

Member recruitment: Reasonable adjustments process note

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Owner: Nominations Committee: delegated to Andy Mackay-Sim (Chief of Staff)
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1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this process is to ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented in a way that removes barriers and enables fair and equitable participation in the member recruitment process. It aims to recognise that reasonable adjustments are made to remove disadvantage and enable equal participation, not to confer advantage.

1.2 This supports the GOC's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and reflects a commitment to inclusive and accessible recruitment practices.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The appointment panel, acting through the appointment panel chair, retains responsibility for approving any reasonable adjustments to the member recruitment process.

2.2 Where a reasonable adjustment has been requested via the appointments mailbox or directly to the Governance and Compliance Officer, the Officer will seek to understand the nature of the request and will ensure timely communication with the candidate, including acknowledgement, requests for clarification (where required), and confirmation of any agreed arrangements.

2.3 The Governance and Compliance Manager will liaise with relevant departments and authorities to obtain appropriate advice (including the Chief of Staff, Head of People and Culture, the Chief Legal Officer, the EDI Manager, and the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), where necessary), and will provide a summary of that advice to the appointment panel chair.

2.4 The Chief of Staff will be responsible for ensuring that there is a provision of advice and guidance to inform the panel chair's consideration of the request.

3. Receipt of request

3.1 Candidates should be invited to submit any reasonable adjustment requests as early as possible in the recruitment process. Requests should be made:

- In writing, preferably by email to appointment@optical.org.
- To the named recruitment contact for the campaign (e.g. appointment mailbox listed in the candidate information pack)

3.2 Requests should set out:

- the nature of the adjustment being requested; and
- when the adjustment is required (e.g. application stage, assessment, interview).

3.3 Candidates are not required to disclose a diagnosis but may do so if they wish.

3.4 All reasonable adjustment requests must be acknowledged in a timely manner by the recruitment contact.

4. Advice and guidance

4.1 The request should be reviewed by the Governance and Compliance Officer to understand the adjustment needed and any time sensitivity. Where clarification is required, this should be sought from the candidate as soon as reasonably practical.

4.2 Where necessary, advice should be sought by the Governance and Compliance Manager from the Chief of Staff, People and Culture, the EDI Manager, Chief Legal Officer or other appropriate authorities to support an effective and proportionate implementation of the requested adjustment.

4.3 Candidate-specific details should not be disclosed beyond what is necessary. The panel is not automatically entitled to know a reasonable adjustment is in place, to mitigate the risk of unconscious bias. Where it is necessary to disclose a reasonable adjustment, as it will require the panel members to make the adjustment, this will be agreed by the panel chair and the Chief of Staff.

4.4 The panel chair, in consultation with the Chief of Staff, will consider the request and assess how the adjustment can be implemented in a way that is reasonable and proportionate. Wherever possible, consultation should take place without disclosing the identity of the candidate.

5. Assessment

5.1 Fairness should be understood as equitable treatment, recognising that reasonable adjustments are intended to remove disadvantage rather than provide advantage.

5.2 Consideration must be given to whether other appointment panel members, including any Independent Panel Member, need to be consulted.

5.3 Panel involvement should be proportionate and focussed on supporting the implementation of the adjustment. Candidate information should be shared only where necessary.

5.4 An assessment must be made by the Chief of Staff and the panel chair of the impact of the adjustment on fairness and consistency across candidates, this will take into account:

- the stage at which the request is received;
- whether assessments or interviews are already underway; and
- whether providing the adjustment more widely would be appropriate or practicable.

6. Implementation of the Adjustment

6.1 Where a reasonable adjustment is identified, it will be implemented in a way that supports the candidate while maintaining the integrity of the recruitment process.

6.2 Where similar reasonable adjustment requests are identified across campaigns, this should inform ongoing improvements to the standard recruitment approach to reduce barriers for future candidates.

6.3 All reasonable adjustment requests, actions taken, and the rationale for those actions will be documented by the Governance and Compliance Officer as part of the recruitment process record.

7. Where a reasonable adjustment request is declined

7.1 Where a requested adjustment cannot be accommodated, the decision must be based on objective grounds, be reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances, and take account of the candidate's needs.

7.2 In reaching a decision, consideration should be given to what is practicable, the extent to which an adjustment would remove or reduce disadvantage, and any material impact on the integrity, fairness, or timely delivery of the recruitment process. If the specific request cannot be accommodated, we should discuss and explore alternative options with the candidate (where appropriate), taking into account their preferences and the stage of the recruitment process.

7.3 The Governance and Compliance Manager should seek relevant advice (for example from People and Culture, the Chief Legal Officer, the EDI Manager and/or the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), where necessary) and provide this to the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff will provide consolidated guidance to the appointment panel chair to support a timely, informed decision.

7.4 The outcome, rationale, and any alternatives considered or agreed must be recorded as part of the recruitment process record, together with any advice received and the approval route followed. Records should be limited to what is necessary and handled in line with confidentiality requirements.

7.5 The Governance and Compliance Officer or the Governance and Compliance Manager will communicate the outcome to the candidate in a timely manner, using the candidate's preferred method and format of communication where possible. Communications should be clear, respectful, and limited to what is necessary, explaining (at a high level) why the requested adjustment cannot be accommodated and, where relevant, setting out any alternative adjustment(s) available and how the candidate can ask further questions or discuss other options.

7.6 If candidates are unhappy with the outcome of the decision, they may request an internal review to take place using our [Corporate Complaints policy](#).