

ADVISORY PANEL - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Council's committees (Companies, Education, Registration and Standards) which form the Advisory Panel are established by statute for the purpose of giving advice and assistance to Council (whether or not in response to a request from them) on:
- matters relating to business registrants other than matters required by the Opticians Act to be referred to the Investigation Committee, the Registration Appeals Committee or the Fitness To Practise Committee;
 - matters relating to optical training, education and assessment;
 - matters relating to registration, other than matters required by the Opticians Act to be considered by the Registration Appeals Committee; and
 - matters relating to the standards of conduct and performance expected of registrants or those seeking admission to the register.
- 1.2 The Advisory Panel is a meeting of the four Council's committees in plenary session.

2. Membership, Chair, Secretary and Quorum

- 2.1 Each of Council's Committees (Companies, Education, Registration and Standards) are constituted according to the General Optical Council (Committee Constitution Rules) Order of Council 2005 and the General Optical Council (Committee Constitution) (Amendment) Rules Order of Council 2008.
- 2.2 The quorum for a meeting of the Advisory Panel will be determined by the quorum for each constituent committee. If there is no quorum for any constituent committee then the meeting of the Advisory Panel may go ahead as a joint meeting of the remaining committees, but no advice will be offered from the committee that is absent.
- 2.3 Meetings will be chaired by a Chair of one of the four Council's committees. The Chair shall rotate annually.
- 2.4 When Council's committees meet separately for the purpose of giving formal advice to Council, the chair of each committee will be as specified in that committee's own terms of reference.

- 2.5 The Advisory Panel will be supported by the Chief Executive and Registrar and other GOC staff as appropriate. The Chair of Council and members of the senior management team (SMT) may attend and speak at meetings of the Advisory Panel. Other members of the Executive and representatives from stakeholder organisations may be invited to attend and speak for all or part of any meeting by the Chair of the Advisory Panel. For the purposes of clarification, the Chair of Council and GOC staff (including the executive) do not form part of the membership of the Advisory or count towards the quorum (apart from the Registration Committee's responsible officer who is either the Director of Corporate Services or Head of Registration)
- 2.6 A member's attendance via electronic means is permissible.
- 2.7 Where the Chair of the Advisory Panel considers it appropriate, decisions may be taken by email. An audit trail of decisions taken by email will be maintained by the Governance team.

3. Frequency and Notice of Meetings

- 3.1 The Advisory Panel shall meet at least twice per year.
- 3.2 As described above, the Council's committees may meet together as an Advisory Panel in a plenary session and separately as committees during the same time period, as well as break-out sessions, which may be committee-specific or mixed according to the topic.
- 3.3 Meetings of the Advisory Panel shall be called by the secretary of the Committee, who is normally a member of the Governance team, according to the annual calendar. Additional meetings can be organised at the request of the Chair of the Advisory Panel, Chair of Council, Chief Executive and Registrar or a member of SMT. For a meeting to proceed, the secretary of the Committee must be present. A Chair will be elected by the remaining Chairs of the four Council's committees in the event the appointed Chair has given their apologies.
- 3.4 Meetings will be held electronically (online via MS Teams or similar) unless otherwise notified. Notice of each meeting confirming the login details, venue (if not online), time and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed and supporting papers, shall be forwarded by electronic means to each member of the Advisory Panel and any other person required to attend, no later than five working days before the date of the meeting

4. Minutes of Meetings

- 4.1 A member of the governance team shall minute the discussion, actions and advice to Council of all meetings of the Advisory Panel, including recording the names of those present and in attendance.

4.2 Draft minutes of the Advisory Panel will be circulated to all members of the Panel once agreed by the Chair of the Advisory Panel. Draft minutes will be considered and approved by the Panel at its next meeting. In the event of a dispute, the Chair of the Advisory Panel will have the casting vote.

5. Accountability & Reporting Responsibilities

5.1 As described above, the Council's committees may meet together as an Advisory Panel in a plenary session and the committees may meet separately during the same time period.

5.2 The draft minutes of the Advisory Panel and any meetings of the Council's committees will be circulated to the next public Council meeting, along with a report from the Advisory Panel Chair highlighting any issues for Council's discussion/consideration. Draft minutes will be considered and approved by the Advisory Panel at its next meeting. In the event of a dispute, the Chair of the Advisory Panel will have casting vote.

6. Other

6.1 The Advisory Panel will review its effectiveness every three years, including how it is performing against its terms of reference and report the results to Council.

6.2 The terms of reference will be reviewed and any changes recommended to Council every three years.

7. Authority

7.1 The Advisory Panel is authorised by Council to consider and provide advice on any matter within its terms of reference and in accordance with the GOC's Scheme of Delegation.

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