

Candidate Information Pack

Council Associate

2 x GOC Registrants (including at least one dispensing optician)

Ref: GOC04/22
January 2023

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 your interest in these positions and for taking the time to read this information pack. I hope it gives you all the details you need to apply.

The GOC is 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 and businesses. The Council plays a key role in guiding and supporting the executive as a team to ensure that our common purpose of protecting the public is at the heart of everything we do.

Being a Council member is an incredibly rewarding and interesting role. However, we have struggled to attract diverse candidates for our Council member roles. That is why we are excited to be able to provide this Associate opportunity to two talented GOC registrants, at least one of whom will be a dispensing optician, to give you that first step into a board role. We hope this scheme will be a development and learning opportunity for you.

For the GOC, this scheme will enhance the work that our Council does. By gaining broader opinions and perspectives around our Council table, we can represent the diverse needs of our registrants, staff, and other stakeholder groups.

We particularly welcome applications from registrants who are disabled and from ethnic minority backgrounds, as these are currently under-represented across our Council and committees. We also encourage registrants without previous involvement or exposure to board level work to apply. On this occasion, however, we will not accept applications from students – only fully qualified and registered optometrists or dispensing opticians may apply.

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

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Associate. I hope the information provided in this pack will result in your application. Please email appointment@optical.org for further information and we will aim to respond to your query within 48 hours. Please quote reference **GOC04/22** on all correspondence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Anne Wright".

Dr Anne Wright CBE, Council Chair
January 2023

Key dates for this appointment are as follows:



Meetings Dates 2023

Council Dates:

Council – Strictly Confidential Meeting, Tuesday 27 June 2023

Council – Public Meeting, Wednesday 28 June 2023

Council – Strictly Confidential Meeting, Tuesday 26 September 2023

Council – Public Meeting, Wednesday 27 September 2023

Council – Strictly Confidential Meeting, Tuesday 12 December 2023

Council – Public Meeting, Wednesday 13 December 2023

Audit, Risk & Finance (ARC) Committee Dates:

ARC, Tuesday 2 May 2023

ARC, Tuesday 11 July 2023

ARC, Tuesday 5 September 2023

ARC, Tuesday 21 November 2023

ARC, Tuesday 30 January 2024

ARC, Tuesday 27 February 2024

About the GOC

Background

We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. We currently register around 30,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student optometrists and dispensing opticians, and optical businesses.

Our Core Functions:

1. Setting standards for the performance and conduct of our registrants.
2. Approving qualifications leading to registration.
3. 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.
4. Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practice, train, or carry out business may be impaired.

Legislation

Our primary legislation is the Opticians Act 1989 (as amended). We have a series of related rules that describe how we carry out our statutory functions which 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**

Council and Council Associates

What is the Council

Our Council is our 'board'. The Council is the most senior decision-making group at the GOC. They are ultimately responsible for the success of the GOC. Our Chief Executive and her team are accountable to the Council.

There are 12 members of the Council, and they are all non-executive members as well as the charity's trustees, meaning they are not employed by the GOC.

Half of our Council members are professionals currently on our register. The other half are 'lay' members, who have skills and experience which benefits the GOC, for example legal, business, HR, financial, IT etc.

The Associate Role

Our Council is committed to making the Council Associate role a success.

We want to help give the right talented candidates the experience and skills they need to go on to have a rewarding boardroom career.

Once appointed our Council Associates will take part in all our Council meetings and associated activity. They will also get involved in our Audit, Risk and Finance Committee to maximize their transferable experience of governance.

Due to our governing laws, Council Associates cannot be a voting member when decisions are taken. They will be expected to read all the Council papers and encouraged (and once settled in, expected!) to participate in the debates that lead to decisions being made.

Our Associates will be expected to attend all Council and Audit, Risk and Finance Committee meetings, as well as the Council workshop sessions. Outside of meeting activity we want our Associates to regularly meet informally with their assigned Council and Executive buddies.

We are committed to understanding, respecting, and representing as broad a range of views and backgrounds. We know that diverse perspectives and experiences are critical to an effective, modern GOC.

Appointment Information and Expectation

Remuneration, Time Commitment, and Tenure of Office

Council Associate roles are unpaid. Associates can claim reasonable expenses for travel and accommodation as required.

The Council Associate is not a GOC employee and will not have employment rights. They will be expected to adhere to the Council member Code of Conduct.

The appointed Associates will be expected to commit approximately 1.5 days per month.

If employed, please seek permission from your employer for the time required to participate effectively.

We are afraid that we cannot consider students for Council Associate roles due to the time requirement and impact on your studies.

Council and Committee meetings will usually take place online via Microsoft Teams and typically take half a day. You will therefore require a laptop and a stable internet connection to participate. Very occasionally we may hold meetings at the GOC office at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG - or other suitable venues.

The initial appointment will be for a maximum of two years.

Inclusion

We are a supportive Council and are very keen to hear opinions and views that may differ from our own. We include the Associates in everything that happens on a board - no issues will be off limits.

Development

We will provide comprehensive support before meetings and feedback after meetings. You will be assigned a buddy who will support you throughout the year. The Council has several development workshops each year from which you will gain invaluable training.

Range

We will involve the Associates in our Audit, Risk and Finance Committee work which will enhance the experience gained by the Associate.

Support

Initial governance training will be provided by the Governance Team and your buddy will regularly check in with you to provide ongoing mentorship. We would appreciate your feedback to see how we are doing, and our governance team will be on hand to provide you with practical support and assistance.

Management of Interests

You should note your requirement to declare any interests you hold which relate to the 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.

On appointment you will be required to declare any interests you hold which could conflict or be perceived to conflict with your role as an Associate. 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

We are looking for candidates with potential and a passion for and an interest in the work of the GOC, public protection, and a desire to give back to public service. Previous committee or board experience is not a requirement.

Candidates will be required to provide in their application examples of how their experience matches the criteria outlined below.

The Council Associate must have the following:

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- An interest in the GOC's work
- Keen interest to learn about being on a board
- Good communication skills
- A willingness to commit to a time commitment of 1.5 days per month
- An ability to uphold the seven principles of public life

In addition, the Council Associate must be a GOC Registrant (either an optometrist or a dispensing optician). There are two Council Associate roles being advertised, at least one of which will be for a dispensing optician.

How to Apply

Your Application

Please apply with your CV and a statement of no more than 2 sides of A4 giving examples of how your experience matches criteria in the person specification. Your CV should outline:

- your employment history
- any relevant voluntary work, public service, or other experiences
- any relevant professional, academic, or vocational qualifications

Equality Monitoring

When submitting your application, you will be asked to complete [an equality, diversity, and inclusion \(EDI\) monitoring form](#). This ensures all candidates are treated fairly throughout our process. Once completed, please submit this with your application.

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. Monitoring information gathered from application processes is published annually in our [EDI monitoring report](#). Our approach to monitoring can be viewed on our [website](#).

Deadline

Please complete your application by **midnight on Sunday 19 February 2023** and email it to appointment@optical.org.

If you have any questions, please send them to address above, quoting Ref: GOC04/22. We will aim to respond to you within 48 hours. You may also contact us by telephone on 0207 307 3934.

Application Process

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 and check it for completeness and eligibility.
- The selection panels for these appointments will be comprised of¹:
 - Dr Anne Wright CBE (Council Chair)
 - Roshni Samra (Registrant Council member)
 - Nick Yeo (Lay Independent member)
- The selection panel will rely only on the information you provide in your CV and statement and whether you have demonstrated that you meet the selection criteria as set out in the person specification.
- Candidates shortlisted for interview will be notified in the week commencing [Monday 13 March 2023](#).
- 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 on [Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 March 2023](#).
- Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the published dates, the selection panel *may* consider a new date, at their discretion.
- If invited to interview, the selection panel will question you about your experience and expertise and ask specific questions to find out whether you meet the selection criteria.
- Written references from two referees and other due diligence checks (including Google/LinkedIn/Facebook searches, director/trustee checks) will be undertaken after a successful interview. Please ensure 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 [early April 2023](#).
- On appointment, you will receive further information about training and induction.

¹ Please note the panel may change depending on panellists' availability

Equal Opportunities and Accessibility

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

We strive to be as diverse as the public we protect and welcome applications from all communities, from all backgrounds, and with a broad range of experiences. Appointments will be made solely on merit. For any organisation to be successful, we believe it needs to work with the most talented range of people available. We assess all applicants fairly and do not discriminate based on:

- age,
- disability,
- race or ethnicity,
- religion or belief,
- gender, gender identity or expression, gender reassignment,
- sexual orientation,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity, or
- geographical location outside of London.

Access Requirements

As a Disability Confident organisation, we are committed to playing 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 to ensure we have robust and inclusive recruitment practices. 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 at governance@optical.org, quoting Ref: GOC04/22, or on 0207 307 3934. If you would like more information on reasonable adjustments, [you can read more on the Government website](#).

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 for the information we collect for public appointments is to keep the following information for one year for unsuccessful candidates and six years for successful candidates. This information is then destroyed.

- initial contact details, including your name and address,
- application form and any supporting documentation,
- 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 and in accordance with our [Member Appointments Guidance](#), which will be applied consistently to all applicants. However, if you have a complaint about the process used in this recruitment campaign, please refer to our [Corporate Complaints Procedure](#). This 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 on appointment@optical.org or telephone 020 7580 3898.

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Tel +44 (0)20 7580 3898

www.optical.org

Email: goc@optical.org

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

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