



Business Plan and Budget

April 2021 – March 2022



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Introduction

The General Optical Council (GOC) is the UK-wide regulator for optometrists and dispensing opticians, student optometrists and dispensing opticians, and optical businesses. We exist to protect the public by raising standards in the optical professions.

Our regulatory functions are:

- Setting the standards expected of optometrists, dispensing opticians, optical businesses, and students
- Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, to train, or continue business is impaired
- Maintaining a register of those who are qualified and fit to practise, to train, or continue business as optometrists and dispensing opticians
- Setting the standards for education and approving qualifications leading to registration



Foreword

Although there are some signs of normality returning, we continue to operate in unprecedented times for the optical professions. Responding to the COVID-19 emergency has been at the forefront of our work over the past 12 months and required agility with the delivery of some aspects of our strategy accelerated and others delayed.

We present this year's Business Plan in the knowledge that we will need to continue to adapt to regulatory issues brought about by the pandemic. That will continue to be a high priority, but we must also deliver our operational functions to fulfil our statutory obligations and in doing so, protect the public.

Council have reviewed our five-year strategic plan 'Fit for the Future' in light of COVID-19, and re-affirmed the broad direction of travel, so we set out here our work programme for the year ahead. It captures our operational priorities and strategic programmes of work in line with our vision of being recognised for delivering world-class regulation and excellent customer service.

We will begin implementation of our education reforms, following the Education Strategic Review, working closely with our education providers and other stakeholders. As we come toward the close of the final year of the final CET cycle, we will also be preparing for the implementation of a new CPD scheme from 2022.

Our recent success in reducing the fitness to practice (FTP) caseload has been driven by focussing on the right cases and dealing with those cases more appropriately. Over the course of the coming year, we expect that to translate into improved timescales enabling us to invest resource in activities that prevent things from going wrong in the first place. Our first FTP learning bulletin, which draws lessons from the cases we investigate, was widely welcomed and we will issue further bulletins during the year ahead.

We will also launch a new Communications Strategy underpinned by a modern and refreshed GOC website, alongside other exciting IT changes that will deliver enhanced services to our registrants.

Finally, we will continue to put GOC values, our public duty to progress equality, diversity, and inclusion, and our recently published commitment to become an anti-racist organisation at the heart of all we do.

I look forward to working with all our stakeholders to deliver this exciting programme of work for the year ahead.

Lesley Longstone, Chief Executive and Registrar

Our mission, vision, and values

Our mission, vision, and values

Our 'Fit for the future' strategy for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025 describes what we plan to do over the next five years to achieve our vision of being recognised for delivering world-class regulation and excellent customer service.

Our mission is...

to protect the public
by upholding high
standards in the
optical professions

Our vision is...

to be recognised for
delivering world-class
regulation and excellent
customer service

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 show **empathy**

We behave **fairly**

We are **agile** and responsive to change

Our strategy

Strategic objectives


Our priorities are organised under three overarching strategic objectives:



Delivering
world-class
regulatory practice



Transforming
customer service



Building a culture
of **continuous
improvement**

2021/22 year in view

This business plan sets out the milestones, outputs, and outcomes that we plan to deliver in 2021/22 in order to deliver our three strategic objectives. We plan to achieve a break-even position in relation to our business-as-usual, while investing some of our reserves on strategic projects.

Work programmes

Below we have outlined the key work programmes that will be undertaken and when they will occur.

Strategic Objective One – Delivering world-class regulatory practice		
Activity	Start	Finish
Publish and implement guidance on ‘speaking up’ for registrants	Apr–Jun 2021	Jan–Mar 2022
Develop and consult on new standards of practice for individuals	Apr–Jun 2021	Oct–Dec 2022
Implement outcomes, standards for education delivery and new quality assurance scheme	Oct–Dec 2020	Apr–Jun 2022
Review and implement any changes to non-UK registration scheme resulting from outcomes of Brexit negotiations and change to education scheme	Apr–Jun 2020	Oct–Dec 2021

2021/22 year in view

Publish and implement 'Outcomes for Registration,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method' for GOC approved qualifications and commission longitudinal research-measures	April 2021	2024/25 and beyond to 2030
Commission knowledge hub/ information exchange and indicative curricula to support providers and potential providers in their design of qualifications to meet our new education requirements	June 2022	2024/25
Advise providers and potential providers applying for GOC qualification approval and work with sector to manage key risks.	April 2021	2024/25 and beyond to 2030
Consider applications for new qualification approval and adaptation of existing approved qualifications	Jan-Mar 2022	2024/25 and beyond to 2030
Implement new CPD scheme	Jan-Mar 2021	Oct-Dec 2021
Launch new CPD scheme	Jan-Mar 2022	Oct-Dec 2024
Implement Government reforms to the governance of GOC	Apr-Jun 2020	Jan-Mar 2022
Implement Government reforms to the fitness to practise process	Apr-Jun 2020	Jan-Mar 2022
CPD scheme underpinning legislation	Apr-Jun 2020	Oct-Dec 2021
Implement GOC Refresh to support the delivery of the GOC's strategic objectives	Apr-June 2021	Jan-Mar 2025

2021/22 year in view

Strategic Objective Two – Transforming customer service		
Activity	Start	Finish
Review, development and launch of a new public website	Apr–Jun 2020	Apr-Jun 2021
Development and launch of new MyGOC website for registrants based on Microsoft 365	Jul–Sep 2020	Apr-Jun 2021
Publish FTP learning bulletins	Apr–Jun 2020	Jan–Mar 2022
Revised communications strategy	Jul–Sep 2020	Jan–Mar 2022
Develop and implement improved fitness to practise case management system	Apr–Jun 2020	Apr–Jun 2021
Review and implement new illegal practice strategy	Apr–Jun 2020	Jan–Mar 2022
Project to automate registration processes	Jan–Mar 2021	Jan–Mar 2022
Research into impact of GOC fitness to practise processes on different groups of registrants	Jan–Mar 2021	Jan–Mar 2022
Review, develop and implement new processes for presenting GOC fitness to practise cases (advocacy)	Jul–Sep 2020	Jul–Sep 2023
Improve recording, analysis and sharing of fitness to practise data	Apr–Jun 2020	Jan–Mar 2022

2021/22 year in view

Strategic Objective Three – Building a culture of continuous improvement		
Activity	Start	Finish
New secure portal to share information with external parties involved in fitness to practise, registration, and education processes as well as those members on Council and committees	Jan–Mar 2022	Jan–Mar 2025
Development of CRM to support regulatory functions	Apr–Jun 2021	Jan–Mar 2025
Archive management project to reduce historic paper records	Apr–Jun 2021	Jan–Mar 2022
Review of data collection on protected characteristics to better inform regulatory policy and impacts	Jan–Mar 2022	Jan–Mar 2024
Develop and roll-out of three-year management development programme	Apr–Jun 2021	Jan–Mar 2025
Review of internal banking and accounting procedures	Apr–Jun 2021	Jan–Mar 2024
Implement and progress year one of our EDI Plan	Apr–Jun 2021	Jan–Mar 2022

What will success look like?

We will measure our success through the following high-level outcomes

In aspiring to be world-class we should be rated highly by the Professional Standards Authority. We will aim to meet all their standards but will not let this get in the way of trying new and innovative approaches to regulation.

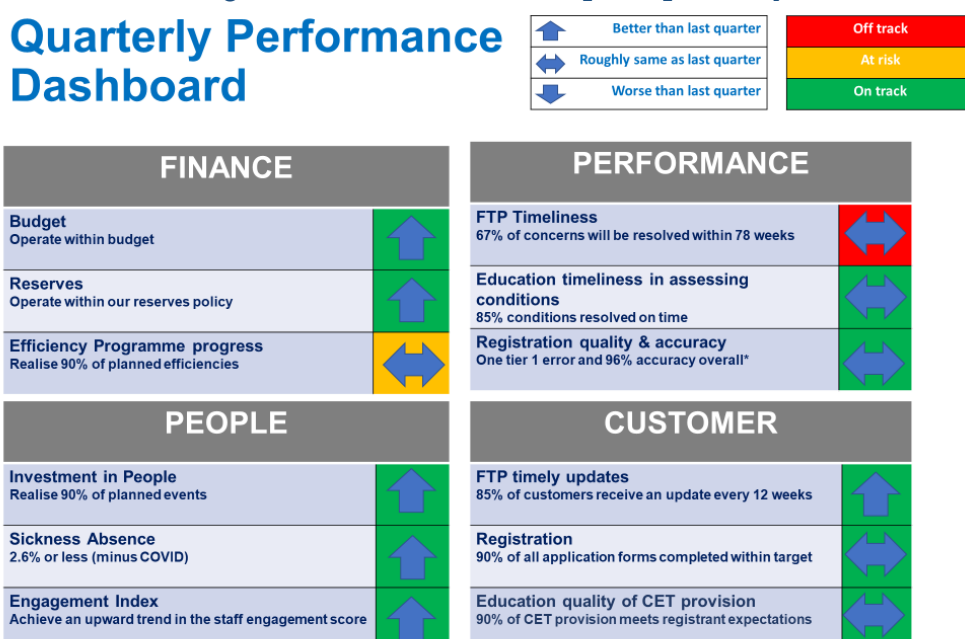
We should also retain the confidence of the optical professions and we will measure this through an annual registrant survey and regular stakeholder survey, looking, for example, at the extent to which we follow our values including behaving fairly, acting with integrity and pursuing excellence.

Public confidence in the professions we regulate is already strong and we expect this to be maintained if we are to uphold high standards. By protecting the public, we are also protecting the reputation of the optical professions. We have instigated an annual public perceptions survey and will continue this throughout the period of this plan.

We expect customer satisfaction with the GOC to increase if we deliver on our customer engagement strategy. We do not have a robust baseline and will prioritise the development of this in 2021/22, with an emphasis on patients, the public and registrants.

We will measure success on a business as usual basis quarterly at Senior Leadership Team level and Council level, providing success measure indicators, RAG rated progress reporting and an indication of changes which have occurred from the previous quarter

Council receive the following balanced scorecard report quarterly:



* Tier 1 errors are the most serious and are reserved for errors where the applicant should not have been put on to the register

Budget 2021-22	
	2021-22 Budget Final £'000
INCOME	
Registration	9,524
Dividend Income	196
Bank and Deposit Interest	10
Other Income	20
Total Income	9,750
EXPENDITURE	
Staff Salaries Costs	4,869
Other Staff Costs	427
Staff Benefits	125
Members Costs	1,290
Case Examiners	80
Professional Fees	482
Finance Costs	183
Case Progression	620
Hearings	180
CET and Standards	216
Communications	40
Registration	15
IT Costs	668
Office Services	1,001
Other Costs	100
Depreciation and Amorti-sation	131
Total Expenditure	10,426
Surplus / Deficit	(676)
Unrealised Investment gains	269
Surplus / (Deficit)	(407)

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You can get this plan in Welsh by visiting www.optical.org

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