

16th February 2006

**A CONSULTATION ON AMENDMENTS TO
THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL (GOC)
CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING (CET) RULES 2005**

The GOC's CET Rules 2005 came into force on 1st July, 2005. The first CET cycle will come to an end on 31st December 2006. The Rules are available on the GOC website at www.optical.org (click on 'Legislation').

In 2004, the GOC made it known that it would take the earliest opportunity to review the 2005 Rules so that amended Rules could be put in place in January 2007 for the beginning of the second CET cycle.

Consequently, throughout September and October 2005, (following advice from the *ABDO, AOP, BUCO, College of Optometrists and FODO) the GOC identified a number of relevant issues for review. In October, the GOC distributed a review document to the above bodies, to CET Providers and GOC Council Members and made a version of the document available online so that all registrants would have an opportunity to comment. Copies of the main questions in the review are attached (and are also available at www.optical.org).

Nearly 500 responses were received, which have now been analysed. A summary of the analysis is attached here and is also available on www.optical.org. The GOC, together with representatives of the optical bodies has considered the review responses. It is concluded that many of the comments could be accommodated by amendment to the CET Scheme Guidelines. Therefore, the GOC now submits to the Privy Council only two amendments to the Rules, which are attached here (also available at www.optical.org).

Amendment to Rule 2

A three-year cycle was introduced in the first instance to allow registrants, who wished or needed to, to concentrate their CET activity into a limited time period. It was considered that such registrants could within a three-year cycle make up for any break from CET and that it would still be reasonable to expect them to achieve 36 points within 36 months. On reflection the GOC now favours retaining the current three-year cycle, which is felt, will allow flexibility for career breaks, illness and sabbaticals without detriment to patient safety.

Amendment to Rule 6

Rule 6 defines the fee to be charged to CET Providers to become 'listed providers' and this is currently set at £35.00 to the end of 2006. The Council wishes to increase this fee to £45.00 for the further three-year period of 1st January 2007 to 31st December 2009.

The Council will be asked to consider making these two proposed amendments to the CET Rules at its meeting on 23rd March 2006. You are therefore invited to comment on the above amendments

by Thursday 16th March 2006

Comments should be sent to:

**Dian Taylor
Director for Education & Deputy Registrar
41 Harley Street
London
W1G 8DJ**

*ABDO: Association of British Dispensing Opticians;
AOP: Association of Optometrists;
BUCO: British Universities Committee on Optometry;
FODO: Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians

Associated Documents

1. The General Optical Council Continuing Education Rules 2005, at www.optical.org (Legislation)
2. The General Optical Council (Continuing Education And Training) (Amendment) Rules Order of Council 2006 at www.optical.org
3. Summary of responses to CET consultation online survey at www.optical.org
4. Analysis of responses to CET consultation (article in GOC *Bulletin* Spring 2006)