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📞 0207 307 3934 or 07989 147099

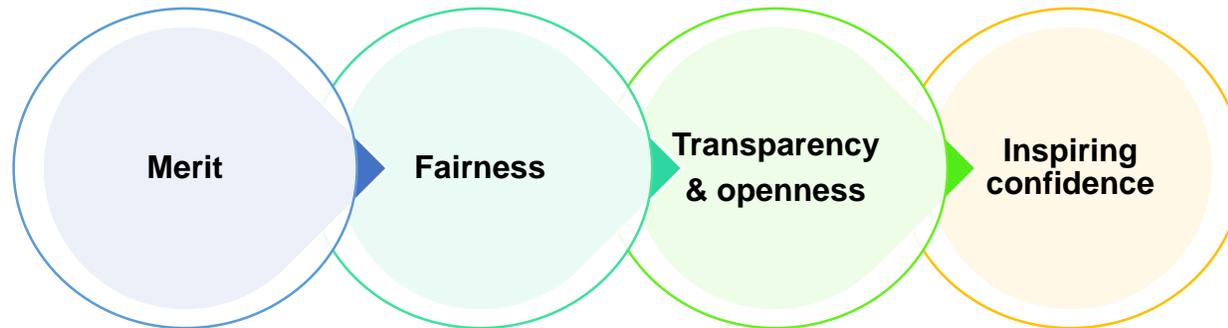
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We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. The GOC's primary purpose is to assure the health and protection of those who use the services of optometrists and dispensing opticians by promoting high standards of education, performance and conduct amongst dispensing opticians and optometrists. We currently register around 30,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, optical students and optical businesses. Please visit our [website](#) for more information on our [mission and values](#) and [regulatory functions](#).

## Candidate Information Pack

### **Circa 20 lay members - Hearings Panel (ref: 02/19)**



**CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: Wednesday 24 July 2019 (12 noon)**

We highly recommend you read this information pack thoroughly before starting your application.

This information pack is available in alternative formats (for example, braille, audio or large print) upon request

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## Key dates

**Vacancy opens:** Wednesday 26 June 2019



**Vacancy closes:** Wednesday 24 July 2019 (noon).  
Late applications will **NOT** be accepted.



**Sifting & shortlisting:** 24 July to 30 August 2019



**Interviews:** eight days: Thurs 19, Fri 20, Mon 23, Tues 24, Thurs 26, Fri 27 & Mon 30 September and Tues 1 October 2019



**Induction:** October 2019



**Anticipated appointment start:** 01 November 2019

## Foreword from the Chair of Council

Thank you for expressing your interest in becoming a lay member on our Hearings Panel. We are looking to increase the size of our pool as a result of natural turnover but with a potential for a greater number of vacancies subject to legislative change. We are therefore seeking circa 20 lay members. We currently anticipate appointment in early November 2019, however if legislative change has not been approved by this time, appointable applicants will be [held on reserve](#) and appointed when we are able.



The members of the Hearing Panel sit in two capacities: Firstly, as members of the Fitness to Practise (FTP) Committee which considers whether a registrant's fitness to practise is impaired and impose sanctions if appropriate to do so. Secondly, as members of the Registration Appeals Committee which considers appeals against any decision of the Registrar refusing to enter the name of an individual or body corporate in, or to restore it to, the appropriate register.

As well as helping us to protect the public and regulate the profession, being a Hearing Panel member gives you the opportunity to share your unique skills and experience while learning from others. The work is challenging, varied and you will be able to learn from the experience of other members as well as sharing your own – previous experience of this type of role is not a requirement. We are committed to supporting personal and professional development in the role. If you welcome this challenge, we will be delighted to hear from you.

We believe that for any organisation to be successful, it needs to work with the most talented and diverse people available. We strive to be as diverse as the public we protect and positively encourage applications from everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. We are committed to equality of opportunity for all and undertake that your application will be dealt with fairly and that all decisions we make about it will be based on merit and your ability to meet the competences required. For more information about our commitment to equality and diversity please refer to our [Member Appointments Guide](#).

If you require further information, please email [appointment@optical.org](mailto:appointment@optical.org) and we aim to respond to your query within 48 hours. Please quote reference **GOC 02/19** on all correspondence.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Hadley'.

Gareth Hadley, Chair, General Optical Council  
June 2019

# Overview of the role

In the capacity of the Fitness to Practise Committee, to determine allegations relating to the fitness to practise of registered optometrists and dispensing opticians, the fitness of business registrants to carry on business as an optometrist or a dispensing optician or both; and the fitness of student registrants to undertake training as an optometrist or dispensing optician. Hearings panel members also determine whether it is necessary for interim measures (suspension or made subject to conditions) to be put in place whilst an investigation is in progress for the protection of members of the public or is otherwise in the public interest, or in the interests of a registrant. Hearings panel members also sit as part of the Registration Appeal Committee which is constituted for the purpose of hearing and determining appeals against any decision of the Registrar refusing to enter the name of an individual or body corporate in, or to restore it to, the appropriate Register.

Our Hearings Panel consists of registrant and lay members with different backgrounds, skills, knowledge and experience. A full list of our current members can be found [here](#). For more information about our Hearings functions please refer [here](#).

## Time commitment



These roles are part time with a commitment of 30-40 days per year, including travelling time and time spent preparing for hearings. Most hearings are held at [our offices](#) in central London, however occasionally these may be held at other regional locations.

## Appointment tenure



It is the intention for appointments to start from 01 November 2019, however this is subject to legislative change. Should there be a delay, appointable candidates will be [held 'on reserve'](#) until appointments can be made. The initial tenure will not exceed four years (any decision on reappointment will be subject to the needs of Council and a satisfactory member review, up to a maximum of ten years).

## Performance review process



All Hearing Panel members are required to take part in our [review process](#), which involves routine discussions with a fellow Chair and third-party feedback (prior to any reappointment discussions).

## Fees and expenses



From 1 April 2019, the daily fee payable is £319. This is taxable and subject to Class 1 National Insurance (NI) contributions. It is not pensionable. As we are a registered charity members can decide not to be paid their fee if they wish to do so. This option is available on or after appointment and is not taken into account when making appointment decisions. Members can also claim [expenses](#), at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs incurred on Council business.

## Training, development and induction



Potential candidates are welcome to observe a public Hearing if they wish. Please refer to [our website](#) for dates of future hearings. Should you wish to observe a hearing please contact our Hearings Team at [hearings@optical.org](mailto:hearings@optical.org) and advise them you would like to observe as you are considering applying for this role. Please note that we do not cover expenses/accommodation for observing hearings.

On appointment, appropriate training and induction will be provided and tailored to the role. Induction will commence in October 2019. Attendance at face to face training/development or induction is payable at a rate of £223 per day.

# Essential and desirable competences required

Candidates are required to **provide evidence on the application form of how their experience matches the competences required to be effective in the role.** For applicants who have a similar level of skills, knowledge and experience evidenced against the essential competences, an assessment against the desirable competences will be made in order to rank applications. Therefore, candidates who provide evidence that also support the desirable competences may be even better positioned to demonstrate that they meet the challenges of the position. Candidates who are shortlisted for interview will need to demonstrate they have these competences.

## Essential competences

**E1.** Demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion – dealing with people and issues honestly, fairly and with respect

**E2.** Ability to analyse and interpret complex information and evidence, demonstrating impartiality, intellectual flexibility and sound judgment

**E3.** Ability to build supportive relationships and work as a team – welcoming & showing regard to the views and advice of others and supporting collective decision making

**E4.** Ability to listen, communicate and influence effectively – articulating clear reasoning

**E5.** Ability to articulate patient and consumer issues and/or the interests of service users who are especially vulnerable

**E6.** Ability to understand and operate within a complex legislative framework – thinking logically & weighing evidence to achieve well-founded impartial decisions & reasoning

## Desirable competences

**D1.** Understanding of professional regulation and its impact on public protection

**D2.** Demonstrable commitment to accountability – taking personal responsibility and holding others to account

**D3.** Handling and managing complaints

## Eligibility criteria

To be **eligible to apply**, applicants **must:**

- ✓ have the right to live and work in the UK;
- ✓ be over 18 years of age; and
- ✓ be a lay person (i.e. never been registered with the General Optical Council; held qualifications which would entitle you to apply for registration with the General Optical Council; and/or been a Director of a body corporate registered with the General Optical Council).

**You are ineligible to apply** if you have previously served:

- × as a Hearing Panel member for the GOC for the maximum of ten years; and/or
- × as a GOC Council member, a GOC employee (excluding Case Examiners) or as an independent member of a GOC non-statutory committee (i.e. Audit, Risk and Finance, Remuneration and/or Nominations committee) and less than two years has passed since your service ended.

## Disqualification criteria

Applicants **must not:**

- × have an unspent UK conviction for deception/dishonesty **or** an unspent UK conviction for any offence which received a sentence of imprisonment or detention;
- × have ever been convicted of any offence outside the UK **unless** the GOC is satisfied that your membership would not be likely to undermine public confidence in its regulation of registrants;
- × have ever been removed as a charity trustee, officer, agent or employee on the ground of misconduct or mismanagement **or** ever been removed as a chair, member, convenor or director of a public body on the grounds that continuation of your office was not in the interests of, or conducive to the good management of, that body; **and/or**
- × currently be an undischarged bankrupt **or** subject to bankruptcy restrictions, an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) or a UK disqualification order as a company director.

**Your fitness to practise status (if you are subject to regulation by a regulator and/or any other licensing body)**

You are **disqualified from appointment** if you:

- × are currently subject to interim or substantive suspension from the register;
- × have ever been erased from the register following an investigation into your fitness to practise **or** into an allegation that your registration was fraudulently procured;
- × are currently subject to interim or substantive conditional registration; and/or
- × have received a financial penalty order, and payment was due less than two years ago.

Please refer to Paragraph 2A of the [General Optical Council Committee Constitution Rules 2005](#) for exact wording / requirements. We **strongly advise** all candidates to read these criteria carefully – you are required to confirm in the application form that you have done so. If you are in any doubt or require further guidance please [contact us](#) before proceeding with your application.

## Management of interests

The Appointments Panel for this campaign will consist of Gareth Hadley (lay Chair of Council), Josie Forte (registrant optometrist member of Council) and Penny Bennett (external independent member). You are asked to declare in the application form if you have any prior knowledge of or connection to any of the Panel.

The successful candidate must be prepared to declare and manage any interests held. You are required to declare on the application form any business or personal interests that might be relevant to our work, as well as any close personal relationships with GOC employees or Council/committee members. Any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the Panel. Candidates will be given an opportunity to propose how they would manage or eliminate the conflict.

It is possible that certain conflicts will not be manageable or they might be dealt with as a condition of appointment (for example, a candidate needing to terminate their conflicting activity in order to take up the role). We recommend you read our [Management of Interests Policy](#) and consider any interests that may conflict with the role before deciding to apply.

Examples of **conflicts that will require the candidate to give up their existing role upon appointment** include GOC:

- Case Examiners;
- statutory advisory committee members (Education, Standards, Registration, Companies and Investigation); and
- Education Visitor Panel members.

## Standards in public life

Members are expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct including impartiality, integrity and objectivity in the execution of the role.

Members must at all times demonstrate respect and dignity for others; a commitment to diversity and equal opportunities; and conduct themselves in a non-discriminatory manner. To ensure that these values are maintained by those in public service, successful candidates are required to subscribe to our [code of conduct](#) on appointment and confirm they understand the standards of probity outlined in the "[Seven Principles of Public Life](#)".

# How to apply & complete the application form

**APPLY HERE:** [https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HPL02\\_19/](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HPL02_19/)

**CLOSING DATE:** 12 noon, Wednesday 24 July 2019

We operate a system of anonymised applications for all vacancies. For more information on what this means and how it works please refer to our [Member Appointments Guide](#). You do not need to complete the application form in one go. The application form provides details on how you can save your progress as you go. If you are unable to apply online, require an application form in a different format, require any reasonable adjustments or are experiencing any difficulties please [contact us](#).

## Completing the application form

It is **absolutely essential that your application provides evidence of how you meet the competences required** because the Appointments Panel will use this to assess your suitability for the role. It is not sufficient to say that you have the relevant experience – you should provide evidence of how you have made a success of that experience by describing how you acted in particular scenarios, and what effect(s) the action(s) had. For this reason **we highly recommend using the ‘STARR’ approach for each competency**. It will help you break down the word limit into four/five manageable chunks with the majority on the **Action** and **Results** (and **Reflection** 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 (this could be in a professional / employment situation, personal, academically, through volunteering 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)

- late applications **will not** be permitted under any circumstances. It is the candidate’s responsibility to complete their application and submit it by the deadline.
- we **will not** accept CV’s, covering letters or any other supporting documentation to accompany your application (this includes any links to work that you have had published or been involved with). Such information will be removed from your application and will not be submitted to the Panel.

1. We will follow the process set out in our [Member Appointments Guide](#) for this campaign. We will update our website as this campaign progresses in case there are any announcements / changes and to keep candidates informed. We therefore advise candidates to regularly [check our website](#) for updates. The key dates for this campaign are set out on [page one](#) of this pack.
2. Applications **must** be received by the closing date and time. Extensions **will not** be provided under any circumstances. If we do not receive your completed application by the specified closing date and time, it will be assumed you are no longer interested. Partially completed applications will not be forwarded to the Panel for consideration. We aim to acknowledge your application within two working days. For further details of our customer service commitments please refer to our [Member Appointments Guide](#).
3. Applications put forward to the Panel are anonymous. Each application will be assigned a unique reference number which we will notify you of when we acknowledge receipt. If there are any problems with your application, you will be contacted straight away. For further details of our anonymous application format please refer to our [Member Appointments Guide](#).
4. Once sifting/shortlisting has been undertaken, the Panel will agree who they wish to invite to interview. Once the Panel have determined who they wish to invite to interview, your application will no longer be anonymous and your identity will be shared with the Panel.
5. Candidates shortlisted for interview will be notified no later than one week before interviews. If you have **not** heard from us by this date, please assume you have not been invited to interview. This will be confirmed to you via email.
6. Interviews will take place at the GOC office: 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG during eight days in September / October 2019: Thurs 19, Fri 20, Mon 23, Tues 24, Thurs 26, Fri 27 & Mon 30 September and Tues 1 October 2019. Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the published dates, the Panel *may* consider a new date, but this is at their discretion and in light of those interviewed first time.
7. [Due diligence checks](#) are carried out **prior** to interview. The Panel will be provided with the results of the due diligence checks ahead of interviews.
8. If invited to interview, the Panel will ask questions about your experience and expertise to find whether you meet the competences as set out on [page four](#) of this pack.
9. If in the view of the Panel, you are able to demonstrate that your skills and experience most closely match the competences required for this position, you will be offered appointment. References for candidates who are offered appointment will be taken after interview. We anticipate that this will be during w/c 14 October 2019. Please ensure that your referees are aware and will be able to respond during that time. An appointment will not be confirmed until the GOC has received two satisfactory references.
10. Feedback is available on request for interviewed candidates only.
11. On appointment, you will receive further information about training and induction.

## 1. Is being a Hearing Panel member a job?

No. This is a public appointment/statutory office, rather than a job, and is therefore not subject to the provisions of employment law.

## 2. How do you schedule hearings?

Hearings are held Monday to Friday. We seek availability from members in advance (up to 6 months). We also email members for availability of short notice hearings (a weekly availability email). Allocation of a hearing is determined on your availability, the GOC's requirements, any conflicts of interest you might have and how many days you have already sat (priority is given to members who have sat fewer days to ensure that all members are actively participating in hearings).

## 3. If I agree to sit on a three week hearing do I need to be in London (or wherever the hearing is taking place) every day?

Yes. Members can claim [expenses](#), at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs incurred on hearings business.

## 4. I can only be available for shorter hearings (i.e. a maximum of two days a week) – should I still apply?

All members are expected to sit on a variety of shorter and longer hearings (this will be a requirement of appointment). Candidates should bear this in mind when applying.

## 5. How much pre-reading / preparation in advance of a hearing is required?

Members are sent pre-reading material up to five days in advance. The volume of any pre-reading / preparation depends on the complexity of the case. [Additional fees](#) are payable on an ad hoc basis where the volume exceeds 500 pages.

## 6. I have previously been a GOC Hearings Panellist – can I apply again?

Yes as long as you have not served more than the maximum term of ten years. Please [contact us](#) if you are unsure whether you are [eligible to apply](#).

## 7. I am having problems with the online application form / I need to apply in a different way / I require reasonable adjustments / I have started my application but have not been sent the link to finish it – what should I do?

Please [contact us](#) or call us on 0207 307 3934 or 07989 147099. If you have not been sent the link to complete your application we will need to verify your identity before we can provide this to you.

## 8. 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.

## 9. I have more questions about this role – who should I contact?

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

## 10. 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.

## 11. Why am I required to provide equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data as part of my application?

We monitor diversity at all stages of every campaign using the information you have provided in section five of the application form. All questions provide candidates with the option to state 'prefer not to say' if they wish. The information provided is treated as strictly confidential and is used for monitoring purposes only. It is shared in an anonymous format with the Panel after appointment decisions have been made and assists us in establishing the impact of our processes on particular groups or characteristics. No information is published in any way which allows individuals to be identified. Our [approach to monitoring](#) and information gathered from appointment campaigns is published annually in our [monitoring report](#). Our [Member Appointments Guide](#) also provides more information about our commitment to equality and diversity.

## 12. 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 by the Panel at interview.

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

No. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances. It is imperative that applicants do not leave their submission until the last minute. 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 choose to submit their application in a different format i.e. via email.

## 14. 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 on the published interview date(s) the Panel *may* consider a new date, but this is at their discretion and in light of those interviewed first time.

## 15. Can I observe a public Hearing before I apply?

Yes. Details of how to do this can be found on the '[Overview of the role](#)' section of this guide. Please note that we will not reimburse accommodation or travel expenses for observing hearings.

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

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. We undertake the following checks prior to interview for this role: Google search (against candidate name); LinkedIn review; insolvency; disqualified directors; professional memberships; social media; other roles with (or associated with) the GOC; your fitness to practice status (if you are subject to regulation via another regulator/licensing body).

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

You will be contacted via telephone and email with a minimum of one week's notice. The interview dates are [published at the front of this candidate information pack](#) and candidates are asked to advise on their application form if they can attend the dates given. All candidates are expected to attend interviews in person. If you are unable to do this please [contact us](#).

## **18. Why have I been asked to bring my passport (or other documentation) to my interview?**

We ask all candidates to bring with them identification which verifies their right to live and work in the UK (such as their passport). If you are unable to provide such identification please [contact us](#).

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

Yes, within the limits set out in our published [expenses policy](#). If you are invited to interview, further details will be provided to you in your interview confirmation.

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

Due to the volume of applications we receive we do not offer feedback unless you are interviewed. We aim to advise candidates who were not invited to interview within 28 days of the closing date via email and will include a broad overview of the reasons why applications were unsuccessful following feedback from the Panel. All candidates who have been interviewed will be given the opportunity to receive feedback on request.

## **21. What does being 'placed on reserve' mean?**

At present we have a cap on the number of Hearing Panellists we are allowed to appoint. We are seeking legislative change to have this cap removed thereby allowing us to appoint more Panellists. We currently anticipate appointments for these roles as of early November 2019, however if legislative change has not been approved by this time all appointable applicants will be held on reserve for up to two years and appointed when we are able.

## **22. 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. Your application will not be shared outside of the Appointments Panel without your consent.

## **23. I am unhappy – how do I complain?**

If you wish to complain please [contact us](#) in the first instance or refer to the GOC [corporate complaints and feedback policy](#).