

Candidate Information Pack

Appointments to Council:

Two vacancies:

One lay member

One registrant member (Dispensing Optician)

Ref: GOC02/22

September 2022

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

Please submit your request to the Governance Team (appointment@optical.org)

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Welcome Letter



Thank you for expressing your interest in becoming a Council member. At its core, the role of Council member is to lead on the GOC's mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the public and patients; as well as maintain confidence in the profession.

We are seeking to appoint one lay member to the GOC Council with expertise in audit, risk and finance and one registrant member, who will be a dispensing optician.

The role of Council is to lead on the GOC's mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the public and patients, as well as maintaining public confidence in the professions. Successful candidates will contribute to Council by, exercising oversight, ensuring effective corporate governance, and making high-level policy decisions. They will be able to operate strategically and impartially, listen, communicate, and influence effectively, exercise judgment, and inspire confidence and support amongst our stakeholders.

Who are we looking for? Critical thinkers able to express their point of view and can provide objective advice. Although your professional knowledge of the work of our registrants may be one of the things that you will bring to the Council, it's not the be all and end all. All Council members, be they registrant or lay, are equivalent to non-executive directors: they share equal responsibility for all aspects of the Council's work and each is expected to contribute to all strategic decisions.

Being a Council member gives you the opportunity to share your particular skills and experience while learning from others too. We are committed to supporting personal and professional development in the role.

If you welcome the challenge of helping to shape optical regulation at this time, we will be delighted to hear from you. Please email appointment@optical.org for further information and we will aim respond to your query within 48 hours. Please quote reference **GOC02/22** on all correspondence.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Wright". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr Anne Wright CBE, Council Chair
September 2022

Timeline

Key dates for this appointment are as follows:

Application Deadline

Sunday 2 October 2022 (midnight)

Interviews

First stage – week commencing Monday 31 October 2022

Second stage – Monday 7 & Thursday 10 November 2022

Appointment Start Date

From Sunday 1 January 2023

Induction*

Week Commencing Monday 9 January 2023

*Subject to all the appointment processes having been completed beforehand, the successful candidates will be expected to attend schedule 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 timeless 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 Council

We are governed by a Council which sets the GOC's strategic direction. The Council is composed of six lay members (including the Chair) and six registrant members (i.e., optometrists and dispensing opticians). At least one member of the Council must work wholly or mainly in each of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. One Council member acts as a Senior Council Member whose role is to carry out the Chair's appraisal as well as provide a sounding board for the Chair and serve as an intermediary for Council members, Executive and stakeholders as necessary.

The Council meets in public and private a minimum of four times a year (March, June, September and December). In the interest of transparency, the Council conducts the majority of its business in public. Certain issues are reserved for private discussion, including those where there are certain commercial/financial sensitivities or issues that touch upon specific individuals. The Council also meets to evaluate the performance of itself, to consider strategy and to engage in member development.

Members share corporate responsibility for

- Providing strategic direction and making policy and strategic decisions in the interests of public protection;
- Ensuring the Council's statutory functions are delivered effectively and efficiently by holding the Executive to account, monitoring performance and ensuring equality of opportunity, accountability, openness and transparency;
- Delegating authority to the Chief Executive and Registrar, Executive and committees of the Council where appropriate;
- Agreeing policy on important issues relevant to the Council, including standards of education, conduct and performance;
- Ensuring compliance with relevant legislation;
- Setting registration fees;
- Accounting for its performance to Parliament, the Charity Commission and the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and publishing an annual report;
- Appointing members and the Chief Executive and Registrar;
- Exercising oversight of the Council's activity through financial stewardship;
- Ensuring effective communication with the public, registrants, professional bodies, government, and other interested parties;
- Promoting public confidence in regulation and enhancing the Council's reputation;
- Managing the charity's resources responsibly; and
- Acting in the charity's best interests.

Appointment Information and Expectation

Remuneration and Time Commitment

An annual fee of £13,962 is paid monthly. This is in line with our [member fees policy](#). This is taxable and subject to Class 1 National Insurance (NI) contributions. It is not pensionable.

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 two to three days per month, including time spent preparing for meetings. Meetings will usually take place via MS Teams. We are moving to hybrid meetings in future, and we may on occasion hold meetings at the GOC offices, 10 Old Bailey, London EC4M 7NG or other suitable venues.

The Council currently meets in public and private a minimum of four times a year. Dates for Council meetings in 2022/2023 (as well as previous agendas and papers) can be found [on our website](#). Members also participate in seminars/workshops to discuss key areas of work, such as strategy and performance.

Members might be asked to become a member of one or more of Council's committees and/or a Council lead for a strategic issue or project, as identified in our strategic and business plans.

No additional remuneration is payable for attendance at training, development or induction.

Appointment and Tenure of Office

Council members are appointed by the Privy Council, based on a recommendation of the GOC. The GOC administers the recruitment process, and the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) oversees it to ensure it is fair, transparent and open. You can read more about the role of the PSA [here](#).

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 eight years).

This role is a public appointment / statutory office, rather than a job, and is therefore not subject to the provisions of employment law.

Lay member

Applicants for lay member of Council is only open to lay individuals who are not registered with the GOC as an Optometrist or Dispensing Optician.

Registrant members (Dispensing Optician only)

Applicants for the registrant member of Council must be a Dispensing Optician or Contact Lens Optician.

Member Reviews

All Council members are required to take part in our [member review process](#), which involves self-assessment and one to one meetings with the Chair of Council and third-party feedback on completion of a specified term of office. A satisfactory review will normally be required for Council members to continue to hold office.

Training and Development

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 Council member are set out in Part 2 of [The General Optical Council \(Constitution\) Order 2009](#). Please read this carefully before you submit an application.

Due to our statutory requirements, lay roles are only open to lay individuals who are not registered with the GOC as an Optometrist or Dispensing Optician.

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](#), 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 Council member include:

- Member of the GOC Hearings Panel or Investigation Committee;
- GOC Case Examiner;
- GOC employee;
- GOC Education Visitor Panel member; and
- Independent members of the GOC non-statutory advisory committees: Audit and Risk; Nominations and Remuneration.

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 lay independent 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 3934.

Person Specification

Candidates will be required to provide in their application examples of how their experience matches the essential criteria outlined below. Candidates who additionally provide examples of how their experience matches the desirable criteria outlined below may be better positioned to demonstrate that they meet the challenges 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. An active interest in ensuring public safety of optical services in the UK.
- E2. Ability to listen, communicate and influence effectively, articulating clear reasoning and showing regard to the views and advice of others
- E3. Ability to analyse and interpret substantial volumes of complex documentation and evidence, demonstrating impartiality and intellectual flexibility
- E4. Ability to participate in discussions and decision making actively and constructively, using evidence and exercising sound judgment in formulating advice, making recommendations and building consensus to support collective decision making
- E5. Commitment to equality and diversity and inclusion; aware of how individual and corporate actions contribute to and make a difference to the equality agenda.
- E6. Understanding of corporate governance and corporate performance management

Registrant member only:

E7a. Registered dispensing optician with significant leadership and management experience in the delivery of services in optical primary and/or secondary care and/ or dispensing optician higher or further education and/or its quality assurance.

Lay member only:

E7b. Suitable financial qualification and membership of relevant professional body, eg. ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA with significant leadership and management experience in corporate strategic planning, financial management, risk management and audit, preferably in a regulated industry, charitable or professional body of comparable size and complexity

Desirable Criteria (Lay only)

- D1. Understanding of professional regulation and charity management and its impact on public protection

D2. Specialist expertise relating to the work of the GOC in in one or more of the following: corporate strategic planning; business performance and reporting; financial management; risk management and/or audit in a field such patient safety, patient advocacy, public involvement, higher or further education, fitness to practise, optical and/or NHS service delivery.

D3. Understanding of technology as a driver/facilitator of transformational change

Desirable Criteria (Registrant Only)

D4. An understanding of primary and/or secondary care services for patients in relation to any of the following: paediatrics; low vision; dementia; or learning difficulties.

D5. Significant experience as a contact lens optician, ideally in practice, hospital and/or higher education

D6. Specialist expertise in the leadership and management of GOC approved qualifications in dispensing optics or contact lens optician and/or its quality assurance

Desirable Criteria (Registrant and Lay)

D7. Works wholly or mainly in Northern Ireland.

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; pregnancy and maternity or geographical locations outside of London

How to Apply

Your Application

Please apply with your CV and a statement giving examples of how your experience matches the essential criteria (no more than 150 words per criteria) in the person specification for the vacancy you are applying for. The desirable criteria for each role will be explored further at interview.

Your CV should outline your employment history, any relevant voluntary work, public service or other experience; together with any relevant professional, academic or vocational qualifications.

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 [online](#).

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 2 October 2022**.

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 3934.

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, statement and EDI form (by email) and check it for completeness and eligibility.
- Due diligence checks (including google/LinkedIn/Facebook searches, director/trustee checks) and references will be taken up **before interview** for the candidates that are invited to interview.
- You will be offered the opportunity to talk to our out-going Senior Council member, Glenn Tomison (Registrant DO) **before interview**.
- There will be two stages to the recruitment campaign. In the first instance, you will be invited to meet on-line with Lisa Gerson (Registrant Council member) and Tim Parkinson, (Lay Council member) for an informal chat as part of the final process in the week commencing Monday 31 October 2022.
- This will be followed by an on-line interview with an appointments panel. The appointments panel will be comprised of:
 - Dr Anne Wright CBE (Chair)
 - Dr David Parkins (Registrant Council Member)
 - Clare Minchington (Lay Council member)
 - Ranjit Sondhi (Independent Member)
- The appointments panel will rely only on the information you provide in your CV and statement 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 Monday 24 October 2022.**
- 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 Monday 7 November 2022.
- 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 mid December 2022.
- 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

The GOC is committed to equality in the workplace. As a Disability Confident organisation, we are committed to play a leading role in changing attitudes for the better. We are changing behaviour and cultures in our own business, in our networks and our communities, and ensuring we have robust inclusive recruitment practices. This ensures the GOC draw from the widest possible pool of talent, secure high-quality staff who are skilled, loyal and hard working as well as improve employee morale and commitment by demonstrating that the GOC treat all employees fairly. This commitment extends to our recruitment activity for Council and committee members, and any application would be considered in line with our Disability Confident commitments.

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 [you can read more in the Government website](#).

Your Data

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 Concerns

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.

You can raise your concern by email (appointment@optical.org) or telephone (0207 307 3934).

If you have exhausted the internal complaints process and do not feel your concerns have been addressed, you are able to direct your complaint to the Privy Council

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