, will the proposed quality assurance and enhancement framework of annual, thematic, sample-based and periodic reviews have for providers of approved qualifications and their students?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact Positive impact No impact Negative impact
 Very negative impact Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider what potential improvements or barriers the proposed quality assurance and enhancement framework could create?

Section Three: Part G(ii) - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method Timescale

We would like to ask you about the impact of the timescale outlined in the proposed [Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method](#) <user_uploads/esr-consultation-quality-assurance-and-enhancement-method-4.pdf> .

First, we are proposing that all new qualifications (that is, qualifications not currently approved or provisionally approved by us) applying for GOC approval at or after 1st March 2021 will be expected to meet the 'Outcomes for Registration' and 'Standards for Approved Qualifications.' This means that new qualifications applying to us for approval before 1st March 2021 must meet our current requirements as set out in our Quality Assurance Handbooks.

Second, for providers of currently approved qualifications we are proposing that the requirements contained in the current Quality Assurance Handbooks will apply to all existing GOC approved qualifications during the teach out or migration phase, although the expectation is that students on existing programmes should benefit from new teaching, assessment, interprofessional learning (IPL), work-based learning (WBL), experiential learning and placement opportunities if it is feasible to do so.

Third, we propose that providers of currently approved qualifications have three options to choose from;

- a. To 'teach out' existing programmes to a timescale approved by us, alongside developing, seeking approval for and recruiting to a 'new' approved qualification.
- b. Develop and seek approval to adapt an existing approved qualification to a timescale approved by us.
- c. Choose to 'teach out' existing programmes to a timescale approved by us and partner with another organisation or institution to develop, seek approval for and recruit to a 'new' approved qualification.

Fourth, we will work with each provider of existing GOC approved qualifications to agree a timescale for the migration/ recruitment of students into new approved qualifications and when recruitment of new students to currently approved qualifications for dispensing opticians or optometry will cease. The aim is that providers of 'new' or 'adapted' approved qualifications will choose from which academic year they might begin recruiting students, from the 2022/23 academic year onwards.

1 What impact, if any, could the proposed timescale have on the ability of providers to develop, seek approval for and recruit to a 'new' or 'adapted' approved qualification that meets the outcomes & standards in your/your organisation's view?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact
 Positive impact
 No impact
 Negative impact
 Very negative impact
 Don't know

Please explain your answer. Please consider, thinking about what potential improvements or barriers the proposed timescale have for providers in developing, seeking approval for and recruiting to a 'new' or 'adapted' approved qualification could create?

Section Four: Impact of our proposals

We would like to ask everyone the following questions on **impact of our proposals**

user_uploads/impact-assessment.pdf .

1 We want to understand whether our proposals may discriminate against or unintentionally disadvantage any individuals or groups sharing any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Do you think our proposals will have a negative impact on certain individuals or groups who share any of the protected characteristics listed below? (Please select all that apply)

(Required)

Please select all that apply

- Age
 Disability
 Gender reassignment
 Marriage and civil partnership
 Pregnancy and maternity
 Race
 Religion or belief
 Sex
 Sexual orientation
 None of the above
 Don't know

2 We also want to understand whether our proposals may benefit any individuals or groups sharing any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Do you think our proposals will have a positive impact on any individuals or groups who share any of the protected characteristics listed below? (Please tick all that apply)

(Required)

Please select all that apply

- Age
 Disability
 Gender reassignment
 Marriage and civil partnership
 Pregnancy and maternity
 Race
 Religion or belief
 Sex
 Sexual orientation
 None of the above
 Don't know

3 Please describe the impact on the individuals or groups that you have ticked in questions 1 & 2.

Please answer

4 Do you think any of the proposed changes will impact – positively or negatively – on any other individuals or groups? For example, students, patients and the public, current providers of approved qualifications, placement providers, employers and devolved nations?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Very positive impact
 Positive impact
 No impact
 Negative impact
 Very negative impact
 Don't know

5 Please describe the impact and the individuals or groups concerned. We are particularly keen to understand further any financial or other impacts we haven't considered in our accompanying impact assessment.

Please answer

Further information

1 Can we publish your response?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Yes Yes, but please keep my name / my organisation's name private No

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We welcome consultation responses from everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

We don't want anybody to miss out or be disadvantaged because of the way we work and we try hard to make sure this doesn't happen. The following questions help us to understand who we are reaching with our surveys, so that we can make sure that everybody has the opportunity to get involved.

You do not have to answer these questions (just click 'Prefer not to say'), but we would be grateful if you did. Your answers to these questions will be treated as confidential and held securely in line with data protection requirements. They will not be considered or published alongside your name or anything else that might identify you.

For more information about how we use information like this across the General Optical Council, please visit the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section of our website** <https://www.optical.org/en/about_us/equality-and-diversity.cfm> .

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please do not respond to these questions.

1 Gender

Please select only one item

Male Female Other Prefer not to say

2 Age

Please select only one item

16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+
 Prefer not to say

3 Sexual orientation

Please select only one item

Bisexual Heterosexual/straight Gay/Lesbian/Homosexual Other
 Prefer not to say

4 The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Please select only one item

Yes No Prefer not to say

5 My gender identity is different from the gender I was assigned at birth.

Please select only one item

Yes No Prefer not to say

6 Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?

Please select only one item

Yes No Prefer not to say

7 Ethnicity

Please select only one item

- White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British White - Irish
- White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller White - other (please specify)
- White and Asian White and Black Caribbean White and Black African
- Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background (please specify) Indian/Indian British
- Pakistani/Pakistani British Bangladeshi/Bangladeshi British
- Chinese/Chinese British Any other Asian background (please specify)
- African/African British Caribbean/Caribbean British
- Any other Black background (please specify) Arab/Arab British
- Any other ethnic group (please specify) Prefer not to say

If you have selected 'other', please specify

8 Marital status

Please select only one item

- Civil partnership Divorced/legally dissolved Married Partner
- Separated Widowed Single Not stated Prefer not to say

9 Do you perform the role of a carer?

Please select only one item

Yes No Prefer not to say

10 Religion/belief

Please select only one item

No religion Buddhist Christian Hindu Jewish Muslim
 Sikh Any other religion/belief (please specify) Prefer not to say

If you have selected 'other', please specify