

Hearing Panel: Candidate Information Pack

Vacancies for ten dispensing optician or contact lens
optician Hearing Panel members

Ref: GOC01/23

May 2023

This information pack is available in alternative
formats (for example large print).

Please submit your request to the governance
team (appointment@optical.org)

Introduction

1.	Welcome letter	3
2.	Contents	4
3.	Timeline	4
4.	About the GOC and Council.....	5
5.	Appointment information and expectations	8
6.	Person specification	11
7.	How to apply	12
8.	Appointment process.....	13
9.	Equal Opportunities and accessibility.....	15
10.	Questions and feedback.....	16



Welcome letter

Thank you for expressing your interest in becoming a member of our Hearings Panel.



We are seeking ten experienced dispensing or contact lens opticians to join our Hearings Panel. The GOC's Hearings panel has over 40 members made up of optometrists, dispensing or contact lens opticians and lay (non-registrant) members. Hearing Panel members play an important role, helping us to maintain the public's confidence in the two professions we regulate.

Most of the work undertaken by our Hearings Panel members is in relation to fitness to practise (FtP). Hearings Panel members serve on two committees, our Fitness to Practise Committee and our Registration

Appeals Committee, both of which are described in more detail below.

This is a unique opportunity to share your skills and experience while learning from others, as well as use your professional skills to help us protect the public. In addition, we are committed to supporting personal and professional development in the role, and offer a comprehensive annual induction and training programme.

Members of the Hearing Panel sit in two capacities:

- as members of the Fitness to Practise (FTP) Committee which considers whether a registrant's fitness to practise is impaired and impose sanctions if appropriate to do so; and
- as members of the Registration Appeals Committee which considers appeals against any decision of the Registrar refusing to enter the name of an individual or body corporate in, or to restore it to, the appropriate register.

Our mission is to protect the public by upholding high standards in the optical professions and our Hearings Panel is at the centre of helping us to achieve that. We are on the look-out for talented and passionate people and we welcome and encourage applications from people of all backgrounds.

If you have any questions about the role, please email appointment@optical.org for further information, quoting reference **GOC01/23**. We will aim respond to your query within 48 hours.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Wright".

Dr Anne Wright CBE, Council Chair

Timeline

Key dates for this appointment are as follows:

Application Deadline

Sunday 18 June 2023 (midnight)

Interviews

Week commencing 24 July 2023

Appointment Start Date

Friday 1 September 2023

Induction*

Week Commencing Monday 4 September 2023

*Subject to all of the appointment processes having been completed beforehand, the successful candidates will be expected to attend scheduled inductions.

Key contact: appointment@optical.org

About the GOC

Background

We are one of 13 organisations in the UK known as health and social care regulators. These organisations oversee the health and social care professions by regulating individual professionals. We are the regulator for the optical profession in the UK. We currently register around 30,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

We have four core functions:

Setting standards for optical education and training, performance, and conduct

Approving qualifications leading to registration

Maintaining a register of those who are qualified and fit to practise, to train or carry on business as optometrists and dispensing opticians

Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, to train or carry on business is impaired

Legislation

Our primary legislation is the Opticians Act 1989 (as amended) and we also have a series of related rules that describe how we carry out our statutory functions. This information can be found on our [website](#).

Our values

The interests of patients and the general public are at the heart of all we do, and we aspire to the seven (Nolan) public sector principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership).

Our values underpin the way we work with each other, and with the public, our registrants and partner organisations:

- We act with **integrity**
- We pursue **excellence**
- We **respect** other people and ideas
- We are **agile** and responsive to change
- We show **empathy**
- We behave **fairly**

Overview of the role of Hearings Panel member

The role of the Hearings Panel is to determine allegations relating to the fitness to practise of registered optometrists and dispensing opticians, the fitness of business registrants to carry on business as an optometrist or a dispensing optician or both; and the fitness of student registrants to undertake training as an optometrist or dispensing optician. Hearings Panels also determine whether it is necessary for interim measures (suspension or made subject to conditions) to be put in place whilst an investigation is in progress for the protection of members of the public, or is otherwise in the public interest, or in the interests of a registrant.

Hearings Panel members may also sit as part of the Registration Appeal Committee which is constituted for the purpose of hearing and determining appeals against any decision of the Registrar refusing to enter the name of an individual or body corporate in, or to restore it to, the appropriate Register.

Our Hearings Panel consists of registrant and lay members with different backgrounds, skills, knowledge and experience.

A full list of our current members can be found [here](#).

For more information about our Hearings functions please refer [here](#).

Appointment information and expectations

Remuneration and time commitment

Members are paid a daily fee of £319 (rate effective from 1 April 2022). This fee is taxable and subject to Class 1 National Insurance (NI) contributions. It is not pensionable. This is in line with our [member fees policy and schedule](#).

Members can claim expenses, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs incurred on Council business as set out in our [expenses policy](#).

This role is part time with a commitment of approximately 12-16 days per year, including time spent preparing for meetings. Hearings will usually take place via MS Teams but may on occasion be held at the GOC Offices at 10 Old Bailey, London EC4M 7NG or other suitable venues.

Appointment and tenure of office

The initial tenure will not exceed four years (any decision on reappointment will be subject to the needs of Council and a satisfactory member review, up to a combined maximum of ten years).

Member reviews

All Hearing Panel members are required to take part in our [member review process](#), which involves self-assessment and one to one meetings with a Hearings Panel Chair. A satisfactory review will normally be required for Hearing Panel members to continue to hold office.

Training and development

Potential candidates are welcome to observe a public Hearing if they wish. Details of how to do this can be found on our [website](#). Appropriate training and induction will be provided and tailored to the appointed candidate. Induction will take place prior to appointment where possible. All members are expected to undertake routine refresher training on key areas – such as information governance and equality, diversity and inclusion as a condition of appointment.

Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct including impartiality, integrity and objectivity in the execution of the role and its responsibilities.

To ensure that these values are maintained by those in public service, the successful candidate will be required to subscribe to our code of conduct on appointment.

You must also confirm that you understand the standards of probity required by public appointees outlined in the “Seven Principles of Public Life”. These principles are

included within our [Code of Conduct](#).

You should be aware that this post is a public appointment or statutory office, rather than a job and therefore is not subject to the provisions of employment law.

Disqualification

Appointments to healthcare professional regulatory bodies are governed by regulations which include details of the circumstances in which an individual may be disqualified from holding office.

The criteria for disqualification from appointment as a member Committee member are set out in Part 2 of [The General Optical Council \(Constitution\) Order 2009](#). Please read this carefully before you submit an application.

Management of interests

You should note your requirement to declare any interests you hold which relate to the advertised role. These are:

- Business or personal interests that might be relevant to our work, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest were you to be appointed, should be declared at the application stage.
- Any close personal relationships with any GOC employees, workers or Council, committee or Hearings Panel members. Any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the selection panel at shortlisting and interview stage. Candidates will be given an opportunity to propose how they would manage or eliminate the conflict.

It is possible that certain interests will not be manageable or might be dealt with as a condition of appointment (for example, a candidate needing to terminate their conflicting activity in order to take up the role).

We strongly recommend that you read our [Management of Interests policy](#), which can be found on our [website](#), and consider any interests that may conflict with the role before deciding to apply.

Examples of interests that will require the candidate to give up their interest prior to taking up appointment as a member of the GOC Hearing Panel

- member of Council or Investigation Committee;
- GOC Case Examiner;
- GOC employee;
- GOC Education Visitor Panel member; and
- independent members of the GOC Council and non-statutory committees.

On appointment you will be required to declare any interests you hold which could conflict or be perceived to conflict with your role as a registrant member. In order to be transparent, these interests will be published on our website.

If you wish to discuss an interest before submitting your application, please email appointment@optical.org or call the Governance team on 0207 307 9482.

Person Specification

Candidates will be required to provide examples of how their experience matches the essential criteria outlined below. Candidates who provide examples of how their experience matches the desirable criteria outlined below may be better positioned to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the appointment. For applicants who have a similar level of skills, knowledge and experience evidenced against the essential criteria, an assessment against the desirable criteria will be made in order to rank applications.

Essential criteria

E1. A qualified dispensing optician (DO) or contact lens optician (CLO) with current “hands on” experience of optical primary and/or secondary care; and/or significant involvement in other roles, for example DO or CLO education, manufacturing, delivery of CPD or in research

E2. Demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, dealing with people and issues honestly, fairly and with respect

E3. Ability to analyse and interpret complex information and evidence, demonstrating impartiality, intellectual flexibility and sound judgment;

E4. Ability to listen, communicate and influence effectively, articulating clear reasoning and showing regard to the views and advice of others to support collective decision making

Desirable criteria

D1. Understanding of professional regulation, the legislative regulatory framework and its impact on public protection

D2. Demonstrable commitment to accountability – taking personal responsibility and holding others to account

D3. Handling and managing complex complaints

We are committed to ensuring that in exercising all of our functions we operate in a fair and transparent manner and in a way that is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Within all of our functions, we are committed to promoting equality; valuing diversity; being inclusive; and meeting our equality duties.

We will not discriminate on age; disability; gender reassignment; race/ethnicity; religion or belief; gender; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership; and pregnancy, maternity and geographical locations outside of London.

How to apply

Your application

Please apply with the following:

- your CV outlining your employment history, any relevant voluntary work, public service or other experience; together with any relevant professional, academic or vocational qualifications;
- the application form, stating how your experience matches the essential and desirable criteria for the vacancy you are applying for; and
- an EDI monitoring form

Equality monitoring

We would welcome applications from individuals who are disabled and from diverse ethnic backgrounds as these are currently under-represented on our council and committees.

When submitting your application, you will also be asked to complete equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) monitoring information. This is to ensure all candidates are treated fairly, through our process. The form can be accessed [here](#).

Please note the information you submit will be treated in the strictest confidence and used for monitoring purposes only. This will be separated from your application and will not be seen by anyone directly involved in the selection process.

Deadline

Please complete your application by **midnight on Sunday 18 June 2023**.

If you have any questions, please email them to appointment@optical.org and we will aim to respond to you within 48 hours. You may also contact us by telephone 0207 307 9482.

Appointments process

For more information on our appointments process, read our [Member Appointments Guidance](#).

We will process your application as quickly as possible and keep you informed at key stages. **Please read the information below carefully, which outlines important information and our process once we receive your application:**

- We will acknowledge receipt of your CV, application form and EDI form (by email) and check it for completeness and eligibility.
- Due diligence checks (including Fitness to Practise status, google/LinkedIn/Facebook searches, director/trustee checks) and references will be carried out for candidates invited to interview.
- This will be followed by an interview with an appointments panel. The appointments panel for these appointments will be comprised of:
 - Mike Galvin (Lay Council Member)
 - Catherine Kimpton (DO Hearings Panel member)
 - Nick Yeo (Independent Member)
- The appointments panel will rely only on the information you provide in your CV and application form whether you have demonstrated that you meet selection criteria, as set out in the person specification.
- Where 30 or more applications are received for a role, applications will be “pre-assessed” before being forwarded to the full appointments panel for consideration. In this event, you should be aware that your application might not be considered in full by all appointment panel members.
- Candidates shortlisted for interview will be notified in the week commencing **17 July 2023**.
- If you have **not** heard from us by this date, please assume you have not been invited to interview. This will be confirmed to you via email at a later date. Please note that individual feedback will only be available to candidates who attend interview (but are not appointed).
- Interviews will take place remotely via Microsoft Teams in the week commencing **24 July 2023**.
- Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the published dates, the selection panel *may* consider a new date, but at their discretion and in light of those interviewed first time.

- If invited to interview, the selection panel will question you about your experience and expertise and ask specific questions to find whether you meet the selection criteria.
- Written references from two referees and other due diligence checks (including google/LinkedIn/Facebook searches, director/trustee checks) for the candidates invited to interview will be undertaken before interview. Please ensure that your referees are aware and will be able to respond when contacted.
- All candidates who have been interviewed will be notified of the outcome once the final decision has been made which we expect to be by the week commencing **14 August 2023**.
- On appointment, you will receive further information about training and induction.



Equal Opportunities and accessibility

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

We strive to be as diverse as the public we protect and welcome applications from everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity and geographical locations outside of London. We are committed to equality of opportunity for all, and appointments will be made solely on merit. We believe that for any organisation to be successful, it needs to work with the most talented and diverse people available. We positively encourage applications from people from all of the community, from all backgrounds and with a broad range of experience.

To ensure all candidates are treated fairly, we monitor diversity at all stages of the appointments process. The application process includes a monitoring section which is submitted online. Providing this information is optional, but we would be grateful for your co-operation.

Information provided will be treated as strictly confidential and will be used for monitoring purposes only. It will not be seen by anyone directly involved in the selection process and will not be treated as part of your application. No information will be published or used in any way which allows any individuals to be identified. Monitoring information gathered from application processes is published annually in our [monitoring report](#). Our approach to monitoring can be viewed on our [website](#).

Access requirements

We have a duty to promote equality of opportunity for people who have disabilities. One of the ways we are doing this is through identifying barriers to opportunity facing people with disabilities and making reasonable adjustments to remove them.

If you would like to discuss your requirements for reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process in more detail, please contact the Governance team on 0207 307 3934. If you would like more information on reasonable adjustments please read this link: <https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers>

Data Protection

Our data protection policy is published on our [website](#). We are required to retain information about the people who apply for public appointments, and make this available for audit purposes, if requested to do so. Our retention policy in relation to the information we collect in respect of public appointments is that we keep the following information for one year for unsuccessful candidates and six years for successful candidate and then it is destroyed:

- initial contact details, including your name and address;
- application form and any supporting documentation; and
- monitoring information.

Some of the information requested on the application form will be made public if you are appointed (e.g. your name, brief career/background history, other public appointments held, any other information that it is in the public interest to disclose). Moreover, we may be required to release information, including personal data, on request under the UK Data Protection Act 2018. However, we will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality, and where possible will look to gain consent from the individual. Nor will we act in contravention of our obligations under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Questions and feedback

We aim to process all applications as quickly as possible. However, if you have a complaint about the process used in this recruitment campaign, please refer to our [Corporate Complaints and feedback Procedure](#) which provides guidance on what can and cannot be considered and how to raise concerns. In the first instance, you should raise your concern/complaint informally within 72 hours of the action you are complaining about.

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Email: goc@optical.org

Twitter: [@GOC_UK](https://twitter.com/GOC_UK)

The GOC is a charity registered in England and Wales (1150137)