

TENDER NOTICE

Administrative and IT support for the GOC's Statutory Continuing Education and Training Scheme

The GOC is looking to appoint an organisation as Scheme Administrator to support the scheme from 2013.

Background

Introduction to the General Optical Council

The General Optical Council (GOC) is the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. We currently register around 24,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

We are 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.

The GOC has four core functions:

- setting standards for optical education and training, performance and conduct
- approving qualifications leading to registration
- maintaining a register of individuals who are qualified and fit to practise, train or carry on business as optometrists and dispensing opticians
- investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, train or carry on business is impaired

You can find out more about our work at www.optical.org.

Introduction to Continuing Education and Training (CET)

It is essential that eye care practitioners maintain the up to date skills and knowledge needed to practise safely and effectively throughout their career. To ensure this, the GOC operates a mandatory CET scheme.

CET is a statutory requirement for all fully-qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians. The CET scheme is a points-based scheme that runs over a three-year cycle. All full registrants must earn a minimum number of CET points by completing approved CET activities in the specified range of competencies and learning methods.

Registrants must manage their CET via an online portfolio, which allows the GOC to audit their CET activity and to ensure they have met the requirements in order to remain on the Register.

Further information can be obtained on how the scheme works by downloading the principles and requirements document and also by visiting the cetoptics website.

Overview of how the CET Scheme works

A GOC registrant has to complete a minimum of 36 hours of CET over a defined 3 year period. One hour of learning equals one CET point.

To collect their CET points the Registrant has to complete CET which has been approved by the GOC. Each approved piece of CET has a number of points attached to it.

Organisations or individuals wanting to offer CET to Registrants therefore have to have their CET approved in advance by the GOC. These organisations are known as CET Providers.

Once it has been approved against a set of GOC criteria and given a points value the CET can be offered to Registrants. All CET has to be approved in advance. There is no retrospective approval.

CET is approved within 10 days of the submission date by a team of Opticians and Dispensing Opticians appointed by the GOC.

The CET Provider is required to confirm the identity of the Registrant attending the CET, confirm that they have completed the CET, issue a paper certificate of attendance to the Registrant, and to inform the GOC of the registration number of those completing the CET within 10 days of the completion date.

After completion of CET the Registrant is required to confirm to the GOC the details of the CET they have completed.

The Providers use the platform known as cetopics to submit their CET proposals and to inform the GOC of who has completed CET. The Registrants uses cetopics to confirm to the GOC the detail of the CET they have completed.

This provides a double validation of CET completion from the Provider and the Registrant. A Registrant cannot self-validate completion of CET.

At the end of the 3 year period the Registrant submits to the GOC a statement of the CET they have completed and the GOC uses this statement to determine whether or not the Registrant has met the requirements of the CET Scheme. A Registrant who has not met the requirement is at risk of being removed from the GOC Register and is therefore at risk of not being able to work in the optical profession.

1. Outline of the Services Required from a Scheme Administrator

The GOC is seeking expressions of interest from organisations which are able to provide the following services to support the administration of the CET Scheme from January 2013.

- Provision of software to create the web-based platform which handles the daily transactions between CET stakeholders
- Maintenance of the software, servers and databases used to run the platform
- Support by email and telephone for all stakeholders
- Liaison with GOC on platform requirements and reporting on platform performance
- Liaison with GOC on progress of CET completion during the 3 year period.

Each of the above is defined in more detail in section 2.

1.1. **Stakeholders** is a generic term for the users of the platform. Stakeholders are defined as:

- CET Providers – who submit the CET they wish to have approved; who update Registrant's records after CET completion (inform the GOC of the CET a Registrant has completed)
- CET Approvers – who review and approve the CET submitted by CET Providers
- CET Users – GOC Registrants who validate their CET completion to create their CET Statement; create and maintain a personal development plan; reflect and comment on the CET they have completed
- CET Auditors – who submit audit reports on CET events to the GOC as part of the quality assurance process
- CET Approver Administrator – the person who administers the approval process using the platform
- CET Audit Administrator – the person who administers the audit process using the platform
- CET User Administrator – looks up information in order to answer stakeholder queries
- CET Manager – the person at the GOC with overall responsibility for the CET Scheme.

1.2. **CET** – CET is used here to mean training and education which covers the GOC competencies for optometrists and dispensing opticians. This training and education can be delivered in a range of ways e.g. lectures, workshops, distance learning. CET is given a points value. These points are totalled against a 3 year target to determine whether or not a Registrant has met the requirements of the CET Scheme. Registrants who do not meet the requirement may be removed from the Register.

2. Purpose of the platform

The purposes for the CET Scheme platform are to:

- create an accurate record of the CET completed by each Registrant and the CET Points total for each Registrant
- create an audit trail which shows who did what CET where and when; who delivered it; what it covered; who approved it
- provide a mechanism for validation of CET completion by both the provider and the participant
- collect feedback for the GOC on the quality of CET

- create a fast and efficient paperless process maximising the benefits of technology

2.1. Outline of User Requirements and Processes

2.1.1. CET Providers

Use the platform to:

- Submit all the information requested by the GOC about the CET they are proposing so their CET can be approved.
- Add dates of events to approved CET
- Ensure their CET appears in the online CET directory
- Update the availability status of their CET
- Submit the registration numbers of Registrants who have completed CET to the GOC

2.1.2. CET Approvers

Use the platform to:

- Review the information submitted from the CET Providers
- Request clarification or further information from the CET Provider
- Approve or not approve the CET submission or request a 3rd opinion.

2.1.3. CET Users

Use the platform to:

- Confirm they have completed the CET which CET providers have submitted to the GOC on their behalf.
- Reflect on the CET they have completed
- Create a development plan which shows they have analysed their development needs and created a plan of action
- Answer questions about the quality of CET

2.1.4. CET Auditor

Use the platform to:

- Submit the results of an CET Event audit to the GOC

2.1.5. CET Approver Manager

Use the platform to:

- Allocate approval work to Approvers
- Manage approvals through the process
- Review and update information in CET submissions
- Create management reports on the quantity and quality of submissions
- Set the final status of a CET submission to approved.
- Generate approver payment reports

2.1.6. CET Audit Administrator

Use the platform to:

- Allocate audit work to Auditors
- Manage audits through the process
- Review and update information on audits
- Create management reports on the quality of CET

2.1.7. CET User Administrator

Use the platform to:

- Look up information on any CET User, CET Provider, item of CET
- Answers queries from CET Users, CET Providers

2.1.8. CET Manager

Use the platform to:

- Run a set of standard reports
- Generate adhoc management reports
- View any information in the system on any Registrant or CET provider

2.2. Management of the servers and databases which run the platform

It is anticipated that these will be sited at a reputable 3rd party managed service company contracted by the GOC after discussion with the Provider. The successful bidder will be fully responsible for the maintenance and upgrade of software, operation of servers and databases, routine server management and maintenance, data and information security. If any of these operations are being carried out by the managed service company, then these need to be identified as such and processes put in place to confirm their completion.

2.3. Support by email and telephone

The provider will setup a telephone and email support service for all stakeholders with agreed response times as set out in a service level agreement. The provider will issue training material to all stakeholders when system upgrades occur.

2.4. Liaise with GOC on platform requirements and report on performance

The provider will report to the GOC on a monthly basis on the performance of the platform. The provider will be expected to develop requirements for platform upgrade based on changes the GOC may make to the CET Rules or CET Principles and Requirements or issues of platform performance that are jointly identified. The Platform needs to be compliant with the CET Principles and Requirements at all times.

2.5. Scale

Currently the CET Scheme has 17,000 active CET Users, 150-200 CET Providers who create approximately 2,500 CET submissions per annum. Over a 3 year period CET Users confirm a minimum of 620,000 CET Points. The regular and most frequent users of the platform are CET Providers, CET Administrators and CET Approvers.

3. Pool of Bidders

The GOC would like to receive bids from organisations capable of delivering the above services. The GOC would consider partnerships or consortia of bidders as long as there is a single organisation leading the contract.

The CET scheme is currently supported by a 3rd party Scheme Manager and an online platform known as CETOptics (www.cetoptics.com).

4. Commercial Framework

The GOC's objective is to appoint a supplier for a 3 year period at a fixed annual cost. The contract will be for an initial period of 3 years with the option to extend to 6 years (2 CET Cycles).

There will be a service level agreement against which performance will be monitored.

The GOC will retain the right to audit the provider against the contract and service level agreement at any time.

The GOC will agree a start-up period with the supplier before the service commences.

At the end of the 3 year period, or at Termination of the contract for breach, the GOC requires the rights to use the software for the purposes of supporting the CET Scheme and ownership of the intellectual property in the software source code that runs the platform.

5. Service Success Factors

The following outlines some of the GOCs expectations:

- An accurate CET record for each Registrant – at all times, now, in the past and in the future
- Service focus – a fast and efficient service focus to meet the needs of all stakeholders
- IT Managed Service – all data must be held in the UK, with 24x7 availability guaranteed; GOC prefers to hold the contract with the company providing the managed service to ensure continuity of service.
- Integration – appropriate links to GOC IT systems to be developed as part of the contract, if required.
- Continuity of service – although the start of a new CET period brings changes to the CET Scheme, the service to Registrants, Providers and Approvers needs to be seamless.
- Cost control – a budgeting process to be agreed that covers requirements for system upgrade and any rebuild over the term of the contract.
- Reputational risk – behaviour and performance of the Scheme Administrator to enhance the reputation of the GOC; a risk assessment to be completed and management plan to be agreed.

GOC Contact Information

The person leading this process at the GOC is Linda Kennaugh, Head of Education and Standards.

Any questions regarding this request for expressions of interest should be sent by email to lkennaugh@optical.org

A summary of questions received and answers given will be circulated to all who have requested further information 1 week before the final date for receipt of confirmed expressions of interest. Question submitted later than 1 week before the final date for receipt of EOI will not be answered.

Expressions of Interest should be submitted in the format described below to Linda Kennaugh, Head of Education and Standards.

Format for Submitting an Expression of Interest

Submissions to be sent by email to lkennaugh@optical.org before 12noon on 31st October 2011

Receipt will be acknowledged by email upon receipt.

Subject of email: Expression of Interest for the Administration of the CET Scheme

- Contact Name:
- Organisation Name:
- Organisation Address:
- Contact Telephone Number:
- Contact Email Address:
- Organisation website address:
- Primary business of the organisation:

No further supporting documentation is requested at this time.