

Council Scheme of Delegation

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Council Scheme of Delegation

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To set out the scheme of delegation for Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 Council has approved a scheme of delegation that sets out which specific statutory powers and duties have been reserved by Council, and where they have been delegated by Council to a committee, the Chief Executive and Registrar or another officer or employee of the Council. The powers and duties originate from the Opticians Act 1989 (and the rules made under the act). This forms section 2 of the below scheme.
- 2.2 In addition to its statutory powers and duties, Council has also identified the key strategies, policies and procedures it considers necessary to discharge its responsibilities as a regulator and charity. The delegations relating to these policies and procedures are set out in section 1 of the below scheme.
- 2.3 Where matters have been delegated, such matters may be further delegated to an officer or employee of the Council, unless this document specifies that this shall not be the case. Notwithstanding any further delegation, the Council will hold to account the named person or committee it has delegated the function to in the scheme for the exercise of those functions.
- 2.4 Other than where functions are delegated to committees, other structures or to the Chief of Staff (in the case of some limited governance functions), the Council regards the Chief Executive and Registrar as its single point of delegation. Council holds this position accountable for meeting the Council's expectations for organisational performance. If the Chief Executive and Registrar chooses to delegate these functions further, they will be held accountable by the Council for the discharge of all functions delegated under the Scheme. This accountability is demonstrated through monitoring reports submitted to the Council.

3. Using this scheme

- 3.1 Employees are expected to refer to this scheme before discharging any of the powers or duties described within.
- 3.2 This document is one of several that describe the GOC governance arrangements, known collectively as the GOC governance handbook. You should read this document in conjunction with the standing orders for financial management and the financial regulations.
- 3.3 When using this framework, you should also follow any relevant guidance, organisational policies, and any agreed standing operating procedures within your own team or Directorate.
- 3.4 The Chief of Staff is responsible for maintaining the scheme and should be consulted if further advice is required.

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- 3.5 The Chief of Staff has delegated authority to amend the scheme to reflect a change of job titles or minor alterations in operational responsibilities. However, this delegation is limited so they cannot alter the level of seniority that a power or duty is delegated to, or if an organisational restructure means significant amendments are required. Such amendments require the approval of Council.

4. Reviewing this scheme

- 4.1 This scheme will be reviewed at least every five years.

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Section 1: key strategies, policies and procedures		
Description of strategy, policy or procedure	Responsible for approval	Notes (for example, where consultation with another person is required)
Please note: Council is advised by SMT in respect to all proposed strategies, policies and procedures, unless explicitly stated otherwise below.		
Strategic and business planning		
Strategic Plan	Council	<p>The strategic plan is the key strategy document for the organisation. It includes the GOC's mission, vision and values, as well as the organisation's strategic objectives. The plan will be reviewed a minimum of every five years. The plan includes any complementary strategies that Council may determine necessary.</p> <p>For 2025-2030 the complementary strategies include: Digital Strategy; EDI Strategy; Financial Strategy; and People Strategy</p>
Annual business plan	Council	Public-facing business plan approved by Council, operational business plan approved by Senior Management Team.
Annual budget and five-year forecast	Council	Approved alongside the annual business plan.
Annual EDI action plan	Council	
Annual report and accounts	Council	
Annual EDI report	Council	

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Audit		
External auditors (approval and removal)	Council	Advised by Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
External audit annual plan	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
External auditor fees	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
External audit terms of engagement	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Internal auditors (approval and removal)	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Internal auditor fees	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Internal audit plan	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Corporate Services (including Finance and Risk)		
Annual Report statements regarding internal controls and risk management	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Annual accounting policies	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Anti-financial crime policy	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Credit cards policy	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Contracts and Procurement policy	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Financial regulations	Council	Advised by Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
Investment Managers (appoint & remove)	Council	Advised by Investment Committee
Investment Manager's terms of engagement, including fees	Investment Committee	
Investment policy	Council	Advised by Investment Committee

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Reserves policy	Council	Advised by Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
Risk appetite	Council	Advised by Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
Risk Management policy	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Scheme of delegation for Financial Management	Council	Advised by Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
Working Capital policy	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Governance		
Acceptable Behaviour When Communicating with the General Optical Council	Council	
Complaints and Feedback about the General Optical Council	Council	
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy	Council	
Freedom to Speak Up Policy for Members, Workers and Employees	Council	
Gifts and Hospitality policy	Council	Advised by Remuneration Committee
Information Governance framework	Audit, Finance and Risk Committee	
Investigations policy	Council	
Management of Interests policy	Council	
Member Code of Conduct	Council	Advised by Nominations Committee (not advised by SMT)
Safeguarding policy	Council	
Serious and significant incident policy	Council	
Members		

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Annual process for Council evaluation	Nominations Committee	Advised by Chief of Staff
Appointment of Committee Chairs on recommendation of the Chair of Council.	Council	(not advised by SMT, though it may be consulted by the Chair of Council)
Appointment of Council members to non-statutory committees on recommendation of the Chair of Council.	Council	(not advised by SMT, though it may be consulted by the Chair of Council)
Appointment of independent members to non-statutory committees	Nominations Committee	(not advised by SMT)
Appointment of Senior Council Member on recommendation of the Chair of Council.	Council	(not advised by SMT, though it may be consulted by the Chair of Council)
Arrangements for Council member appointments	Nominations Committee	Privy Council decision following a recommendation from the GOC. Nominations Committee will delegate final appointment recommendation to an appointment panel unless otherwise specified.
Arrangements for member appointments (excluding Council members) -	Nominations Committee	Nominations Committee will delegate final appointment decisions to an appointment panel unless otherwise specified.
Matters relating to the continuation in office of any Council Member including the retraction of resignation, disqualification, suspension and removal from office.	Council	Advised by Nominations Committee (not advised by SMT)

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Member extensions and emergency appointments (Council Members)	Nominations Committee	Privy Council decision following a recommendation from the GOC. (not advised by SMT)
Member fees	Council	Advised by Remuneration Committee
Re-appointment of Council Members	Nominations Committee	Privy Council decision following a recommendation by the GOC. Advised by the Chair of Council (not advised by SMT, though it may be consulted by the Chair of Council)
Re-appointment of members (excluding Council members)	Nominations Committee	
Vacancy requirements for Council member appointments	Nominations Committee	Advised by the Chair of Council (not advised by SMT, though it may be consulted by the Chair of Council)
People and Improvement (including People and Culture)		
Annual Report statements regarding Council remuneration and expenses.	Remuneration Committee	Advised by Chief of Staff (not advised by SMT)
Senior Management Team appraisal process	Remuneration Committee	Advised by the Head of People and Culture (not advised by SMT)
Chief Executive and Registrar pay, pensions, gratuities or superannuation schemes	Remuneration Committee	Advised by the Head of People and Culture (not advised by SMT)
Director pay, pensions, gratuities or superannuation schemes	Remuneration Committee	Advised by the Head of People and Culture (not advised by SMT)
Regulatory Operations (including Legal)		

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To initiate judicial review proceedings.	Council	Advised by the Chief Legal Officer This would not extend to any individual case-related matters (Fitness to Practise or illegal practice) or defending a judicial review brought against the GOC.
Regulatory Strategy (including Education, Policy and Standards)		
Business standards	Council	
The competencies which a person must be able to demonstrate in order to be granted a qualification as an optometrist or a dispensing optician.	Council	
Individual standards	Council	
Maximum financial penalty order for consideration by Privy Council	Council	
Requirements for the content and standard of education and training	Council	
Rules	Council	Cannot be delegated
To withdraw the approval of a training establishment or qualification, following Serious Case Review (SCR)	Council	

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Section 2: Duties and powers imposed by the Opticians Act 1989			
Origin of authority	Description of function /delegation	Responsible for this power or duty	Notes (for example, where consultation with another person is required)
1(2)	To promote high standards of professional education, conduct and performance among registrants	Council	
2(2)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Education Committee	Council	
3(2)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Companies Committee	Council	
3(3)	To consult on rules as to the constitution of the Companies Committee	Council	
4(3)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Investigation Committee	Council	
5(2)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Registration Committee	Council	
5A(3)/(4)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Registration Appeals Committee	Council	
5B(2)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Standards Committee	Council	
5C(3)/(4)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Fitness to Practise Committee	Council	
5D(1)	To appoint a Hearings Panel	Council	

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5D(2)(b)	To make rules relating to requirements to be satisfied by persons applying for inclusion on the Hearings Panel	Council	
5D(3)	To determine fees, allowances and expenses to be paid to members of the Hearings Panel and pay such fees.	Council	
5D(4)	To consider appropriate training for the members of the Hearings Panel and arrange such training	Chief Executive and Registrar	
5D(5)	To make rules as to the constitution of the Hearings Panel	Council	
6(1)	To set up additional committees and determine the membership of such committees in accordance with sections 6(2) and (3)	Council	
6(1)/(6)	To delegate functions to a committee set up under section 6(1) (except where delegation is prohibited), which functions can be further delegated		
6A(1)/(2)	To delegate functions to a committee (other than a committee set up under section 6(1)), officer or employee (except where delegation is prohibited), which functions can be further delegated		
7	To maintain a register of optometrists and a register of dispensing opticians	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8(1)	To be satisfied of entitlement to register (UK applicants)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8(2)	To be satisfied of entitlement to register (Non-UK applicants)	Chief Executive and Registrar	

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8(2A)	To determine additional qualifications to be obtained or tests to be passed (Non-UK applicants)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8(4)	To be satisfied of entitlement to register (Pre 1 June 1961)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8(5)	To be satisfied of entitlement to register (Post 1 June 1961/pre 16 February 1990)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8(6)	To be satisfied of entitlement to register (Post-16 February 1990)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8A(1)	To maintain a register of persons undertaking training as optometrists and a register of persons undertaking training as dispensing opticians	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8A(3)	To be satisfied of entitlement to register as a student	Chief Executive and Registrar	
8A(4)	To make rules prescribing particulars to be contained in the registers of students	Council	
8A(5)	To make rules as to the circumstances in which a student registrant may be removed from a register	Council	
9(1)	To maintain a register of bodies corporate carrying on the business of an optometrist or a dispensing optician or both	Chief Executive and Registrar	
9(2)	To be satisfied of entitlement to register as a business registrant	Chief Executive and Registrar	

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10(1)	To make rules regarding the form and keeping of the registers, and making of entries and alteration in them, including prescribing fees for entering, retaining or restoring someone to the registers	Council	
10(1A)	To make rules regarding the registration of specialties	Council	
10(5)	To make rules regarding communication and storage of documents in electronic form	Council	
10A(4)	To make rules requiring registrants to provide the registrar with evidence of their professional indemnity arrangements	Council	
10A(5)	To make rules enabling the registrar to specify when registrants must provide evidence of professional indemnity arrangements	Council	
11(1)	To publish the registers	Chief Executive and Registrar	
11(2)	To direct the particulars, in addition to name and registration number, to be published in the registers	Chief Executive and Registrar	
11A(1)	To make rules providing for a continuing education and training scheme	Council	
11B(6)	To make rules setting out procedures to be followed before the registrar can refuse to retain a registrant's name or specialty or decide whether to restore a name or specialty	Council	
12(1)(a)	To establish the competencies which a person must be able to demonstrate in order to be granted a qualification as an optometrist or a dispensing optician	Council	

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12(1)(b)	To establish requirements for the content and standard of education and training	Council	
12(2)(a)	To consult the Standards Committee before establishing competencies to be granted a qualification	Chief Executive and Registrar	
12(2)(b)	To consult the Education Committee before establishing requirements for the content and standard of education and training	Chief Executive and Registrar	
12(3)	To publish the competencies and requirements	Chief Executive and Registrar	
12(5)	To take into account advice received from the Standards and Education Committees and revise the competencies and requirements accordingly	Council	
12(6)	To provide the competencies and requirements to approved training establishments	Chief Executive and Registrar	
12(7)	To approve establishments, qualifications and tests of language	Chief Executive and Registrar	
12(8)	To commission advice on the suitability of the establishment or qualification	Chief Executive and Registrar	
12(9)	To approve establishments and qualifications which provide only some education and training or qualifications which meet only some of the requirements	Chief Executive and Registrar	
12(10)	To publish a list of approved establishments and qualifications	Chief Executive and Registrar	

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13(1)	To keep themselves informed as to the instruction at each approved establishment and the assessment which leads to the approved qualification	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13(2)	To appoint visitors to visit approved training establishments	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13(4)	To specify matters to be addressed by visitors	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13(5)	To give written notice of intention to withdraw the approval of a training establishment or qualification	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13(7)	To decide whether to withdraw the approval of a training establishment or qualification	Council	
13(8)	To give written notice of the decision to withdraw the approval of a training establishment or qualification	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13(9)	To withdraw partially the approval of a training establishment	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13(11)	To determine fees (and travelling and subsistence allowances) to be paid to visitors and pay such fees	Council	
13A(1)(a)	To provide, in such manner as the Council considers appropriate, guidance for registered optometrists, registered dispensing opticians and student registrants, on matters relating to fitness to practise or, in the case of a student registrant, fitness to undertake training, and in particular on the standards of conduct and performance expected of them	Council	Approval of standards by Council; approval of supplementary guidance is delegated to the Chief Executive and Registrar

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13A(1)(b)	To establish and keep under review effective arrangements to protect members of the public from registered optometrists, registered dispensing opticians and student registrants whose fitness to practise or, in the case of a student registrant, fitness to undertake training, is impaired.	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13A(2)(a)	To provide, in such manner as the Council considers appropriate, guidance to business registrants on matters relating to fitness to carry on business as an optometrist or a dispensing optician or both, and in particular on the standards of conduct and performance expected of such registrants in carrying on that business;	Council	Approval of standards by Council; approval of supplementary guidance is delegated to the Chief Executive and Registrar
13A(2)(b)	To establish and keep under review effective arrangements to protect the public from business registrants whose fitness to carry on business as an optometrist or a dispensing optician or both is impaired.	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13A(3)	To consult before issuing guidance, or amending guidance already issued, under sections 13A(1)(a) and (2)(a)	Council	Consultation on standards requires Council approval. The duty and power to consult on supplementary guidance is delegated to the Chief Executive and Registrar.
13A(4)	To keep under review guidance issued under sections 13A(1)(a) and (2)(a)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13B(1)	To require information or documentation from a registrant or third party	Chief Executive and Registrar	

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13B(2)	To require registrants, about whom Fitness to Practise allegations have been received, to provide the identity of their employers	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13B(3)	To require information to be put into a form not capable of identifying an individual	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13B(6)	To enforce, through a court order, the power to require information or documentation pursuant to section 13B(1)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13C(1)	To disclose the receipt of a Fitness to Practise allegation to persons specified in 13C(2)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13C(3)	To disclose, in the public interest, the existence of an investigation to any person	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13E(1)	To make rules enabling others to exercise the functions of the Investigation Committee	Council	
13H(4)	To make an order amending the level of the maximum financial penalty order	Council	
13H(5)	To publish an order made under section 13H(4)	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13H(8)	To recover any sum specified in a financial penalty order by way of enforcement in the civil courts	Chief Executive and Registrar	
13H(9)	To pay any sum recovered under a financial penalty order to the Department of Health Consolidated Fund	Council	
13L(6)	To apply to the court for the extension of an interim order	Chief Executive and Registrar	
23A(2)	To make rules regarding the service of notifications by electronic means	Council	

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23C(1)(a)	To make rules regarding the procedure and rules of evidence of the Fitness to Practise Committee and Registration Appeals Committee	Council	
23C(1)(b)	To make rules regarding the procedure of the Investigation Committee	Council	
23C(3)	To make rules regarding the appointment of assessors	Council	
23D(1)	To appoint legal advisers for the Fitness to Practise Committee and Registration Appeal Committee	Chief Executive and Registrar	
23D(5)	To determine fees, allowances and expenses to be paid to legal advisers and pay such fees	Chief Executive and Registrar	
23D(7)	To make rules as to the functions of legal advisers	Council	
23E(1)(a)	To appoint clinical advisers for the Fitness to Practise Committee and Registration Appeal Committee	Chief Executive and Registrar	
23E(1)(b)	To appoint other advisers for the Fitness to Practise Committee and Registration Appeals Committee	Chief Executive and Registrar	
23E(6)	To determine fees, allowances and expenses to be paid to clinical and other advisers and pay such fees	Chief Executive and Registrar	Expenses policy determined by Remuneration Committee, fees determined by Chief Executive and Registrar.
23E(8)	To make rules as to the functions of clinical and other advisers	Council	
24(3)	To make rules as to the testing of sight by persons training as optometrists	Council	

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25(3)	To make rules as to the fitting of contact lenses by persons training as optometrists or dispensing opticians	Council	
27(3C)	To make rules specifying aftercare to be provided following optical appliance or zero powered contact lens sales	Council	
29	To specify the period of time in which section 29 will apply following the death or bankruptcy of registered optician, if such time is longer than the three years specified in the legislation.	Chief Executive and Registrar	
30A(1)	To determine whether the Council is in receipt of evidence sufficient to justify a criminal prosecution	Chief Executive and Registrar	
31(1)(b)	To make rules prohibiting or regulating the carrying on of practice or business under a name other than a registered name	Council	
31(1)(c)	To make rules prohibiting or regulating the prescription, sale, supply and administration of drugs	Council	
31(1)(d)	To make rules prohibiting or regulating the practice of orthoptics by GOC registrants	Council	
31(1)(e)	To make rules prohibiting or regulating the prescription, sale, supply and fitting of contact lenses	Council	
31(3)	To make rules as to requirements to be met by registrants who wish to prescribe, fit, supply or sell contact lenses	Council	
31(5)	To make rules regarding the steps to be taken when it appears to a registrant that a person is suffering from injury or disease of the eye	Council	

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32(1)	To allocate monies received (other than from the payment of financial penalty orders)	In accordance with the scheme of delegation for financial management and the financial regulations.	
32(2)	To keep accounts.	Chief Executive and Registrar	
32(2)	To appoint an external auditor	Council	
32(2)	To approve an annual report and accounts prior to it being laid before Parliament	Council	
32A(1)(a)	To publish a report on the arrangements in place to ensure good practice in relation to equality and diversity	Council	
32A(1)(b)	To publish a report indicating the efficiency and effectiveness of Fitness to Practise procedures and the Council's observations on the report	Council	
32A(1)(c)	To publish a strategic plan	Council	
Sch. 1, para 1C	To maintain and publish a register of members' private interests	Chief Executive and Registrar	
Sch. 1A, para 3	To serve notice of reasons and the person's right to appeal, when making an appealable registration decision	Chief Executive and Registrar	

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Sch. 1, para 10	To appoint a registrar	Council	<p>Council has elected to name the registrar 'Chief Executive and Registrar'.</p> <p>Council to approve a recruitment process and appointment panel based on recommendations from Remuneration Committee.</p> <p>Council would need to determine any change of title and responsibilities if it decided to split the role of registrar and Chief Executive at a future date. It would remain responsible for appointments related to both roles, unless it explicitly delegated the responsibility elsewhere.</p>
Sch. 1, para 11(1)	To do anything which in their opinion is calculated to facilitate the proper discharge of their functions	Council	

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Sch. 1, para 11(2)(a)	To appoint such officers and servants as the Council may determine	Chief Executive and Registrar	The determination of staffing requirements and arrangements for appointment will both be the responsibility of the Chief Executive and Registrar, within the budget set by Council.
Sch. 1, para 11(2)(b)	To determine fees and travelling and subsistence allowances) to be paid to members of the Council or its committees and pay such fees	Council (Member fees policy) Remuneration Committee (expenses policy) Chief Executive and Registrar (individual payments under the policy)	Council responsible for setting the Member fees policy and Remuneration Committee is responsible for approving the expenses policy – individual decisions delegated to budget holders as described in the Chief Executive and Registrar scheme of delegation.

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Sch. 1, para 11(2)(c)	To pay to their officers and servants such remuneration as the Council may determine	Chief Executive and Registration (except for the Senior Management Team) Remuneration Committee (for the Senior Management Team)	The determination and payment of remuneration will both be the responsibility of the Chief Executive and Registrar, within the budget set by Council (except for the Senior Management Team, the pay of which will be determined by Remuneration Committee).
Sch. 1, para 11(2)(d)	To determine to pay to some or all of their officers and servants payments in relation to pensions, gratuities or superannuation schemes	Chief Executive and Registration (except for the Senior Management Team) Remuneration Committee (for the Senior Management Team)	
Sch. 1, para 12	To make Standing Orders	Council	