

**BEFORE THE FITNESS TO PRACTISE COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

F(24)21

AND

IMAAD AMANAT (01-39014)

**DETERMINATION OF A SUBSTANTIVE REVIEW
19 MAY 2025**

Committee Members:	Sara Nathan (Chair) Miriam Karp (Lay) Nicola Enston (Lay) Claire Roberts (Optometrist) Kalpana Theophilus (Optometrist)
Legal adviser:	Aaminah Khan
GOC Presenting Officer:	Holly Huxtable
Registrant:	Present and represented
Registrant representative:	Andrew Malloy
Hearings Officer:	Terence Yates
Outcome:	Not impaired

DETERMINATION

Background

1. On 22 March 2023, the Registrant was first registered with the GOC as an Optometrist. He was employed as a resident Optometrist with Specsavers in the [Branch B]. The allegations arise out of his attendance at a consultation at the Specsavers [Branch A] on 26 March 2023.
2. Registrant 1 and Registrant 2 were registered student Optometrists working at Specsavers [Branch A]. Registrant 1 was a friend of the Registrant. The Registrant had never previously had an appointment at Specsavers [Branch A], nor had he been provided with any trial contact lenses. On 2 February 2023, Registrant 1 asked Registrant 2, via Snapchat message, to access his profile and complete a clinical record relating to a contact lens fit for a patient, when there had been no contact lens trial and the clinical record was a fabrication. Registrant 2 used Registrant 1's code to access his profile and complete a contact lens fit on the false clinical record, recording that it took place on 1 February 2023.
3. On 26 March 2023, the Registrant attended Specsavers [Branch A] for a consultation. He was seen by Ms A, a resident Optometrist at Specsavers [Branch A]. When Ms A called the Registrant into the consultation room, she asked why he had attended. She was told that it was for an end of trial for contact lenses. During the consultation, Registrant 1 entered the room and told Ms A that he was a friend of the Registrant.
4. Concerns were raised as to the legitimacy of the consultation and other concerns relating to Registrant 1's actions. Both branches of Specsavers conducted their own respective investigations into the Registrant, Registrant 1 and Registrant 2.
5. On 21 June 2023, a referral was made to the GOC by Specsavers [Branch A], which included concerns regarding the Registrant's actions relating to the 26 March 2023 consultation.
6. On 26 July 2023, Specsavers [Branch B] conducted a formal disciplinary hearing with the Registrant. In that hearing, the Registrant knowingly made a number of incorrect statements as follows:
 - a. Registrant 1 had not been present during the consultation, whereas the Registrant knew Registrant 1 had been present;
 - b. The Registrant had not learned until after the consultation that Registrant 1 was under investigation, whereas the Registrant had been aware at the time of the consultation that Registrant 1 had been under investigation; and
 - c. The Registrant had not told anyone about his attendance at the consultation as he did not consider it to be significant and thought it was already being dealt with, whereas he knew it was significant.
 - d. On 21 August 2023, Specsavers [Branch B] confirmed to the Registrant that no further disciplinary action would be taken in respect of him.
 - e. At the substantive hearing, the Registrant admitted that he gave the inaccurate answers in his disciplinary hearing and that they were intended to interfere with and obstruct the formal disciplinary and investigation

processes in respect of himself (but not Registrant 1) and that he did so dishonestly.

- f. The Registrant denied that he colluded with Registrant 1 or discussed with him the responses he would give if he were asked about the consultation.
- g. At a substantive hearing, which took place between 11 and 15 November 2024, the Registrant made admissions and/or the following facts were found proved:

ALLEGATION

The Council alleges that in relation to you, Imaad Amanat (01-39014), a registered optometrist:

- 1) *On 26 March 2023, you attended Specsavers [Branch A] for a contact lens end of trial consultation ('the Consultation') and your attendance at the Consultation was inappropriate because you knew that:*
 - a. *The reason for your attendance was to assist Registrant 1; and/or*
 - b. *You had not been provided with any trial lenses prior to attending the appointment; and/or*
 - c. *You did not have a genuine intention to continue with the contact lenses and/or purchase any contact lenses from the store following the appointment; and/or*
 - d. *Your attendance would inappropriately assist Registrant 1 with their preregistration requirements to become a fully qualified registrant.*
- 2) ~~*On or around 29 March 2023, you colluded and/or discussed with Registrant 1 the responses you would give if you were asked about the Consultation.*~~ **Submission of no case to answer upheld**
- 3) *On 26 July 2023, you attended a disciplinary hearing conducted by Specsavers [Branch B] and you stated the following in response to questions you were asked, or words to the effect that:*
 - a. *Registrant 1 had not been present during the Consultation; and/or*
 - b. *You had learned after the Consultation that Registrant 1 was under investigation; and/or*
 - c. *You had not told anyone about your attendance at the Consultation as you had not considered it to be significant and thought it was already being dealt with.*
- 4) *You knew that:*
 - a. *Registrant 1 had been present for some of the Consultation; and/or*
 - b. *You had been aware at the time of the Consultation that Registrant 1 was under investigation; and/or*
 - c. *Your attendance at the Consultation was significant.*
- 5) *Your actions as set out at paragraphs 2 and/or 3 were intended to interfere with and/or obstruct the ongoing formal disciplinary and/or investigation processes.*

- 6) *Your actions as set out at paragraph 1 were dishonest.*
- 7) *Your actions as set out at paragraphs 2 ~~and/or~~ 3 were dishonest by reason of paragraphs 4 and/or 5.*
7. The Committee found misconduct and that the Registrant was currently impaired on the personal element (as the Committee was not satisfied that the Registrant had yet fully remediated his misconduct) and also on the public interest element. The Registrant's registration was suspended for 6 months, with a review hearing directed. No immediate order of suspension was imposed. The order is due to expire on 11 June 2025.
8. At the substantive hearing, the Committee considered that the Review Committee may be assisted by:
- Evidence that the Registrant has undertaken targeted and relevant professional development/training in respect of probity and ethics;
 - A detailed reflective statement incorporating the particular learning the Registrant has gained from the relevant professional development/training; and
 - Testimonials from any current employer, manager or equivalent in either paid or unpaid work, attesting to their knowledge of the Registrant's integrity.

The Review hearing

9. The Committee considered the documentary evidence that was before it, which included (but was not limited to), evidence from the substantive hearing, the earlier Committee's substantive determination and the Council's written submissions. The Registrant's bundle contained certificates from CPD courses, a reflective witness statement from the Registrant and a testimonial from his pre-registration supervisor and colleague with whom he had continued contact. The Registrant did not give oral evidence.
10. The Committee then heard submissions from Ms Huxtable on behalf of the Council and from Mr Malloy on behalf of the Registrant in relation to current impairment.
11. Ms Huxtable outlined the background to the case, the findings of the substantive Committee and the law and procedure on review hearings. She reminded the Committee that there was a burden upon the Registrant to show that his fitness to practise was no longer impaired and that the Committee had to consider the matter of impairment afresh.
12. Ms Huxtable outlined that the Council had considered the Registrant's bundle and had a few observations regarding the remediation that the Registrant had undertaken, namely that the testimonial was not from a current employer, as suggested by the substantive Committee, so it was unclear how the Registrant could show that he had insight in his current role. She suggested that it may have been preferable for a statement to have been obtained from someone in the [redacted] business where the Registrant has been working.

13. Ms Huxtable acknowledged that the issue of current impairment was a matter for the independent judgement of the Committee. Ms Huxtable submitted that the central question for the Committee was whether the Registrant had taken sufficient steps to indicate that the risk of repetition was fully mitigated and he had remediated the misconduct.
14. Mr Malloy, on behalf of the Registrant, invited the Committee to find that the Registrant was no longer impaired. He submitted that the review was to effectively monitor the Registrant's progress and he reminded the Committee that it was not bound by the previous decisions of the earlier Committee.
15. Mr Malloy submitted that the earlier Committee had found that the misconduct was remediable and when considering if that had now been remediated, that could be answered in the affirmative. At the substantive hearing, it was found that the Registrant had started to develop insight and Mr Malloy submitted that full insight had now been shown. Mr Malloy highlighted sections of the Registrant's reflective statement, which he submitted showed that he appreciated the seriousness of the misconduct and had reflected upon how to change his practice going forwards.
16. Mr Malloy highlighted that the substantive Committee had recommended steps, which the Registrant had since undertaken, including attending relevant and targeted CPD courses on probity and ethics. He submitted that the Registrant had undertaken the further remediation and reflection envisaged by the earlier Committee, as set out in his reflective statement, to the point that his fitness to practise was no longer impaired. Mr Malloy highlighted that there had been no repetition of the misconduct and when looking at future risk, he submitted that this was low.
17. In relation to the testimonial, Mr Malloy submitted that an appropriate testimonial had been provided from someone in Optometry who had contact with the Registrant throughout the suspension. He submitted that a testimonial from a [redacted] member would not have had as much value.
18. Mr Malloy further submitted that the suspension was primarily to mark the conduct and to meet the public interest. However, the public interest had been met by the six-month suspension and the Registrant had '*served his time*'. He invited the Committee to find that the Registrant was safe to return to unrestricted practice and is not now impaired.
19. Mr Malloy answered questions from the Committee, which included to confirm the date of the testimonial (4 May 2025) and reflective statement (12 May 2025), to expand upon how the Registrant was a different practitioner and to confirm details of the extent of the engagement between the Registrant and his referee (his former supervisor).
20. The Committee accepted the advice of the Legal Adviser, who referred the Committee to the relevant sections of the Hearings and Indicative Sanctions Guidance 2021. It was advised that the Committee will need to satisfy itself that the Registrant has fully appreciated the gravity of the offence, has not re-offended and has maintained their skills and knowledge, and that the Registrant's patients will not be placed at risk by resumption of practice. The Committee was advised that at a Review hearing, there is in effect a persuasive burden upon a Registrant to demonstrate that they are fit to resume unrestricted practice.

Findings regarding impairment

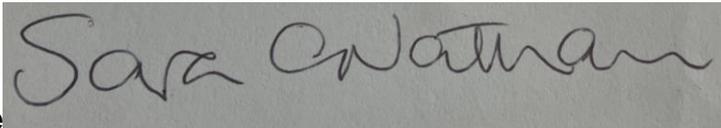
21. This Committee took account of the substantive hearing decision and the findings of the previous Committee, as well as the steps which it had recommended may assist at a Review hearing, as set out above.
22. The Committee considered that the Registrant has followed these recommendations, as he has provided documentary evidence of relevant and targeted training and a detailed reflective statement, reflecting on the remediation that he had undertaken since the earlier hearing. Further, he has produced a testimonial from his pre-registration supervisor, whom he has been in monthly contact with since his suspension.
23. Whilst this testimonial was not from a current employer, the Committee considered that a testimonial from a current employer was not required given that the Registrant has been working in a [redacted] business (not in Optometry). The Committee was satisfied that the testimonial from the Registrant's former supervisor was helpful and showed that the Registrant had maintained a good working relationship with his former supervisor, whom he has engaged with regularly over his period of suspension. The Committee considered this testimonial was sufficient to address this aspect of what had been recommended by the earlier Committee. Therefore, the Committee concluded that the Registrant had done all of what had been asked of him in terms of remediation.
24. In relation to the reflective statement produced by the Registrant, the Committee considered that this was detailed and demonstrated that the Registrant had reflected further during his period of suspension. In the statement the Registrant has shown regret and that he appreciates the seriousness of his misconduct. Additionally, it showed that he had gained an understanding of the moral reasoning behind his misconduct and the impact of it upon his colleagues, the public and the profession.
25. The Committee considered that the Registrant had undertaken relevant and targeted CPD courses on probity, reflection and remediation, which addressed the nature of the misconduct in this case.
26. The Committee noted that at the substantive hearing the Committee found that at that stage the Registrant had started to develop insight. In the period since, the Committee was satisfied on the evidence before it, that the Registrant had now developed good insight into the misconduct found and understood the gravity of his misconduct. The Committee noted that there had been no repetition of the misconduct since it occurred over two years ago and considered that the misconduct was highly unlikely to be repeated. It was the view of the Committee that the Registrant's skills and knowledge would have remained up to date, given the relatively short period of suspension and that he was at an early stage of his career.
27. The Committee was mindful that there was in effect a persuasive burden on the Registrant to demonstrate that he is fit to resume unrestricted practice. The Committee was satisfied that given the further reflection and remediation that had taken place since the suspension was imposed, that the Registrant had demonstrated he was safe to return to unrestricted practice.

28. The Committee considered whether the public interest required a finding of impairment to be made, in order to maintain public confidence in the profession and/or to declare and uphold standards in the profession. The Committee concluded that the original suspension for a period of six-months appropriately marked the misconduct. In view of the steps that the Registrant had undertaken to reflect, develop his insight and remediate, and with there being no repetition, the Committee was of the view that it was not necessary, nor proportionate, to make a finding of impairment on public interest grounds.
29. Accordingly, the Committee found that the fitness of Imaad Amanat to practise as an Optometrist is not impaired.

Declaration

30. The Committee makes a formal declaration that the Registrant's fitness to practise is no longer impaired for the reasons above. The substantive suspension order will expire at the conclusion of the six-month period for which it was imposed.

Chair of the Committee: Sara Nathan

Signature  **Date: 19 May 2025**

Registrant: Imaad Amanat

Signature *present and received via email* **Date: 19 May 2025**

INFORMATION
Transcript
A full transcript of the hearing will be made available for purchase in due course.
Appeal
Any appeal against an order of the Committee must be lodged with the relevant court within 28 days of the service of this notification. If no appeal is lodged, the order will take effect at the end of that period. The relevant court is shown at section 23G(4)(a)-(c) of the Opticians Act 1989 (as amended).
Professional Standards Authority
<p>This decision will be reported to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) under the provisions of section 29 of the NHS Reform and Healthcare Professions Act 2002. PSA may refer this case to the High Court of Justice in England and Wales, the Court of Session in Scotland or the High Court of Justice in Northern Ireland as appropriate if they decide that a decision has been insufficient to protect the public and/or should not have been made, and if they consider that referral is desirable for the protection of the public.</p> <p>Where a registrant can appeal against a decision, the Authority has 40 days beginning with the day which is the last day in which you can appeal. Where a registrant cannot appeal against the outcome of a hearing, the Authority's appeal period is 56 days beginning with the day in which notification of the decision was served on you. PSA will notify you promptly of a decision to refer. A letter will be sent by recorded delivery to your registered address (unless PSA has been notified by the GOC of a change of address).</p> <p>Further information about the PSA can be obtained from its website at www.professionalstandards.org.uk or by telephone on 020 7389 8030.</p>
Effect of orders for suspension or erasure
To practise or carry on business as an optometrist or dispensing optician, to take or use a description which implies registration or entitlement to undertake any activity which the law restricts to a registered person, may amount to a criminal offence once an entry in the register has been suspended or erased.
Contact
If you require any further information, please contact the Council's Hearings Manager at Level 29, One Canada Square, London, E14 5AA or by telephone, on 020 7580 3898.