

Invitation to tender: GOC's Registrant survey

Summary

1. We are seeking a market research agency to conduct an annual survey with GOC registrants to help track registrants' experiences of working in clinical practice and views and perceptions of the GOC.
2. We most recently carried out three waves of the [survey](#) in 2021 – 2023 (with one standalone survey in 2016). We expect to keep many existing questions for tracking purposes but will also explore new topics each year.
3. The tender is for three waves of the survey over 2024-26. We have an approved budget of up to £60,000 including VAT and all other contractor costs across the three waves. Proposals over £60,000 will not be considered.
4. The deadline for tenders is **5pm 27 November 2023**.

About the GOC

5. We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK and our mission is to protect and promote the health and safety of the public. We currently register around 33,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student optometrists, student dispensing opticians and optical businesses.
6. We have four core functions:
 - Setting standards for the performance and conduct of our registrants.
 - Approving qualifications leading to registration.
 - Maintaining a register of individuals who are fit to practise or train as optometrists or dispensing opticians, and bodies corporate who are fit to carry on business as optometrists or dispensing opticians.
 - Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, train or carry on business may be impaired.
7. An important part of our policy and research work is to carry out an annual survey with GOC registrants (i.e. optometrists, dispensing opticians and optical students). We carried out three waves of the [survey](#) in 2021, 2022 and 2023, and a standalone survey in 2016. The aim of the survey is to understand registrant experiences of working in clinical practice, including satisfaction levels, challenges in carrying out their role, experiences of bullying and discrimination at work, and future career aspirations. We also track workforce

data, such as the number of locums, part-time and full-time workers, location of work, which is important information in terms of workforce planning. In addition, we also collect data on views of GOC performance and on specific areas such as registrants' views and experiences of completing the GOC's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme.

8. For more information, please visit our [website](#).

Survey

9. We would like the survey to be sent to all 30,000 individual GOC registrants – i.e. fully qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians and optical students (those training as optometrists and dispensing opticians). The research will not cover optical businesses.
10. We usually send an email to registrants notifying them of our intention to run the survey, but we would like the appointed agency to email registrants directly with the survey link. We can share registration data (i.e. prefix, name, email address) subject to a non-disclosure agreement and GDPR compliance. In previous waves, registrants have been sent a unique link to avoid any duplication of responses.
11. The previous surveys achieved good responses rates, varying from 17% in 2021, to 14% in 2022 and 13% in 2023. We would like the appointed agency to advise on how they will meet or exceed last year's percentage. An incentive was given in the last three waves of the survey (i.e. respondents were entered into a £100 prize draw). We would be content to keep this approach for the next waves.
12. The last three surveys have varied in length between 10-15 minutes and we would like to keep to this timeframe. Over the last three waves of the survey, there have been a mixture of open and closed questions, and we would like to retain this combination.
13. We already have a template [survey](#) to work from, and envisage keeping the following questions, subject to review and minor alterations:
 - Your role
 - Your career
 - Speaking up
 - Harassment, bullying and abuse
 - Discrimination
 - Consumer complaints
 - About you (including equality, diversity and inclusion questions)

14. The areas we want to review and likely change are:
 - Your perspectives of the GOC
15. It is likely we will want to ask the questions on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), in one or more waves of the survey to track the data. Again, these questions may require review and some tweaking.
16. We would also like to have the space to ask any new questions each year and would like the appointed agency to help draft and finalise these.

Analysis

17. We would like the appointed agency to continue to weight the data as in previous years by registration type (optometrist, dispensing optician, student optometrist, student dispensing optician), based on an up-to-date version of the GOC register (we will provide this data). This will help ensure comparability with previous surveys.
18. As with previous waves, we would like sub-group analysis by, for example, registration type, length of registration, workplace setting, location, and key demographics including gender, age group, ethnicity, and disability status. It is also important for us as a UK regulator to bring out national differences between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
19. To provide the GOC with insight to inform future workforce planning, we would also like to continue to have certain survey results scaled up to the number of optical professionals currently on the GOC's register, converting the results into approximate registrant numbers.

Outputs

20. The appointed agency will be expected to deliver the following:
 - refine the questionnaire to meet the research aims;
 - data collection;
 - data processing;
 - rigorous analysis of findings and drawing conclusions for the GOC;
 - production of a detailed written report (template to be agreed in advance with the GOC and include infographics) to publishable standards;
 - produce summary data tables suitable for lay people to understand, which will be published on GOC's website; and
 - produce raw data tables to allow for further data analysis.

21. Producing visual materials that bring the findings to life and raise awareness is increasingly important to the GOC. Tenders should include examples of past work of a similar standard to what the agency would expect to produce for this survey. The costs of this work should be included within the total budget.

Budget

22. We have an approved budget of up to a total cost of £60,000 including VAT and all other contractor costs across the three waves of the survey. Proposals over £60,000 will not be considered.

Timetable

23. The timetable for this project is in the table below. (We reserve the right to alter this timetable.)

Task	Date
Contract advertised by GOC	25 October 2023
Deadline for bidders to submit clarification queries	15 November 2023
Deadline for tenders to be submitted	5pm 27 November 2023
Selection process by GOC	Week commencing 4 December 2023
Draft report submitted by agency	13 May 2024
Final report and all other outputs submitted by agency	31 May 2024

Proposals

24. Proposals should clearly state how agencies would meet the requirements set out in this invitation to tender. They should include:
- evidence of an understanding of our requirements;
 - details of the project team, relevant skills and experience (including examples of relevant projects previously conducted) and specific project roles;
 - details of any conflicts of interest that the agency or project team members may have relevant to this work and how these would be managed;
 - details of any information or assistance that will be required from the GOC;
 - details of how this project will be delivered, including the project management procedures and a research timetable for the different stages;
 - an assessment of the key risks and how these will be mitigated; and

- a comprehensive itemised cost for all aspects of the work and the total cost of the project.

Selection process

25. Tenders will be evaluated carefully against the award criteria and weightings set out below:
 - extent to which proposals demonstrate understanding of the brief, and meet its stated objectives in terms of research design (40%);
 - the tenderer having appropriate skills, qualifications and a track record in delivering similar projects (20%);
 - proposals relating to producing visual materials (20%); and
 - the ability of the tenderer to deliver this project within the specified timescale and budget (20%).
26. All work should comply with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.
27. The Council reserves the right to pay only for work it deems to be satisfactorily completed.
28. The Council is not bound to accept the lowest offer or any tender.
29. Following assessment of proposals, we reserve the right to request a further tender, proposals or pricing details from selected potential contractors.

GOC contacts

30. Please send tenders and direct any questions to Angharad Jones (Policy Manager) by email to ajones@optical.org

Data and Freedom of Information

31. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“FOIA”) applies to the GOC and potential contractors should be aware of our obligations and responsibilities under FOIA to disclose, on written request, recorded information held by the GOC. Information provided by you in connection with this proposal, or with any contract that may be awarded as a result of this exercise, may therefore have to be disclosed in response to such a FOIA request, unless we decide that one of the statutory exemptions under the FOIA applies. If you wish to designate information supplied as part of this response as confidential, or if you believe that its disclosure would be prejudicial to any person’s commercial interests, you must provide clear and specific detail as to the precise information

involved. Such designation alone may not prevent disclosure if in our reasonable opinion publication is required by applicable legislation or Government policy or where disclosure is required by the Information Commissioner.

Warnings/Disclaimer

32. Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this contract with the GOC will disqualify your proposal from being considered. You must not tell anyone else what your proposal or tender price is or will be, before the deadline for proposals. You must not try to obtain any information about anyone else's proposal or make any arrangements with another organisation about whether or not they should make a proposal, or about their or your tender price. Failure to comply with any of these conditions may disqualify your proposal.
33. Nothing contained in this ITT or any other communication made between the GOC or our representatives and any person shall constitute an agreement, contract or representation (except for the formal written contract between the GOC and our preferred supplier). Receipt by the tenderer of this ITT does not imply the existence of a contract or commitment by or with the GOC for any purpose and tenderers should note that this ITT may not result in the award of any business.
34. It is the responsibility of tenderers to obtain for themselves all information necessary for the preparation of their response to this ITT. The information contained in this ITT and the supporting documents and in any related written or oral communication is believed to be correct at the time of publication. The GOC will not accept any liability for its accuracy, adequacy or completeness and no warranty is given as such. We reserve the right to change any aspect of, or cease, the tender process at any time.
35. By issuing this ITT the GOC is not bound in any way and does not have to accept the lowest or any tender.
36. You will not be entitled to claim from us any costs or expenses which you may incur in preparing your tender whether or not your tender is successful and regardless of whether a contract is awarded.