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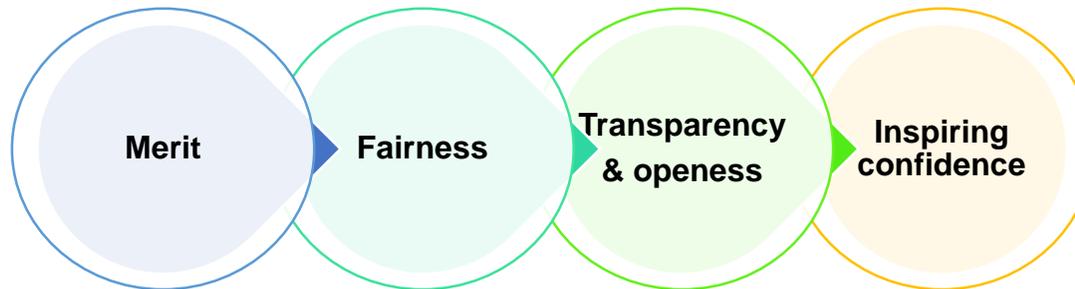
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# Joining us, staying with us and leaving us: a guide to member appointments, reappointments and removals

The processes explained within this guide comply with the [Professional Standards Authority \(PSA\) Good Practice Guidance](#), [the GOC's legislation and Constitution Orders / Rules](#) and is underpinned by the [Nolan Principles](#), to ensure that fair, open and transparent processes are in place so that appointments, reappointments and removals are made in the public interest.

**All our processes are underpinned by the following four principles:**



our decisions are based on evidence of the candidates' merit of skills, experience and qualities which best meet the needs of the GOC	our appointment processes are objective, impartial, applied consistently, promote equality and are free from discrimination, harassment or victimisation	our appointments are advertised publicly to attract a strong and diverse field of suitable candidates	our processes and systems promote public confidence in regulation, involve independent scrutiny and are in keeping with our legislative framework
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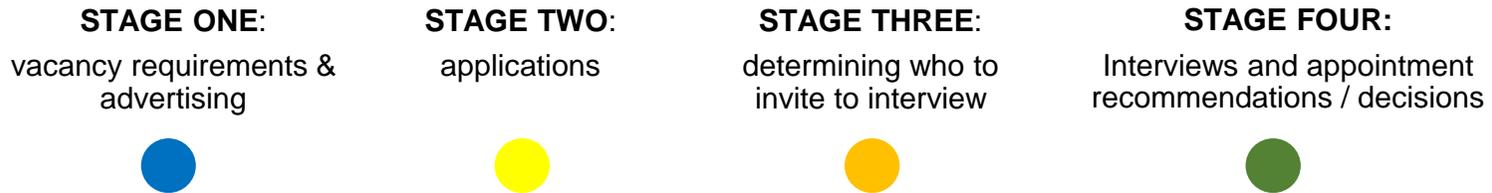
# Introduction

The processes set out within this guide apply to the following roles only:



## Joining us: appointments

When we have vacancies to fill, we operate a four stage process which applies to all roles listed above (unless it is necessary for us to make an [emergency appointment](#)). Where we may vary our process this is explained in more detail throughout this document:



## Staying with us: reappointments and extensions

Once members are nearing the end of their term of office we will initiate a [reappointments process](#) (subject to the member agreeing they wish to be reappointed). Alternatively, we may consider it appropriate to consider an [extension](#). We have a [three stage reappointment process](#), which takes around four to nine weeks to conclude:



## Leaving us: resignation / end of term, disqualification, suspension and removal

The [General Optical Council \(Constitution\) Order 2009](#) sets out the criteria for [disqualification, suspension and removal](#) of Council members. The [Committee Constitution Rules 2005](#) sets out the criteria for all other members. Our processes are bound by the principles of fairness, transparency and natural justice.



# How to use this guide

Please click on the relevant button to take you to your chosen page. This also works throughout this document.

 Our commitment to outstanding customer service

 Our commitment to equality and diversity

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## Our commitment to outstanding customer service

We are committed to treating our applicants and members with sensitivity and courtesy. Effective customer service will not only help us to find good quality, diverse members but also to retain our members, potential future appointees or candidates for other roles. We are committed to:

- ✓ determining competences which attract the appropriate volume and diversity of candidates required as well as avoiding competences which are unnecessary, may create barriers or deter applications;
- ✓ ensuring the competences remain unchanged throughout an appointment campaign to ensure it is fair and transparent to all;
- ✓ publicly advertising our roles to attract a strong and diverse field of suitable candidates and ensuring adverts are easily accessible and appropriate to the nature and degree of responsibility for our roles;
- ✓ ensuring the method of application is the same for all and that there will be no optional elements which candidates may choose to submit;
- ✓ responding to queries and acknowledging applications within two working days;
- ✓ anonymising candidate applications prior to pre-sifting/shortlisting by the Panel;
- ✓ removing equality, diversity and inclusion data from the pre-sifting / shortlisting process;
- ✓ interviewing candidates which best meet the published competences – never appointing on the basis of written evidence alone;
- ✓ ensuring the Panel is credible by including a mix of gender and diversity (where possible) from a range of different backgrounds, both professionally and personally in order to bring different perspectives;
- ✓ ensuring any recommendations / decisions are based on evidence, merit, the needs of the GOC and the public interest;
- ✓ ensuring that all documentation provides a clear audit trail and sufficient explanation to convey how decisions were reached;
- ✓ ensuring equality of opportunity and being non-discriminatory; and
- ✓ providing opportunities for feedback when members leave so we can learn from their experiences.

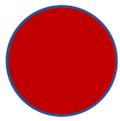
**Merit**

**Fairness**

**Transparency  
& openness**

**Inspiring  
confidence**

We understand that sometimes things do go wrong. If we have not lived up to your expectations or you wish to complain please [contact us](#) or refer to the GOC [corporate complaints and feedback policy](#). For Council campaigns only – if you remain unhappy and have exhausted our complaints process you may refer your concerns to the [Privy Council](#) within six months.



## Our commitment to equality and diversity

We have given due regard to Guidance issued by the [Equality and Human Rights Commission in its Statutory Code of Practice on Employment](#) in ensuring that the GOC is complying with the [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#). The PSED requires public authorities and organisations fulfilling public functions to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

We:

- ✓ strive to be as diverse as the public we protect and welcome applications from everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ have signed up to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's \(EHRC\) Working Forward pledge](#), which promotes key standards for inclusive policies and processes for pregnant women or those on maternity leave;
- ✓ consider the same standards will be applicable for paternity or shared parental leave; and
- ✓ will consider using positive action to attract applications from particular groups in society in order to promote a diverse field of candidates; however all appointments will be made on merit.



To ensure all candidates are treated fairly, we monitor diversity at every stage of a campaign, by taking information from section five of the application form which covers all nine of the protected characteristics: age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity, pregnancy/maternity, ethnicity, marital status and religion. The information you provide is treated in the strictest confidence and is used for monitoring purposes only. It is **never** used by the Appointments Panel as part of your application or the decision-making process. No information will be published in any way which allows any individuals to be identified. Our [approach to monitoring](#) and information gathered from application processes is published annually on our website in our [monitoring report](#).

**If you require assistance (or reasonable adjustments) at any point please [contact us](#) or call us on (020) 7580 3898. We can also provide our applications in a different format, such as Braille, audio and large print upon request.**

More information on reasonable adjustments can be found on the [EHRC website](#).

## At a glance: our appointments process: stages one and two

The majority of our vacancies are filled via open appointment campaigns. These are publicly advertised and open to all individuals subject to any relevant eligibility and disqualification criteria. Appointments to Council take approximately six months to complete (or nine months for a Chair). For all other roles this is around four months. We also run internal appointment campaigns (not for Council vacancies and open to existing members only subject to any relevant eligibility and disqualification criteria) which take around three months to complete. Should we find there is an urgent need to fill an unexpected vacancy and there is insufficient time to run an open appointment campaign, we will consider making an [emergency appointment](#).

I need more detail  
on stage one

### STAGE ONE: vacancy requirements & advertising

#### Determine our vacancy requirements

Prior to commencing a campaign we evaluate our vacancy requirements to inform the development of a role profile and person specification (competences). Candidates will be assessed against the competences during sifting, shortlisting and at interview.

#### Agree the timetable and candidate information pack

The timetable is included in the [candidate information pack](#) and takes account of key milestones/ deadlines as well as appropriate contingency. Should the timetable change during a campaign we will make this known on our website and contact any candidates who have expressed an interest in the role. The candidate pack provides applicants with everything they need to know about the vacancy(s) and how to apply. This is always published on the [GOC website](#).

#### Agreement of advertising and application format

Our advertising will ensure that we can obtain an appropriate amount of applications from a varied and diverse field. We use a competency based application form which can be completed online. Where candidates are unable to apply in this way, alternative arrangements will be made. We highly recommend candidates [use the STARR approach to structure responses to each competency](#).

### STAGE TWO: applications

I need more detail  
on stage two

#### Applications

Details of how to apply are on the [GOC website](#), the vacancy advert and in the candidate information pack. Once the closing date and time has been reached, the GOC will close the online application form and no further applications will be accepted. The same will apply for any candidates who have opted for alternative application arrangements (for example, submitting their form via email). We operate anonymous application for all vacancies.

## At a glance: our appointments process: stages three and four

I need more detail  
on stage three

### STAGE THREE: determining who to invite to interview

Pre-sifting  
Dip-sifting  
Shortlisting

If we receive more than 30 applications for a vacancy, each application is 'pre-sifted' by one member of the Panel using our [our A-D criteria](#). This is followed by a 'dip-sift' (by another Panel member) before the final list of those to be shortlisted goes forward to the remainder of the Panel. Either following a pre-sift or where there are fewer than 30 applications received, applications are then shortlisted by the whole Panel against the candidates' competency responses in order to determine who is most suitable for interview. All applications are anonymous at this point.

Determining who  
to invite to  
interview

Once shortlisting is complete, the full Panel will discuss their collective scoring of each application in order to make a decision on which candidate(s) to invite to interview. These decisions are documented and contain sufficient explanation to convey how a decision was reached. Once the Panel has determined who they wish to invite to interview, candidates identities will be revealed to the Panel.

Interview  
questions and  
presentation

They will then agree on the interview questions to be asked and decide if candidates will be asked to give a short presentation or engage in another activity. Candidates invited to interview will be contacted via telephone and email. They will also be reminded of their right to request reasonable adjustments as well as the details of the topic(s), format and length of any presentations or activity they are required to do at interview.

Invitations to  
interview

I need more detail  
on stage four

### STAGE FOUR: interviews, appointment recommendations and decisions

References & due  
diligence checks

Due diligence checks are undertaken and provided to the panel prior to interview for all vacancies. For Council campaigns, references are sought prior to interview; for all other vacancies, references are sought once the Panel has agreed who they wish to appoint.

Interview  
documentation

All candidates are asked the same interview questions (to ensure fairness) to assess how they meet competences. All interviews are fully documented to ensure an appropriate audit and decision-making trail. This includes a summary note of appointment decisions/recommendations.

Appointment  
recommendations  
/ decisions

For all vacancies the Panel will agree on their preferred candidate(s) they wish to appoint, those they wish to place on a [Reserve List](#) and those which are not appointable. For Council, the Panel will make a recommendation(s) to the Privy Council before an appointment can be made. A decision will be made for all other roles.

Feedback

We only provide feedback (on request) to those candidates who attend interview. Any feedback requested will not be provided until after an appointment announcement has been made.



### 1. How do you evaluate your vacancy requirements?

As a minimum, we will:

- evaluate the balance of existing skills, knowledge and experience within the current membership and any gaps (this could be via a skills audit or through discussion with the Chairs / existing members);
- review any specific requirements contained within the [Opticians Act](#), our [Constitution Order\(s\) and/or Rules](#) (such as representation from specific nations); and
- review the current competences (essential and desirable) and consider if any changes are required to ensure that the competences meet the needs of the GOC and that none unlawfully discriminates directly or indirectly against any protected characteristics set out within the Equality Act 2010.

### 2. Why do appointments to Council take longer?

Appointments to Council take longer because the [decision to appoint is made by the Privy Council](#), and not by the GOC. Prior to the appointment being made, the PSA will scrutinise the process we have undertaken to ensure it meets the four principles of a good appointments process. This adds approximately nine weeks to the process (three weeks before the campaign can start and six weeks once the Panel have made a recommendation to the Privy Council).

### 3. What is a 'role profile'?

This sets out the purpose of the role and any responsibilities that are expected of the successful candidate (such as time commitment, travel, pre-reading etc). It may also include details of the composition of Council, the GOC's strategy, priorities and future challenges.

### 4. What is a 'person specification' / 'competences'?

The person specification sets out the essential and desirable competences required of the candidate(s). These competences are included on the application form (to enable candidates to evidence how they meet the competences), are assessed by the Panel at sifting / shortlisting and are tested at interview.



### 5. What information can I expect to find in the 'Candidate Information Pack'?

This provides applicants with everything they need to know about the role and we produce one for every campaign we run. As a minimum the pack will include:

- overview of the role of the GOC, the role profile and person specification (competences), including any eligibility and/or disqualification criteria;
- details of how to apply, the appointment process being followed (inc. due diligence checks and references), information on conflicts of interest, timescales, key dates and who is on the Panel;
- location and term of appointment and whether it is renewable as well as an indication of time commitment, remuneration, expenses and development;
- our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and how to make a request for reasonable adjustments;
- details of how to make a complaint / raise concerns; and
- privacy statement.

### 6. What do you take into account when determining how to attract the right candidates?

We consider the location and timing as well as what methods are most appropriate (based on previous experience and costs). We will :

- avoid (where possible) advertising over holidays or religious festivals and will consider extending or moving the opening and closing dates to maximise the number of applications we may receive;
- advertise for a minimum of four weeks and if it is necessary to advertise for less than this, steps will be taken to off-set the impact of a shorter advertising period;
- ask all our applicants to advise where they saw the vacancy advertised to assist us in monitoring what methods applicants are using / what are most effective;
- ensure our adverts contain a minimum of a brief description of the role; headline competences; expected time commitment; remuneration and term of office; appointment date; how to apply; and closing date for applications; and
- encourage 'word of mouth' advertising but will not rely solely on this. Any individuals contacted are required to apply using the agreed application method and must be made aware that be made on merit only.



### 7. What is an 'emergency appointment'?

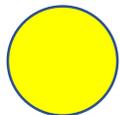
This is where there is an urgent need to fill an unexpected vacancy, there is insufficient time to run an open appointment campaign and where we do not have a suitable candidate held on a 'Reserve List'. Emergency appointments to Council will be recommended by the Nominations Committee and made by the Privy Council. The Privy Council is not required to ask the PSA for advice about emergency appointments but can do so if it chooses. Emergency appointments for all other roles will be made by the Nominations committee.

If we need to make an emergency appointment, we will ensure that:

- ✓ we have gone through an appropriate process for identifying the competences required and for choosing the suitable candidates(s);
- ✓ where possible there is more than one credible candidate for consideration;
- ✓ the individual meets the relevant eligibility and term-length criteria as specified in our Constitution Orders and/or Rules and/or other relevant legislation;
- ✓ appointments do not exceed 12 months;
- ✓ appointments will not be followed by an extension or reappointment without an open appointment campaign being run; and
- ✓ appointments will be publicised once approved (Council appointments only).

### 8. Is being a Council/committee/Panel member a job?

No. These are public appointments/statutory office, rather than a job, and are therefore not subject to the provisions of employment law.



### 1. What is 'anonymous application'?

We implement anonymous application for all our vacancies. Anonymisation is to avoid panellists making conscious or sub-conscious assumptions about individuals they do not know based on their name. All candidates will be assigned a unique reference number to ensure each anonymised application is correctly attributed to the right candidate. The table below sets out what information is required in the application form and at what stage(s) it is provided to the Panel:

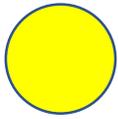
Section:	Requests information on:	Provided to the Panel:
<b>One:</b> personal details	Contact details, interview availability, prior knowledge of the Panel, reasonable adjustments, other appointments held, referees, declaration of interests and confirmation of eligibility and that disqualification does not apply	Post-shortlisting. Once the Panel have determined who they wish to invite to interview (with section five)
<b>Two:</b> competency statements	Sets out the essential and desirable competences for the role so that the candidate can include their competency statements	For sifting/shortlisting so the Panel can determine who has / has not meet the competency requirements
<b>Three:</b> qualifications and experience	Provision of relevant academic, vocational and professional qualifications, current (or most recent) employer and relevant previous employment history	
<b>Four:</b> equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)	Equality, diversity and inclusion against the nine protected characteristics	This information is used for monitoring only at all stages of the campaign and is shared in an unidentifiable format with the Panel once decisions have been made.
<b>Five:</b> consent and declaration	Consent to use your EDI data for monitoring purposes and confirmation that everything has been declared	Post-shortlisting. Once the Panel have determined who they wish to invite to interview (with section one)

### 2. I cannot access the online application portal or I need to apply in a different way – what should I do?

Please [contact us](#) or call us on 0207 307 3934 or 07989 147099.

### 3. I have started my application but I have not been sent a link to finish it – what should I do?

Please [contact us](#) or call us on 0207 307 3934 or 07989 147099. You will need to verify your identity before we will provide you with the link to complete your application.



### **4. I do not understand how to fill in the application form – can I get some help?**

We will assist with requests for help on understanding and completing the application form, however we will not provide specific advice on how to answer / what to say with regards to the competences, to ensure that the process is fair to all applicants.

### **5. Can I include examples of my work / supporting documentation in my application?**

No. We will not accept any supporting documentation to accompany your application (such as links to published work / websites etc). By providing this information it may enable the Panel to identify you. We will check all completed applications to ensure such information is not included. If it is, it will be redacted prior to submission to the Panel and the candidate will be informed.

### **6. I have an actual, potential or perceivable conflict of interest. Should I still apply?**

Yes. We will not eliminate any candidate from the selection process on the basis of actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest until they have been given an opportunity to propose how they would manage or eliminate the conflict. Any actual or perceived conflicts will be fully explored with the candidate at interview.

### **7. I have changed my mind – can I withdraw from the process?**

Yes. You can withdraw from the process at any time by [contacting us](#). We will inform the Panel and your application will be removed.

### **8. I will miss the application deadline – can I have an extension?**

No. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. Any applications only partially completed at the time of closing will not be put forward to the Panel for shortlisting. The same will apply to any candidates who submit their application in a different format i.e. via email.

### **9. I cannot attend on the published interview date(s) – should I still apply?**

Yes. We encourage all applicants to apply for a vacancy even if they cannot make the published interview date(s). Where a candidate is unable to attend the Panel *may* consider a new date, but this is at their discretion and in light of those interviewed first time.

### **10. Can I speak to a Council/Committee member and/or the Senior Management Team about the vacancy?**

Where opportunities to do this are available we will make this known in campaign candidate information packs.

### **11. Can I observe a Council/committee/Panel meeting before I apply?**

You are welcome to observe a [public Council meeting](#) (if one is due) or [public Fitness to Practise hearings](#). We will not reimburse accommodation or travel expenses for observing such meetings.



### 1. How do you constitute your Appointment Panels?

Our Panels are comprised of four members for Council campaigns and no fewer than two for non-Council campaigns. We aim to ensure our Panels are as diverse as those we regulate with individuals who are competent to undertake the tasks for which they are responsible. All our Panels will include:

- ✓ those with particular knowledge / expertise relating to the vacancy(s);
- ✓ those able to represent the needs of devolved nations (where required);
- ✓ an independent member who is able to bring a credible and independent perspective (who is not nor has ever been a professional or from a profession regulated by the GOC; and
- ✓ a Chair from another regulatory body (when appointing the Council Chair only).

Our Panels will not be constituted to have a registrant majority (all campaigns) nor include a Council member who is due for reappointment within six months of the start date of the vacancy(s) (Council campaigns only).

### 2. What does the Independent Member (IM) do?

More information on the role of the IM can be found in [Appendix four](#). For Council campaigns they prepare a report for the PSA on their assessment of how well the campaign has adhered to the four principles of a good appointments process. Their report includes:

- how well the regulator's process met the four principles, including how well equality and diversity issues were addressed in the process;
- any disagreements within the panel about the process and how these were resolved;
- the quality of panel chairing, the consistency of the panel and any absences or changes and the quality of administration;
- any complaints and how they were responded to and any learning to be gained from the process and how it could be improved; and
- if they are happy to recommend the process to the Authority and if not the nature of any concerns.

In order to ensure their 'independence' we will not use the same IM for more than three separate instances (for Council campaigns only).

### 3. What does 'pre-sifted' and 'dip-sifted' mean?

Where we receive more than 30 applications, each is assessed (using our A-D criteria, [Appendix two](#)) against the stated competences by one panel member, to reduce the number of applications to be put forward for consideration by the full Panel. The number of applications we sift down to will depend on the number of vacancies to be filled and whether any reserves are also required. A dip-sift of the discarded applications is undertaken by another panel member – to ensure the sift has been undertaken fairly and may result in other applications being added to the final list of those to be assessed by the full Panel.



### **4. What happens if a Panel member thinks they know who I am, even though my application is anonymous?**

We understand that it may still be possible for a Panel member to identify (or believe they can identify) a candidate from the information provided in sections two and three of the application form. All Panel members are asked to declare (during sifting / shortlisting) if they believe that they may know a candidate. How we manage such situations can be found in [Appendix three](#).

### **5. How does the Panel determine who to invite to interview**

Once the full Panel have assessed the candidates, they will discuss their collective scoring of each application in order to make a decision on which candidate(s) to invite to interview. These decisions are documented and contain sufficient explanation to convey how a decision was reached. Once the Panel has agreed on which candidate(s) they wish to interview, the Panel will be informed of the individuals' identity and discuss any actual or potential conflicts of interest or areas that may require further discussion either prior to or at interview.

### **6. When will I find out if I have been selected for interview and do I need to attend in person?**

You will be contacted via telephone and email with a minimum of one week's notice. The interview dates are published in the candidate information pack and candidates are asked to advise on their application form if they can attend the dates given. All candidates for Council, Hearing Panel and the Education Visitor Panel are expected to attend interviews in person. Skype interviews are available for all other roles. If you are unable to attend in person please [contact us](#).

### **7. I have been advised that I need to do a short presentation at interview – can I bring anything with me?**

You are welcome to bring notes to refer to during the presentation. You must not bring any slides or handouts for the Panel.

### **8. Why have I been asked to bring my passport to my interview?**

All candidates must provide identification which verifies their right to live and work in the UK. If you are unable to provide such identification please [contact us](#).

### **9. Do you pay expenses for attending interview?**

Yes, within the limits set out in our published [expenses policy](#). You must seek authorisation from the Appointments Team before making any arrangements – please [contact us](#).



### 1. What due diligence checks do you carry out?

All candidates are asked to make a self-declaration (in section one of the application form) which assists with these checks. Our due diligence checks are objective, reliable, verifiable, relevant to the role and are conducted in a way that is fair to all candidates and open to scrutiny. The following checks are undertaken **prior to interview for all roles**: Google search (against candidate name); LinkedIn review; insolvency; disqualified directors & trustees; professional memberships; social media; other roles with (or associated with) the GOC; holding prominent positions with a political party (in particular, but not exclusively with regard to health) and Ministerial / NHS Board appointments. For registrant vacancies this will also include registration status, completion of CET and fitness to practise status and history.

### 2. When and how do you seek references?

References are sought by the Appointments Team. For Council campaigns, references are sought **prior** to interview; for non-Council campaigns, references are sought once the Panel has determined who they wish to appoint. We use a standard form which allows the referee to comment on the candidate's suitability for the role and how they met the required competences. All candidates are asked to provide two referees as part of their application. Once received, references will be reviewed by the Head of Governance (or delegated to the Governance Manager) and any issues will be highlighted to the Chair of the Panel (or IM if conflicted) as appropriate.

### 3. What happens if something arises from my due diligence checks / references?

There may be occasions when additional information about candidates comes to light which calls into question information already provided and may be relevant to the candidate's suitability for appointment. The Panel Chair (or IM if conflicted) will consider the significance and impact and any action taken will be proportionate and ensure appointment on merit. In the interests of openness, transparency and fairness, the Panel will inform the candidate that additional information has been received; what steps it intends to take in order to verify the accuracy of the information; and thereafter, what further steps will be taken.

### 4. What records do you keep of interviews?

The Panel is provided with a guide in advance of the interviews which reminds them of the process to be followed, agreed interview questions, forms to be used in the interview and due diligence information. Interview assessment sheets are used for making notes to assess the candidate's responses to questions. An interview record for each candidate, which incorporates the collective view of the Panel, as well as a final outcome record which clearly explains which candidates are recommended for appointment are also completed. All our Panels are aware that candidates can ask for copies of all information held about themselves, including any information relating to the appointment process under provisions of the [General Data Protection Regulation](#).



### 5. How do you document appointment recommendations / decisions?

- **For Council campaigns** – once all interviews have concluded, the Panel Chair will approve a ‘Notice of Recommendation’ (for the PSA) which sets out the Panel’s collective decisions on the outcome of the interviews and its recommendation(s). Candidates are not identified within the documentation and are instead referred to by their given candidate reference number. Alongside this, the IM is responsible for drafting a [report to the PSA](#). Once both have been submitted to the PSA they will assess the evidence and advise the Privy Council. Once the Privy Council has made a decision it will send an appointment letter to the successful candidate.
- **For non-Council campaigns** – following the conclusion of interviews, the Panel will collectively agree on the outcome of the interviews and complete the ‘final outcome record’ which documents (with reasoning) which candidate(s) they wish to appoint now, which candidate(s) they wish to place on a ‘Reserve List’ and which candidate(s) are not appointable. Candidates will be contacted directly by the GOC and references will be sought.

Once the appointment decision has been confirmed the GOC will write to the candidate asking them to complete an [Appointment Declaration](#) which clearly outlines the period of appointment, fees, arrangements to meet the Council/committee Chair (if relevant), any terms and conditions of appointment and reference to any additional information, such as Code of Conduct, confidentiality and declaration of interests. The GOC will obtain their written acceptance of the appointment (all roles) and a public statement will be made by the GOC to confirm the appointment and placed on the GOC website (Council vacancies only) and an internal statement for all other appointments.

### 6. I have questions about how my information is managed/processed – where can I find this?

Please refer to our published [information governance framework and associated policies](#) and [privacy statement](#) or contact our Compliance Team or telephone 0207 307 3898.

### 7. Can I get feedback on my application / interview?

We do not offer feedback unless you are interviewed. Those candidates not invited to interview will be sent an email within 28 days of the closing date to confirm this along with a broad overview of the reasons why applications were unsuccessful following feedback from the Panel. All candidates who have been interviewed will be notified of the outcome once the Privy Council has made their decision and not before and will be given the opportunity to receive feedback on request, within five working days.



### 8. What is a 'reserve list'

We retain 'Reserve Lists' of previously interviewed and appointable candidates which permits us to approach such candidates who were not appointed initially if an unexpected vacancy arises within 12 months (Council) and 24 months (all other roles) as long as the vacancy has the same (for Council vacancies) or similar (for all other vacancies) role profile and competences and Council requirements have not changed. Should candidates be placed on such a list they will be advised following interview and maybe invited to attend training and induction.

### 9. What is an 'Appointment Declaration'?

An Appointment Declaration is sent to all new members just prior to their appointment start date. It asks new members to confirm that they have read and understood particular policies (for example, the Code of Conduct, confidentiality, management of interests etc) and seeks information with regards to, declarations of interest (which are then published), reasonable adjustments, dietary requirements and next of kin.



## Our reappointments process

**There is no automatic right to reappointment. Recommendations / decisions will be based on the outcome of each members review, the needs of the GOC and on merit.**

Desire for reappointment

Members will be contacted approximately six months before the end of their specified term of office to establish if they wish to be reappointed. If they do, we will arrange a 'member review' (appraisal). If they do not wish to be reappointed, they will serve out the remainder of their term of office and the Nominations committee will be made aware in case there is a need to run an appointment campaign or approach a candidate on our 'Reserve List' to fill the vacancy.

Member Review

Members are required to participate in a Member Review (as set out in our [published Member Review Process](#)) and ensure their [published declaration of interests is up to date](#). The review will not take place more than six months before the end of the members specified term of office and will consider a number of factors.

Reappointment recommendations / decisions

The Nominations committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Privy Council on Council member reappointments; they make decisions (as delegated by Council) on all other reappointments. The Privy Council will confirm with the member if they have been reappointed; the GOC will confirm with all other members if they have been reappointed. There is no requirement to have an independent member report for the PSA for Council reappointments.

### Extensions

Instead of a formal reappointment, we may consider an extension to a term of office more appropriate (i.e. where a review of membership is anticipated or to allow a new Chair to consider needs before reappointing members). We will not use extensions as a way of circumventing the need to follow a robust, merit-based open appointment campaign or assessed reappointment and will always ensure that extensions are in line with our Constitution Orders / Rules and [maximum terms of office](#). Extensions should:

- only be considered if the individuals performance is satisfactory and if there are strong operational reasons (for example for continuity);
- not take place if the term of appointment has already expired and not normally exceed 12 months (Council) or 18 months (all other roles);
- not be followed by a reappointment (or a further extension) without an open appointment campaign taking place (Council only);
- only be considered when the member has been appointed following an open appointment campaign which met the PSA standard (Council only); and
- be publicised once they have been approved (Council only)



## What we take into account when considering reappointments and extensions

When considering reappointments/extensions of all members we will take into account the following factors:



Evidence of satisfactory performance review, the member's willingness to undertake performance review and third party feedback, including the active contribution they make at meetings and views from their Chair/Appraiser.



Completion (within specified timescales) of mandatory development required for the role.



If the member has any conflicts of interest and how these have been managed / resolved as well as any conflicts which have come to light which the member has not declared.



Confirmation that all legislative provisions have been complied with including maximum term of office, eligibility and disqualification criteria, nations provision and the GOC's equality duties.



Attendance at meetings since appointment, the reasons for any non-attendance and confirmation from the member that they continue to be able to meet the time commitment required of the role in future.



Discussion of the members skills and experience, including reference to any additional skills and experience that they may have acquired since appointment, along with a review of competences required for the role and whether (and how) these have changed since appointment.



Details of any complaints received about the member and how these were managed / resolved.

### Documenting our reappointment recommendations / decisions

**Council reappointments / extensions** – for reappointments and extensions a recommendation will be made to Council. Once approved (for reappointments) a 'Notice of Intent to Recommend Reappointment' will be sent to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) along with a governance report (which includes the detail taken into consideration by Nomco and Council) and report from the Chair confirming that the member desires reappointment and how they will contribute to the future of Council. The PSA will then review the documentation sent and make a recommendation to the Privy Council. For extensions, we will liaise with the Privy Council, who can act without seeking the PSA's advice about the detail they require to inform their extension decision. Confirmation in both instances will be provided to the member by letter from the Privy Council and members will be asked to complete a reappointment declaration, sent by the GOC.

**All other reappointments / extensions** – a decision will be made by the GOC on whether to grant reappointment and the term of office. Confirmation will be provided to the member by letter and members will be asked to complete a reappointment declaration.



# Reappointments and extensions: frequently asked questions

## 1. Do I have to be reappointed?

No. All members are asked, before we begin the process of member review, if they wish to be reappointed. Reappointment is optional.

## 2. What are the maximum terms of office?

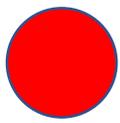
Council	Hearing Panel	Education, Standards, Registration & Companies committees	Investigation committee	Education Visitor Panel	Independent members on Audit, Risk & Finance, Nominations and Remuneration committees
No more than an aggregate of 8 years during any period of 20 years.	Maximum of 10 years	Maximum of eight years			

## 3. What is a 'Reappointment Declaration'?

A Reappointment Declaration is similar to an [Appointment Declaration](#) in that it asks the member to re-confirm that what they have previously declared has not changed, or to provide updates where applicable.

## 4. I was appointed on a term of four years. Why am I then reappointed annually?

This only applies to members of the Education, Registration, Standards, Companies and Investigation committees. Whilst appointments are made on a presumed term of four years, to ensure compliance with the [Committee Constitution Rules](#) reappointments are formally made annually, with terms of office expiring on 31 December in each year. We also use this opportunity ensure all our members have checked their previous declarations to ensure accuracy.



## Leaving us

When a member submits a letter of resignation, they will be removed from office automatically in line with our constitutional requirements. We request all members provide at least three months notice before resigning in order for us to put in place appropriate succession arrangements.

When a member leaves us (through resignation or because they have reached the end of their term and do not desire reappointment, or have reached the end of their maximum term), we write to the member to confirm acceptance of their resignation and ask them to complete a 'Leaving Declaration' which confirms that they have returned all GOC property, will maintain confidentiality, they have deleted all GOC emails and other documents and that they have claimed all due fees and expenses.

All former members will also be offered the opportunity of having an informal discussion with their Chair (or relevant Director) in case there is any learning to be shared from their experience with us.

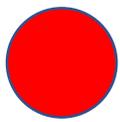
### **Retraction of resignation (not applicable to Council)**

If within a period of six months of resigning the member requests their resignation to be retracted, the Nominations committee may consider the request to be reinstated. Members wishing to retract their resignation must provide in writing:

- the reason for resignation and retraction of resignation (reflecting whether their ability to fulfil the role has been affected);
- confirmation that they remain able and willing to commit to the required time commitment, personal development and review of performance during the remaining term of appointment; and
- complete a member declaration (if the current declaration was made more than six months prior to the date of consideration for reinstatement).

The Nominations committee will make decisions in relation to the reinstatement to office of committee Chairs and members, and will consider:

- the reason(s) given (ensuring that the reason does not call into question the member's ability to fulfil the role);
- whether the member continues to be able to commit the time to the role as well as completion of required development and performance;
- the length of time in office – ensuring more than one year remains between reinstatement and the maximum term of office;
- the members performance and ability to contribute and if any new interests can be managed appropriately;
- if any new appointment campaigns are underway (or due to get underway), and what effect this might have; and
- any requirements as set out in the GOC Committee Constitution Rules 2005.



## Disqualification, suspension from office and removal

The criteria for disqualification, suspension and removal of a Council member is contained within the [General Optical Council \(Constitution\) Order 2009](#). The criteria for all other members is contained within the [Committee Constitution Rules 2005](#). We ensure that the four principles of merit (fairness; transparency; and openness and credibility) are observed during the process of disqualification, suspension, or removal.

Should there be a need to disqualify, suspend or remove a member, we will:

- discuss this with the relevant Chair and Director in the first instance setting out the relevant grounds from the Constitution Order / Rules and how these apply to the member(s). If the instance refers to a Chair, it will be discussed with the Chair of Council. If it refers to the Chair of Council, it will be discussed with the Senior Council member. This discussion will be recorded in writing and held on the members file.
- put the member on written notice that the GOC considers that the circumstances for disqualification, suspension or removal may need to be invoked and will ask the Nominations committee to consider the issues in detail. The written notice will:
  - identify the relevant ground(s) from the Constitution Order / Committee Constitution Rules;
  - set out the factual basis for those ground(s);
  - outline the process; and
  - enclose copies of all documents, providing reasonable notice of their consideration by the Nominations committee. The length of notice will depend on the size and complexity of the case.
- The Governance team will send/ receive all written communication, and be informed of any verbal communication.
- The Nominations committee will be supplied with all documents served on the member, together with any response received from the member.
- The Nominations committee will meet to discuss and make a recommendation / decision, following which the member will be notified of the decisions, with reasons, as soon as possible and when the disqualification, suspension or removal will come into effect. In the case of Council Chair or members, the Privy Council will be notified.
- If the member objects to the decision, they can use the GOC's Corporate Complaints procedure. A corporate complaint could result in NomCo's decision being reviewed by the Council Chair or the Senior Council Member (provided they were not party to the decision) or by the whole of Council (excluding any Council members who were party to NomCo's decision). Alternatively, the member can seek legal redress through the courts.

## Using the STARR approach to complete the application form

Section two of the application form asks candidates to provide competency statements (maximum of 300 words) against the essential and desirable competences required of the role. Providing competency statements is important as the Appointments Panel will use them to assess your suitability for the role.

You are welcome to structure your responses in any way you like. However, we **highly recommend** using the STAR(R) approach. It is not sufficient to say that you have the relevant experience – you should show evidence of making a success of that experience by describing how you acted in particular scenarios, and what effect those actions had. By using the recommended approach to each competency, it will help you break down the “300-word limit” into four/five manageable chunks. The majority of your 300 words should be on the **A**ction and **R**esults (and **R**eflection when appropriate). There are a lot of helpful websites that explain how to answer “STARR questions”.

If you do not have an example to use we recommend that you seek advice from those who have observed you in a professional, academic, voluntary or other vocational capacity as there could be examples which you have forgotten about. We highly recommend you **do not** leave an answer box blank. By leaving it blank you indicate that you do not (or cannot) meet the competency.

### Situation

- think of a situation you have found yourself in (professionally, personally, academically etc) that is relevant to the competency and that you can use to demonstrate how you meet the competency.

### Task

- what was the task you were involved in? explain in some detail your individual involvement and role in the task that demonstrates how you meet the competency. Were you part of a team? leading a team? working alone?

### Action

- what was the action you took? did it have a positive / negative impact? (less successful examples are just as acceptable but you may wish to reflect in your answer the lessons learned)

### Result

- what was the impact of your action(s) on you, others etc? what was the overall outcome?

### Reflection

- what did you learn? what did those around you learn? how might you manage the same situation differently next time?
- you can also use this part to highlight other key skills or knowledge mentioned in the candidate pack (if possible)



## Our A-D sifting and shortlisting criteria

This criteria is used for pre-sifting, dip-sifting and shortlisting.

Rating	Description
<b>A</b> <b>Excellent evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The example given clearly demonstrates that the candidate has the knowledge, experience, behaviour, understanding or skills in question to fully meet the competency.</li> <li>Plenty of detail is provided in the example with strong and clear rationale/logic behind any actions undertaken.</li> <li>The answer provides depth and confidence into what the candidate can offer.</li> </ul>
<b>B</b> <b>Good evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The example is developed and cites evidence through the necessary knowledge, experience, skills, understanding or behaviour in question but there is something about the answer that stops it being “excellent”.</li> <li>Detail may be lacking and the rationale/logic behind actions undertaken is not thoroughly clear.</li> <li>The candidate has demonstrated that they meet the competency but the response is not as developed as it could be.</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> <b>Limited evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The example given is weak and the evidence loosely demonstrates the competency being asked.</li> <li>There is little detail, which demonstrates a limited understanding of the competency <u>or</u> how the candidate’s skills/experience meet the competency.</li> <li>It is appropriate to give this rating when inferences on the panel member’s part are being made or if it is not possible to understand the point the candidate is trying to make in their answer.</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> <b>No evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The example given demonstrates competences different to those stated (and thus not answering the question) <u>or</u> where the candidate leaves the box blank <u>or</u> does not provide any evidence of the competency in question.</li> <li>The candidate demonstrates no understanding of the competency <u>or</u> provides no example to show how their skills/experience meet the competency.</li> </ul>



### Managing Panel members interests

Applications provided at sifting and shortlisting stages are anonymous. Only sections two (competency statements) and three (relevant qualifications, current / recent employment) are provided to the Panel. We recognise that Panel members may be able to / may think they are able to identify candidates (for example if a candidate held a particular role previously which was high profile). During sifting and shortlisting, all Panel members are asked to advise if they know / think they know the identity of a candidate. Where a Panel member believes that they do (or may) know the identity of a candidate it is usual practice for this member to speak last during any discussion, in order that their knowledge does not sway / bias the opinions of the remainder of the Panel.

Once the Panel have determined which candidate(s) they wish to invite to interview, the candidate's identities will be revealed to the Panel. At this point the Panel Chair will consider all connections and make a decision as to how it should be managed (or the IM where the Panel Chair identifies a connection). If any member of the Panel or the candidate is concerned about the closeness of the connection or the connection may be perceived as constituting a conflict, then it is likely that the Panel member will not take an active part in the remainder of the process and a substitute panel member may be sought.

### Managing candidate conflicts of interest

Candidates will not be eliminated from the selection process on the basis of actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest until they have been given an opportunity to propose how they would manage or eliminate the conflict at interview.

The Panel will collectively agree the most appropriate course of action and discuss this with the candidate. The Panel may consider the conflict sufficient to make the candidate unsuitable for appointment or make it a condition that the individual gives up the conflicted activity upon appointment. Alternatively the Panel may consider the conflict not relevant or one that can be managed. The Panel is responsible for ensuring that the candidate recognises the potential impact of the issue.

Our candidate information packs provide more guidance on what candidates should do if they believe that they have an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest as well as any roles which candidates may need to relinquish should they be successful. Candidates may also wish to refer to our published [Management of Interests policy](#).

## Roles and responsibilities: who is involved

**The Nominations Committee (Nomco)** – makes recommendations to Council in relation to Council member appointments, reappointments and removals and makes decisions (as delegated by Council) in relation to all other roles. Their terms of reference can be found [here](#).

**Council** – considers recommendations from Nomco in relation to Council only

**Employees** – our employees provide administrative support to Nomco.

**The Appointments Panel** – responsible for shortlisting, determining who to invite to interview and making recommendations (Council) or decisions (all other vacancies).

**Chair of the Appointments Panel (Panel Chair)** – responsible for guiding the Panel to collective agreement on which candidate(s) are appointable and the strengths and weaknesses of appointable candidate(s) against the competences and ensuring the principle of appointment on merit through fair and open processes.

**Independent Member (IM)** – brings a credible and independent perspective to each appointment campaign. We have one on all Panels and for Council campaigns they will prepare a report for the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) on their own assessment and opinion of how well the campaign has adhered to the four principles. In order to ensure their 'independence' we will not use the same IM for more than three separate instances (for Council campaigns only)

**The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA)** is an independent body, accountable to the UK Parliament. Their role is to check the process we have used, and assess whether it is fair, transparent and open, whether it inspires confidence, and whether it ensures all selection decisions are based on evidence of merit. They then advise the Privy Council about the quality of our processes used to recommend candidates for appointment and re-appointment as chairs and members of their councils. The Privy Council may also ask for their advice in relation to similar processes, such as the removal of a chair or council member. We advise the Privy Council whether each process meets this standard. They take no view on the suitability of particular candidates, and have no say in who is appointed. More information about them can be found [here](#).

**The Privy Council** dates back to Norman times and is one of the oldest parts of Government. It has an important part to play in respect of certain statutory regulatory bodies covering a number of professions including health. For us, the Privy Council is responsible for making decisions in relation to appointments and reappointments to Council. More information about them can be found [here](#).

General Optical Council



professional  
standards  
authority





## STAGE ONE: vacancy requirements

Task	Nominations committee	Appointments Panel	Panel Chair	IM	Council	PSA
Evaluation of vacancy requirements (role profile and competences)	Council – review and recommend to Council All other roles – decision	-	-		Council – decision	Council only – prior to a campaign going ‘live’ the PSA will scrutinise our plans for a campaign and confirm if they are content that our process complies with their Standards of Good Practice and that the Privy Council can have confidence in the process we will use.
Timetable	All campaigns – decision	The full Panel is given the opportunity to review and offer comments before the campaign goes live.	-	The IM is involved in these tasks as they are a member of the Panel.	Council – Council will be informed of the Nominations committee’s decisions when they are asked to approve the role profile and competences in case they wish to offer any further comments or suggestions.	
Candidate pack	All campaigns – review and recommend		All campaigns – decision			
Advertising strategy	All campaigns – decision		-			
Advert content	All campaigns – review and recommend		All campaigns – decision			
Application format	All campaigns – decision		-			
Determine whether a campaign requires the use of an executive search agency / consultant	Council – review and recommend to Council All other roles – undertake and decision	-	-	-	Council – decision	



## STAGE TWO: applications

Task	Panel Chair	IM
Extensions to campaign deadlines in the event that not enough applications are received	All campaigns - decision	Will be consulted before a decision is made

## STAGE THREE: determining who to invite to interview

Task	Appointments Panel	Panel Chair	IM
Determine who will undertake the sifting	All other campaigns	Council campaigns only	-
Dip-sifting (undertake)	All other campaigns	-	Council campaigns
Shortlisting (undertake)	All campaigns	The Panel Chair is involved in this task as they are members of the Appointments Panel	Undertake a random sample check if not undertaken by the full Panel
Determine who to invite to interview	All campaigns	The Panel Chair and IM are involved in these tasks as they are members of the Appointments Panel.	
Agreeing collective feedback for those not invited to interview and the reasons to be given	All campaigns		
Agreeing the Interview questions and if other activity (i.e. presentation is required)	All campaigns		
Managing Panel member conflicts of interest	All members are asked during sifting and shortlisting to highlight any conflicts they have / might have	All campaigns (unless conflicted)	All campaigns – only where the Panel Chair is conflicted
Managing candidate conflicts of interest		All campaigns (unless conflicted)	All campaigns – only where the Panel Chair is conflicted



## STAGE FOUR: interviews and appointment recommendations / decisions

Task	Appointments Panel	Panel Chair	IM
Consider the outcome of due diligence checks and references	All campaigns	The Panel Chair and IM are involved in these tasks as they are members of the Appointments Panel.	
Determine if the outcome of due diligence checks/references requires further investigation and/or discussion with the candidate	-	All campaigns (unless conflicted)	All campaigns – where the Chair is conflicted
Lead the interview process inc. introduction, explaining the order of events and ensuring candidates have the opportunity to provide additional information or ask questions	-	All campaigns	-
Interview candidates and make an initial assessment after each interview to establish whether or not the candidate is appointable based on evidence	All campaigns	The Panel Chair and IM are involved in these tasks as they are members of the Appointments Panel.	
Be satisfied that the appointable candidate(s) can meet the standards of conduct required by exploring and agreeing how any interests will be managed so that their ability to perform the role cannot be questioned	All campaigns		
Council campaigns only – make recommendations on appointable candidate(s) that are in the public interest	Council campaigns only		
Approve the ‘Notice of Recommendation’ for the PSA to enable the Privy Council to agree the appointment	Views from the whole Panel (except the IM) will be sought before this is signed off	Council campaigns only	-



## STAGE FOUR: interviews and appointment recommendations / decisions (cont'd)

Task	Appointments Panel	Panel Chair	IM	Professional Standards Authority	Privy Council
Report to the PSA on their own assessment and opinion	-	-	Council campaigns only	Council campaigns only – scrutinise the report (inc. the Advance Notice to Appoint' prior to making a recommendation to the Privy Council	-
Non-Council campaigns – appoint candidates	All campaigns	-	-	-	-
Make appointments to Council	-	-	-	-	Council campaigns only
Provide feedback to interviewed candidates (upon request)	-	All campaigns (unless delegated to another member of the Panel who may be more appropriate)	-	-	-



## Reappointments and extensions

Task	Nominations committee	Council	Professional Standards Authority	Privy Council
Consider reappointment reports once members reach near the end of their specified term of office	Council – review and recommend to Council All other roles – undertake and decision	Council - decision	the PSA will scrutinise our reports and confirm if they are content that our process complies with their Standards of Good Practice and that the Privy Council can have confidence in the process we have used	-
Make recommendations on Council reappointments	Recommend	Decision	-	-
Decisions on Council appointments	-	-	-	Decision
Make decisions on all other reappointments	Decision	-	-	-
Approve the ‘Notice to Intent to recommend Reappointment’ for the PSA to enable the Privy Council to agree the appointment	Decision	-	-	-