Member review and reappointment policy

Status of document:	Final
Version:	V2 Approved by Nominations Committee
Date of approval:	22 September 2026
Effective from:	22 September 2026
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Planned next review date:	September 2031

1. Policy statement

1.1 The General Optical Council (GOC) recognises the critical role our members play in fulfilling our responsibilities as a regulator.

1.2 By maintaining a member review process, we can ensure that members are supported in their development and are effective in their roles.

1.3 We are committed to:

a. ensuring members act in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct;
b. encouraging self-reflection in respect to effectiveness in the role; and
c. providing a structure where peer-to-peer conversations can help assess performance and identify opportunities to develop and improve.

2. Purpose

2.1 This policy describes our process for member reappointment and reviews.

2.2 Any concerns about a member's performance or conduct in the role should be raised with the Chief of Staff. Concerns may be referred onto the Chair of Council or relevant committee chair if required to ensure that members are supported by a peer in these circumstances. Where concerns arise regarding a Council member, these should be raised with the individual promptly rather than waiting until the member review meeting for discussion.

2.3 This process is not intended to be used to raise concerns or provide feedback about our policies, processes, employees, members or others working for us. Any concerns of this nature should be referred via the Corporate Complaints and Feedback policy.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to Council members and non-Council members appointed or engaged by the GOC.

3.2 Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Non-compliance for members is a breach of the terms of appointment and could result in a Member Code of Conduct investigation.

3.3 If you have concerns about the application of this policy, you should contact the Chief of Staff at amackaysim@optical.org.

4. Council member review

4.1 All Council members will have an annual review. The following table describes the frequency of Council member reviews and who leads the Council member review:

Role	Reviewer	Frequency
Chair of Council	Senior Council Member	Annual (June)
Council members (including Senior Council Member)	Chair of Council	Annual (March – June)

4.2 In order to undertake the review, Council members will be sent a form (annex 1) with a self-assessment section to complete. The form will include a record of the Council

member's attendance at events or meetings relevant to the role, such as Council and committee meetings, training and briefing meetings. A copy of the relevant member role description will also be provided.

4.3 Each Council member will complete the self-assessment, reflecting on their performance and contribution over the previous 12 months, including any development activities undertaken, and record any development activities or briefings that they would like to receive in the year ahead. Council members return their completed forms directly to the relevant reviewer.

Third party feedback

4.4 The Professional Standards Authority (PSA) guidance on Council member reappointments specifies that feedback should be sought prior to any reappointment decision. To facilitate this, the Chair of Council will gather feedback prior to the final review before a reappointment decision is made. Third-party and key stakeholder feedback will be sought, in particular from the Chief Executive and Registrar.

4.5 In line with the PSA guidance, the Chair of Council will have an additional feedback exercise, led by the Senior Council Member, at the end of their first term, before any reappointment recommendation. Feedback may be sought from:

a. related professional and patient/service-user organisations;
b. the professional and policy leads in government health departments;
c. the Chief Executive and Registrar and the wider executive team; and
d. other Council members.

4.6 All third-party feedback will be collected and shared in confidence by the person conducting the review, except where disclosure is required due to significant conduct issues or other concerns.

Council member reviews

4.7 Each Council member will meet with their relevant reviewer to:

a. discuss their self-assessment of their performance and contribution;
b. agree an overall assessment of performance; and
c. identify any development needs and opportunities.

4.8 The reviewer provides a written summary of the review for inclusion in the member's self-assessment form.

4.9 The form is then sent to the member to confirm whether they are content that the summary of the discussion is accurate. If they are content, both the member and the reviewer sign the form and return it to the Governance team to file.

4.10 Consensus should be sought on the assessment. If, for any reason, there is no agreement, the form will be referred to an appropriate member nominated by the Chief of Staff to discuss with both parties, review the process and finalise the outcome.

4.11 Following completion of Council member reviews, the Chair of Council, in consultation with the Chief of Staff, may:

a. identify any areas where development may benefit a wider group of Council members

b. identify any gaps in skills or expertise across the Council as a whole; and

c. use the information to inform the appointment and/or reappointment (if applicable) of a Council member.

4.12 Where individuals identify in their review forms that they require refresher training, this may be arranged subject to agreement with the Chief of Staff. All reasonable requests will be approved. Where approval is not possible because of budgetary or other constraints, alternatives will be explored where possible.

4.13 All forms will be treated in confidence by the Governance team. Broad outcomes may be shared to help the Council identify skills gaps and conduct its own self-assessments as required. Outcomes will also inform any decisions regarding Council member reappointment made by the Nominations Committee.

5. Process for reappointments

5.1 The GOC recognises the critical role that members play in fulfilling its responsibilities as a regulator. Maintaining a clear member review and reappointments process helps ensure that members are supported in their development, remain effective in their roles, and that any decisions about reappointment are informed by appropriate evidence.

5.2 The reappointments process will follow the steps below:

- **Start the process:** Approximately nine months before a member's end of term date, the Governance team will contact the member in writing to confirm whether they wish to be considered for reappointment. The communication will explain the timetable, the information that will be reviewed, and any action required from the member.

- **Confirm whether the member wishes to continue:** If the member does not wish to be considered for reappointment, they will serve out the remainder of their term in office. The Governance team will then make arrangements to support continuity and, where needed, future recruitment. If the member wishes to be considered, the Governance team will move to evidence gathering.

- **Gather the evidence:** The Governance team will collate the information needed to support the reappointment recommendation. This will include the member's term dates, role description, declared or managed conflicts of interest, relevant training records, attendance records, engagement information and any documented concerns or development actions raised during the term. Attendance will be considered where it affects a member's ability to fulfil the role. For Council members, reappointment evidence will include participation in, and output from, Council member reviews.

- **Consider role-specific evidence:** For non-Council members, reappointment will be based on effective participation in meetings and other work relevant to the role. The evidence gathered will be proportionate and will normally include meeting records, attendance and engagement information, preparedness, contribution, conduct, completion of required training, conflicts of interest and availability for work or meetings. This may include records held by the relevant team, such as the Head of Hearings for hearings roles. Where relevant, the Governance team may seek input from the relevant committee or panel chair, independent member or other appropriate senior member of staff. For Council members, reappointment evidence will include participation in, and output from, Council member reviews.

- **Consider availability for work:** Members who are engaged as workers have no obligation to accept work offered. However, reappointment is unlikely to be guaranteed if no work has been accepted for a significant period. For Advisory Panel members, repeated non-attendance at meetings may result in non-reappointment.

- **Use the Council member review process where relevant:** For Council members, the recommendation will be informed by the review process set out in this policy. This includes the annual review, feedback obtained, the anonymised themes from the Chair of Council's feedback exercise undertaken at the end of the first term and before any reappointment recommendation, the reviewer's written summary, and any relevant attendance, training, development or conduct information. These outcomes will inform reappointment recommendations made by the Nominations Committee.

- **Prepare the recommendation and decision route:** The Governance team will prepare the evidence and recommendation for consideration. The Nominations Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Privy Council on Council member reappointments. Acting under delegated authority from Council, it will also make decisions on all other member reappointments.

- **Apply PSA scrutiny for Council member reappointments:** For Council member reappointments, the PSA scrutinises the process and provides assurance to the Privy Council. This is undertaken in a similar way to Council member recruitment, with the GOC submitting an outline of the process used to assess the recommended candidate for reappointment. There is no requirement for an independent member report for Council reappointments.

- **Address concerns before finalising a recommendation:** Where concerns about attendance, engagement, contribution, preparedness, conduct or conflicts of interest are identified, these should be raised promptly with the Chief of Staff and considered fairly. The Member Code of Conduct provides a route for escalating conduct concerns. Where concerns are substantive, they should be documented and retained to support ongoing oversight and inform any future reappointment decisions. The member should be given an opportunity to respond where appropriate before any recommendation is finalised.

6. Hearing panel observations

6.1 The independent member of the Nominations Committee will undertake proportionate observations of hearing panels, focusing on the operation of the panel and the Chair's conduct of the hearing rather than conducting a formal review of individual Hearing Panel members. The independent member will observe a panel chaired by each

Hearing Panel Chair once during the Chair's term, ordinarily around the midpoint of the appointment, and may undertake additional observations where appropriate.

6.2 Observations will be recorded using an agreed template reflecting the competencies for Hearing Panel Chairs. Following each observation, feedback will be shared with the Hearing Panel Chair. The feedback may also be shared with the Governance and Hearings teams where appropriate or necessary. The feedback will be considered as part of the evidence supporting any reappointment recommendation or decision.

6.3 Where the feedback identifies concerns about a member's performance or conduct, the Head of Hearings and/or the Governance team will refer these to the Chief of Staff, who will manage them in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct.

7. The role of the independent member

7.1 The independent member of the Nominations Committee will provide an impartial and confidential point of contact for members requiring pastoral support or advice, including supportive conversations about wellbeing, personal circumstances or other issues affecting their experience in the role, and signposting to further support where appropriate.

7.2 The Chief of Staff may also draw on the independent member's expertise in situations where issues do not require formal intervention. The independent member and the Governance team will coordinate to offer committee members access to confidential drop-in sessions once every six months. This pastoral role is separate from formal performance, conduct and reappointment processes and does not replace established management, escalation or decision-making arrangements.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Council member self-assessment form

Council Member self-assessment form

For Governance team to complete	
Member name:	
Role(s):	
Appointment date:	
Reviewer name:	
Period under review:	
Date of review:	
Number of meetings attended out of those scheduled (for example - Council 4/5 and Committee meetings 3/4)	
Training undertaken:	
Feedback gathered (when required):	
Additional feedback exercise completed and anonymised summary provided to the Senior Council Member (when required and for the Chair of Council only):	

Member to complete	
Questions to consider: - **How do you consider you are discharging the responsibilities of your role (see attached role profile for reference)?** - **What were the highlights in terms of your contribution over the review period?** - **Looking ahead, where might you like to concentrate your efforts?**	
(500 words max)	
What can we do to support your development?	

Reviewer feedback (to be completed by the reviewer following discussion)	
(500 words max)	

Any identified development needs (to be completed by reviewer in discussion with reviewee)

1.
2.
3.

Member's signature and date (completed online)

Reviewer's signature and date (completed online)

(Reviewer - If the member is coming to the end of their term in the next 6-12 months, please confirm you are happy to recommend reappointment when required)

If you require additional advice and support please contact Andy Mackay-Sim, Chief of Staff at amackaysim@optical.org

DATA PROTECTION AND RETENTION NOTICE

Members appointed or engaged by the GOC will be required to provide confidential information. We will maintain a secure file relating to each member's term of appointment, with access restricted to those who require it for purposes directly relevant to the appointment. This may include member review, development, reappointment, business continuity and member or staff welfare. Information will be retained for six years after the appointment ends, in accordance with our Data Retention Policy and you can access our Privacy Statement here – Privacy Statement