

Guidance to applicants for member roles

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This document is intended to assist candidates in completing the application form for member roles at the GOC.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This guidance applies only to candidates applying for member roles at the GOC. It is important to note that it does not cover every element of the application and interview process. The processes for member recruitment are described in the following document - [member-appointment-guide.pdf \(optical.org\)](#)

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Competencies are short statements defining the behaviours and actions needed to perform well in a particular role.
- 3.2 If you apply for a member role at the GOC, you will be asked to provide examples of how you meet the competencies described in the recruitment pack. The pack will be clear about the competencies required for the role, and you should choose examples from your recent work experience, education, training or volunteer or other non-executive roles which are best match for the competences required.
- 3.3 Getting your competency statements right is essential. Sift and appointment panels will use them to assess your suitability for the role and to compare you against the other applicants.
- 3.4 There are some general guidelines for preparing competency statements. Your examples should be:
 - truthful and based on fact
 - grammatically correct
 - spelled correctly

4. Preparation

- 4.1 Before writing anything, you should read all the information in the job advert and recruitment pack. You should pay particular attention to the **competences** required.
- 4.2 Think about everything you have done and achieved over the last five years or so which relate to the competency being asked for. The more recent your examples the better, but you don't necessarily have to make all your examples work related. You may be able to include achievements from outside work, for example in a voluntary capacity.

4.3 You must choose examples that enable you to describe specific things **you** did, not what your team did or what your work area did.

4.4 Think of examples that:

- clearly demonstrate the competency or behaviour
- will allow you to explain in some detail what you personally did
- had positive results, although less successful examples can be used if you can demonstrate the lessons learned and how errors would be avoided in future
- impacted on more than a few people, as these are likely to be more powerful
- allow you to demonstrate other key skills or knowledge mentioned in the job vacancy, if possible.

Stronger examples tend to:	Weaker examples tend to:
Fully demonstrate the competency or behaviour being asked for.	Only partly demonstrate the competency being asked about.
Describe the impact on customers, groups of people, or the organisation as a whole.	Impact on only a few people or a small team.
Support key organisational objectives and priorities such as the organisation’s vision, business strategy and strategic outcomes.	Have little or no direct link to anything at a strategic or organisational level.
Include evidence of a quantifiable improvement backed up by some data.	Contain little firm evidence or data demonstrating positive outcomes and impact.

4. Completing the application form

- 4.1 When completing the form you are asked to describe a particular situation or situations from the past where you displayed the competency. The form is broken down into individual competencies to assist you and the people reviewing your application.
- 4.2 You can use a maximum of 300 words for each competency. It is important to stay within this word limit. Your answer will not be strong if it is not concise.
- 4.3 Do not leave any of the boxes blank. The Panel cannot make an assessment of competency if nothing is provided to support your application.
- 4.4 By quoting examples of why and how you demonstrated the skills, knowledge and other qualities in the past you show that you have the potential to apply them in a new job in the future.

- 4.5 It is not sufficient to say that you have had relevant experience, you must show evidence of making a success of that experience by describing how you acted in particular situations and what the effect of those actions was.

5. Using STARR

- 5.1 We strongly recommend using the STARR model to help you write your statements. It will also help you to break down the writing of a 300 word example into four manageable chunks.
- 5.2 Most of your 300 words need to go on the **A** and the **R** parts of your example, as this is where your role in making an impact will be apparent.

Situation:

- This sets up your example and provides the context for the actions you are going to describe.
- It can include your job role, the circumstances, the resources available, the context, and your responsibilities.
- It needs to be fairly short, but does need to allow the panel to assess the complexity of the task, your role and responsibilities, resources you had available and any challenges you faced.

Task:

- This is where you describe the task you needed to do to meet the objectives.

Action:

- This is where you will describe what you did in response to the situation and task.
- This is the most important part, as this will tell the panel what your specific contribution was.
- Most of your 300 words should be used here.

Result:

- Here you will need to explain what the outcome of your actions was and why they were successful.

Reflection:

- At the end of the statement, you will reflect on what you learned from the experience. If it wasn't successful as it could have been, you can explain what you could have done to make it more so.

6. Hints and tips

Replacing passive verbs and sentences with active ones

- 6.1 The statement needs to be about you and what you did therefore you should include lots of “I” statements and less **we** did this, the **team** did that etc.
- 6.2 Read through your statement, amending anything that talks about what anyone else did.
- 6.3 You also need to replace any passive verbs or sentences with active ones. Active verbs provide additional impact and include words like planned, developed, researched, recommended etc.

Examples:

Don't say	Say this instead
A spreadsheet was set up to show where delays were occurring.	I devised a spreadsheet and compiled data so I could identify where delays were occurring.
The spreadsheet showed that delays were occurring at the same times each week, so we discussed this during a problem solve.	After collecting and analysing the data, I identified a pattern of delays. I carefully considered who was affected and invited representatives from across the processing areas to a problem solve.
I took a lead role in the problem solve and we brought up lots of possible problems. Because the right people had been invited, we were able to come up with solutions for most of them quite easily.	I took a lead role by managing the timings and ensuring everyone had the opportunity to contribute. Because I had identified the key stakeholders, all problems were documented and realistic
After the problem solve, we recorded the outcomes and made some recommendations for change. There was one area that we couldn't resolve, so we escalated it up the management chain.	I ensured the outcomes were collected and after careful analysis, I made some recommendations to our team leader. I recognised that one of the solutions proposed needed to be discussed further, so I escalated this to the management team along with my analysis of the risks involved and my recommended solution

- 6.4 The wording in the right-hand column is more powerful. It not only clearly says what **you** did, but also some of the reasons behind what you did.

Making examples more strategic

- 6.5 There are lots of things you can do to demonstrate the competency and show you understood **how** what you did contributed to meeting organisational objectives and values too.
- 6.6 Think how you might describe this to a group of your peers, or in a presentation. You should try and explain what impact you made, both in the short and long term.
- 6.7 It's important to have an awareness of what's important to GOC, including our values and strategic priorities. You could incorporate this into your example, where appropriate. You can find information about this on our [website](#).

7. Next steps

- 7.1 If you are successful and invited to interview, you should consider the examples you have provided, but also how you might extend these in an interview setting. You can also draw on other examples. You are unlikely to stand out if you repeat everything that you provided in your application form, so think about how you might demonstrate further evidence of your personal contribution and impact.
- 7.2 If you are unsuccessful, try not to be too disheartened. As with any skill, writing application forms can improve with practice. You will have begun to build up examples that will help you prepare for future opportunities. Keep a record of any professional achievements that particularly stand out for you, as they will likely help you when applying for similar roles in the future.