Candidate Information Pack GOC01/18:

Hearing Panel members:
one optometrist and one lay person

This information pack is available in alternative formats (for example, braille, audio or large print). Please submit your request to the Governance team (appointment@optical.org).
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Timeline & Selection Panel

Application deadline: 12:00pm on Monday 19 March 2018

Interview dates: Thursday 31 May & Friday 1 June 2018

Selection Panel: Gareth Hadley (panel chair), Helen Tilley (panel member) and Penny Bennett (independent assessor)

Key contact: appointment@optical.org / 07989 147099
1. **Foreword from the Chair of Council**

Thank you for expressing your interest in this role and for taking the time to read this candidate information pack, which I hope provides all the information you need to apply.

We are seeking to appoint two Hearing Panel members: one optometrist and one lay member.

The GOC’s primary purpose is to assure the health and protection of those who use the services of optometrists and dispensing opticians. We currently register around 30,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

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. 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.

For further information, please email appointment@optical.org and we aim to respond to your query within 48 hours.

Please quote reference **GOC01/18** on all correspondence.

Gareth Hadley, Chair, General Optical Council
February 2018
2. About the GOC and overview of the role

We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. Our purpose is to protect the public by promoting high standards of education, performance and conduct amongst opticians. Please visit our website for more information on our mission and values and regulatory functions.

If you would like to hear what current committee members say about their role on the Panel please visit our website.

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<th>Hearing Panel</th>
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<td><strong>Description:</strong> 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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**Time commitment / appointment tenure**

Both roles are part time with a commitment of approximately 30 - 40 days per annum. The initial appointment will be four years with the possibility of reappointment. The maximum term of office will be ten years. Reappointment is dependent on a satisfactory performance review and the needs of both the Panel and Council.

**Fees and expenses**

A fee of £311 is paid per day when acting as a Panel member. This is taxable and subject to Class 1 National Insurance (NI) contributions. It is not pensionable. Members can claim expenses, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs incurred on committee business.

**Training and development**

Appropriate training and induction will be provided and tailored to the role. A fee of £218 is paid for attendance at full day induction or development sessions, not attached to another meeting/hearing.

**Performance review process**

Committee members are required to take part in our review process, which involves routine discussions with the committee chair and third-party feedback.
3. Person specification

Candidates will be required to provide in their application form examples of how their experience matches the competences required to be effective in the role outlined below.

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.

Candidates who are shortlisted for interview will need to demonstrate they have these competences. 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.

Essential competences:

- ability to listen, communicate and influence effectively - articulating clear reasoning;
- demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion – dealing with people and issues honestly, fairly and with respect;
- ability to impartially analyse and interpret complex information and evidence - demonstrating intellectual flexibility and sound judgment;
- ability to build supportive relationships and work as a team - welcoming and showing regard to the views and advice of others and supporting collective decision making;
- ability to understand and operate within a complex legislative framework - thinking logically and weighing evidence to achieve well-founded impartial decisions and reasoning.

Essential competency for the optometrist member:

- current “hands on” experience of delivery of a wide range of services in optical primary and/or secondary care; OR significant involvement with current practice in other roles, for example education, which could include (but is not limited to): dispensing contact lenses; awareness of commercial pressures in optical practices; General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) contracts; referral procedures; Local Optical Committee dealings with specialised local service delivery such as glaucoma, cataract and diabetic screening; and clinical-based secondary care issues.

Essential competency for the lay person member:

- ability to articulate patient safety issues, patient advocacy and public involvement and/or the interests of service users who are especially vulnerable because of income, other circumstances, or complex optical requirements.

Desirable competences:

- demonstrable commitment to accountability - taking personal responsibility and holding others to account;
- an understanding of professional regulation and its impact on public protection; and
- handling and managing complaints.
4. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply applicants must:

- not be disqualified from appointment – as detailed in the GOC (Committee Constitution) Rules 2005 Part 1A;
- be prepared to declare and able to manage any interests held – see below;
- for the Optometrist role – be registered with the GOC as a fully qualified optometrist. We will not accept applications from student registrants; or
- for the lay member role – not be, nor have ever been registered with the GOC, or a director of a body corporate registered with the GOC, and cannot hold qualifications which would entitle them to apply for registration.

Management of interests

You are required to declare on the application form any business or personal interests that might be relevant to our work, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest were you to be appointed. You should also declare if you have any close personal relationships with a GOC employee or member. Any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the selection 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 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 are likely to require the candidate to give up their existing role for a period of at least two years include:

- former GOC employees; and
- GOC Council members and independent members of GOC non statutory committees (audit and risk assurance, remuneration and nominations).

Examples of conflicts that are likely to require the candidate to give up their existing role upon appointment include:

- GOC case examiners; and
- GOC Statutory advisory committee members (Education, Standards, Registration, Companies and Investigation).

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 and responsibilities. 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”. This post is a public appointment/statutory office, rather than a job and therefore is not subject to the provisions of employment law.
5. How to apply

Application forms and the EDI monitoring form can be downloaded from our website.

We recommend you read this pack, paying particular attention to the competences required, before starting to complete your application form, so you can take this into account when writing your competency statements.

We recommend you allow ample time to complete and review the application form. Please do not assume the selection panel will rate your application based on your CV. Make sure you include plenty of evidence in your application form.

Please send your completed application, with a CV if desired (no more than 3 A4 sides) and a completed EDI monitoring form, to appointment@optical.org by 12:00pm, Monday 19 March 2018.

If you submit a CV it should outline your employment history, any relevant voluntary work, public service or other experience; together with any relevant professional, academic or vocational qualifications. Your CV will be used to assist the assessment of your expertise but it will not be used as a substitute for fully completing the application form. Please note that CVs alone will not be accepted.

The EDI monitoring form will be separated from your application form prior to shortlisting. We are committed to ensuring equality and diversity and completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the application. We use this form to monitor diversity at all stages of the appointments process – see section seven of this pack.

To ensure fairness to all candidates, any additional information you provide will be removed from your application (for example, cover letters, appraisals, examples of work, etc.). The Panel will assess your suitability for the role (against the stated competences) via the application form only (with CV to assist if submitted).

If you have any questions please contact us at appointment@optical.org and we will aim to respond to you within 48 hours. You may also contact us by mail (10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG) or telephone 07989 147099.

How to complete competency based answers in the application form

Providing competency statements is important because the selection panel will use them to assess your suitability for the role. 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.

For each competency, think about and consider providing examples which:

- can be used to demonstrate how you meet the competency;
- allow you to explain in some detail your individual involvement and role in the matter;
- had a positive impact (less successful examples are just as acceptable but you may wish to reflect in your answer the lessons learned);
- clearly identify the impact of your actions; and
- can allow you to highlight other key skills or knowledge mentioned in the candidate pack (if possible).
You may wish to consider adopting the STAR(R) approach (Situation, Task, Action, Results (Reflection)) to structure your answer. Furthermore, 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 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 – 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 recommend you do not leave an answer box blank. By leaving it blank you indicate that you do not (or cannot) meet the competency.

Reviewing your application

It is helpful to review your application before submission, considering whether you:

- have included everything that you needed to;
- have included anything irrelevant or repetitive;
- are able to re-write your statement to adhere to the 300 word limit, without losing any necessary information; and/or
- whether you could use bullet points to summarise.

Once you have reviewed your answers, take a moment to thoroughly proofread it. Check for errors — especially typos and misspellings. You could ask someone you trust to do this so they can give feedback on the content, grammar and spelling.

6. Appointments process

For more information please refer to our Appointments Policy and Process. We will process your application as quickly as possible and will keep you informed at key stages. Please read the information below carefully, which outlines important information and our process once we receive your application:

1. We will acknowledge receipt of your application (by email if provided) and check it for completeness and eligibility. If we are unable to open or print your application or your application is incomplete, you will be contacted immediately. If we then do not receive your application by the specified time, it will be assumed you are no longer interested in the role.

2. Where 30 or more applications are received, applications will be “pre-assessed”¹ by a panel member (most likely the Independent Assessor²) before being forwarded to the full selection panel for consideration. In this event, you should be aware your application might not be considered in full by all selection panel members.

¹ This involves all applications being sifted against the stated competences to reduce the number of applications to approximately 30. The chair of the panel will then undertake a dip-sift of the discarded applications before the final list of those to be sifted goes forward to the remainder of the selection panel

² Independent assessors bring an external, independent and unbiased perspective to our non-executive appointments process.
3. **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. Please note that feedback will only be available to candidates who attend interview but are not appointed.

4. Interviews will take place at the GOC office – 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG.

5. Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the published dates, the selection panel may consider a new date, but this is at their discretion and in light of those interviewed first time.

6. If invited to interview, the selection panel will ask questions about your experience and expertise to find whether you meet the competences as set out in the person specification.

7. If, in the view of the selection 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.

8. All candidates who have been interviewed will be notified of the outcome once the final decision has been made, which we expect to be during the week following interviews.

9. References for candidates who are offered appointment will be taken following interview. An appointment will not be confirmed until the GOC has received two satisfactory references.

10. On appointment, you will receive further information about training and induction.

7. **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

We strive to be as diverse as the public we protect and welcome 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 appointments will be made solely on merit. We believe that for any organisation to be successful, it needs to work with the most talented and diverse people available. We positively encourage applications from people from all of the community, from all backgrounds and with a broad range of experience. We 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 person specification.

To ensure all candidates are treated fairly, we monitor diversity at all stages of the appointments process taking information from the monitoring form submitted on application. Information provided is treated as strictly confidential and will be used for monitoring purposes only. It will not be seen by anyone directly involved in the selection process. It will not be treated as part of your application but completion and submission of the monitoring form is a mandatory requirement of application. 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.
We 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. We also consider the same standards will be applicable for paternity or shared parental leave. We are committed to ensuring excellent flexible working arrangements.

If you would like to discuss your requirements for reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process in more detail please contact us on 07989 147099. If you would like more information on reasonable adjustments please see the EHRC website.

8. Data protection

Our information governance framework and associated policies are published on our website. We are required to retain information about the people who apply for public appointments and make this available for audit purposes, if requested to do so. We hold the information we collect in respect of public appointments as per our retention schedule and then securely destroy it. This includes:

- initial contact details, including your name and address;
- application form and any supporting documentation; and
- EDI monitoring information.

This information is used to process your application and appointment if successful.

Some of the information requested on the application form will be made public if you are appointed (your name, brief career/background history, other public appointments held, any other information that it is in the public interest to disclose). As a public body, we may be required to release information on request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. However, we will not permit any unwarranted breach of confidentiality or privacy nor will we act in contravention of our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. By signing the application form you consent to the information being used in this way.

If you wish to further discuss how we use your information, please do not hesitate to contact our Compliance Team via foi@optical.org or telephone 0207 307 3898.

9. Dealing with your concerns

We aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and in accordance with our appointments process which will be applied consistently to all applicants. However, if you have a complaint about the process used in this appointment campaign, please refer to our policy on complaints and feedback about the GOC which provides guidance on what can and cannot be considered and how to raise concerns. In the first instance, you should raise your concern/complaint informally within 48 hours of the action you are complaining about.

You can raise you concern by letter (10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG), email (appointment@optical.org) or telephone 0207 307 3898.