

Business Plan and Budget

April 2022 – March 2023



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Introduction

The General Optical Council (GOC) is the UK-wide regulator for optometrists and dispensing opticians, student optometrists and dispensing opticians, and optical businesses. We exist to protect the public by raising standards in the optical professions.

Our regulatory functions are:

- Setting standards for the performance and conduct of our registrants.
- Maintaining a register of individuals who are fit to practise or train as optometrists or dispensing opticians, and bodies corporate who are fit to carry on business as optometrists or dispensing opticians.
- Approving qualifications leading to registration.
- Investigating and acting where registrants' fitness to practise, train or carry on business may be impaired.



Foreword

As we enter the third year of our five-year strategic plan, 'Fit for the Future: 2020–2025', we do so in the knowledge that the ongoing pandemic has had an unprecedented impact upon patients, members of the public and our registrants. We know we will need to continue to be agile and empathetic in our response to emerging regulatory issues as we continue to deliver our operational functions and planned programme of work to fulfil our statutory objectives and, in doing so, protect the public.

In our 2022–2023 Business Plan, we set out an ambitious programme of work and investment in strategic projects aligned to our five-year strategic plan. We will continue to work with the sector, universities, and education providers as we take forward the implementation of our broadscale changes to the qualifications we approve. In January 2022, we launched our new three-year Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme and closed down our old Continuing Education and Training (CET) scheme, so it is right that in this year's Business Plan we apply effort to support registrants' engagement in our new approach to professional development and arrangements for registrant review and CPD providers' audit.

We finally launched the modern and refreshed GOC website after much delay alongside our new CRM system, making it easier for registrants to engage with our enhanced services. This year, we plan to revitalize our approach to communications with an enhanced focus on engagement and co-production, critical to the success of the delivery of our strategic plan, as well as continuing to communicate key information that is clear, relevant, and timely to optical professionals, patients and stakeholders.

We will continue to realise the benefits of our investment in the GOC Refresh and the establishment of our new Change Directorate in the acceleration of our investment in our IT capability, the development of our People Plan and the implementation of our new customer care and engagement strategy, whilst continuing to support our registrants to deliver excellent eye care with our full range of business-as-usual activities.

Our recent success in reducing the fitness to practise (FtP) caseload has been driven by focusing on the right cases and dealing with those cases more appropriately. Over the course of the coming year, we expect that to translate into improved end-to-end timescales enabling us to invest resource in activities that prevent things from going wrong in the first place. Our FtP learning bulletin continues to be welcomed by our registrants.

Last year, the Covid-19 emergency remained at the forefront of our work and inevitably this resulted in our need to be more agile by accelerating some aspects of our strategy and delaying others. We will use the surplus generated by delays and savings in some of our planned 2021/22 activity to improve operations and invest in strategic projects in 2022/23, enhancing our services for public benefit in line with our strategic plan and our vision of being recognised for delivering world-class regulation and excellent customer service.

Finally, we will continue to put GOC values, our public duty to progress equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as our commitment to become an anti-racist organisation, at the heart of all we do.

I look forward to working with all our stakeholders to deliver this ambitious programme of work for the year ahead.

Leonie Milliner, Chief Executive and Registrar

Our mission, vision and values

Our 'Fit for the Future' strategy for 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025 describes what we plan to do over the next five years to achieve our vision of being recognised for delivering world-class regulation and excellent customer service.

Our mission is...

to protect the public
by upholding high
standards in the
optical professions

Our vision is...

to be recognised for
delivering world-class
regulation and excellent
customer service

Our values

The interests of patients and the general public are at the heart of all we do, and we aspire to the timeless seven (Nolan) public sector principles of public life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership).

Our values underpin the way we work with each other, and with the public, our registrants and partner organisations:

We act with **integrity**

We pursue **excellence**

We **respect** other people and ideas

We show **empathy**

We behave **fairly**

We are **agile** and responsive to change

Strategic objectives

Our priorities are organised under three overarching strategic objectives:

Delivering
**world-class
regulatory practice**

**Transforming
customer service**

Building a culture
of **continuous
improvement**

2022/23 year in view

This Business Plan sets out our work programmes, milestones and high-level outputs that we plan to deliver alongside our business-as-usual activity in 2022/23 in order to deliver our three strategic objectives. We plan to achieve a break-even position in relation to our business-as-usual, while investing some of our reserves in strategic projects.

Work programmes

Below we outline the key programmes of work and strategic projects that we plan to undertake in 2022/23 and when they will occur. When the timing provides a single date, i.e., December 2023, this describes the date when the activity or project is expected start, or to be completed. When the timing provides a date range, i.e., April 2022 – June 2022 this describes the period in which we expect the activity or project to commence or to be completed. Some work programmes and strategic projects will take longer than a single year to complete, and some projects have already started but have yet to be completed. This is indicated below with a longer date range than the 2022/23 Business Plan.

Strategic Objective One – Delivering world-class regulatory practice		
Activity	Start	Finish
Develop business cases for any legislative reform following the GOC call for evidence, including any additional research required or development of policy positions	July 2022	March 2023
Develop and consult on new standards of practice, taking account of the outcome of the call for evidence and legislative reform consultations	October 2022	March 2023
Publish and implement new education and training requirements for GOC post-registration approved specialty qualifications	March 2022 and June 2022	2024/25 and beyond to 2026
Implement new education and training requirements for approved qualifications leading to registration as an optometrist or a dispensing optician	March 2021 (Ongoing)	2024/25 and beyond to 2028
Commission longitudinal research to measure the impact of the new education and training requirements	January 2023	March 2023

2022/23 year in view

Strategic Objective One – Delivering world-class regulatory practice		
Activity	Start	Finish
Commission knowledge hub/ information exchange to support providers and potential providers of post-registration approved qualifications in their design of qualifications to meet our new education requirements	September 2022	December 2022
Develop and consult on changes to non-UK registration scheme to ensure alignment with new education and training requirements	September 2022	March 2023
Implement new CPD scheme, including audit and portfolio review	January 2022 (Ongoing)	December 2024
Engage with DHSC's planned programme of regulatory reform	January 2022 (Ongoing)	March 2023
Develop business case for workforce data modelling/data analysis	April 2022	July 2022

Strategic Objective Two – Transforming customer service		
Activity	Start	Finish
Develop and implement a customer care and engagement strategy, working with both internal and external stakeholders	May 2022	May 2023
Review the effectiveness of our governance structure	April 2022	July 2022
Development and launch of new MyGOC website for registrants based on Microsoft 365	January 2022 (Ongoing)	December 2024
Publish FtP learning bulletins	April 2022	March 2023
Review communications strategy and launch revised corporate branding	July 2022	December 2022
Review and implement new illegal practice strategy and protocol	April 2022	September 2022
Project to automate registration processes	January 2021 (Ongoing)	March 2023
Scope, develop and implement replacement of existing phone system	May 2022	December 2022

2022/23 year in view

Strategic Objective Three – Building a culture of continuous improvement		
Activity	Start	Finish
Develop and implement a secure portal to share information with external parties involved in fitness to practise, registration and qualification approval and quality assurance as well as Council and committees	May 2022	January – March 2025
Development of CRM to support regulatory functions	April – June 2022	January – March 2025
Develop and implement a fitness to practise case management system	April 2022	April 2023
Develop a business case to review data collection of different groups of registrants' protected characteristics to better inform regulatory policy and assessment of impact	March 2022	March 2023
Develop and test business case / feasibility study for clinical performance coaching (or similar) for cases that do not meet the regulatory threshold	September 2022	March 2023
Develop and implement a three-year management development programme	June 2021 (Ongoing)	January – March 2024
Review of GOC premises and working environment	April – June 2022	January – March 2025
Archive management project to reduce historic paper records	June 2022	March 2023
Develop and implement a People Plan	June 2020 (Ongoing)	January – March 2023
Review, implement and embed a flexible hearings process	March 2022	January – March 2023
Review of internal banking and accounting procedures	June 2021 (Ongoing)	January – March 2024
Develop a business case for a new systems solution for human resources and finance	September 2022	March 2023

What will success look like?

We will measure our success through the following high-level outcomes:

In aspiring to be world-class we should be rated highly by the Professional Standards Authority. We will aim to meet all their standards but will not let this get in the way of trying new and innovative approaches to regulation.







We should also retain the confidence of the optical professions and we will measure this through an annual registrant survey and regular stakeholder survey, looking, for example, at the extent to which we follow our values including behaving fairly, acting with integrity and pursuing excellence.

Public confidence in the professions we regulate is already strong and we expect this to be maintained if we are to uphold high standards. By protecting the public, we are also protecting the reputation of the optical professions. We have instigated an annual public perceptions survey and will continue this throughout the period of this plan.

We expect customer satisfaction with the GOC to increase if we deliver on our customer care and engagement strategy. We do not have a robust baseline and will prioritise the development of this as part of the development of our customer care and engagement strategy in 2022/23, with an emphasis on patients, the public and registrants.

We will measure success on a business-as-usual basis quarterly at senior management team and at Council, providing success measure indicators, RAG rated progress reporting and an indication of changes which have occurred from the previous quarter.

Council will receive the following, updated balanced scorecard report quarterly:

Quarterly Performance Dashboard – 2022/23					 Better than last quarter  Roughly same as last quarter  Worse than last quarter			 Off track  At risk  On track					
Finance					Customer								
Budget: Operate within budget – Tolerance is ±10	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FtP timely updates: Customers who receive an update every 12 weeks	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Reserves: Operate within or reserves policy – Tolerance is ±10%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Registration: Application forms completed – Target is ≤90%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Change: Deliver agreed planned strategic investment – Tolerance is ±10%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Education quality of CPD provision: Target is ≤90%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
People					Performance								
Investment in people: Planned events realised – Target is ≤90%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	FtP Timeliness: FtP cases resolved within 78 weeks (rolling medium) – Target is ≤60%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Turnover: Staff turnover – Target is ≤17% (excluding FTCs ending)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Education: Approved qualifications adapted to meet new education and training requirements – Target is 100% by September 2025 (apart from CoO SfR)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
Vacancy Rate: Staff vacancies – Target is ±10% of total headcount (not FTE)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Registration Quality & Accuracy: Overall accuracy – Target is ≤98%	Q1	Q2	Q2	Q4				
Engagement Index: Staff engagement score – Target is to achieve an upward trend	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4									

2022/23 budget

	2022-23 Budget £'000
Income	9,994
Expenditure	9,946
Surplus / (Deficit) before reserve expenditure	48
Reserve Expenditure	1,920
Surplus / (Deficit) after reserve expenditure	(1,871)
Unrealised Investment gains	247
Surplus / (Deficit)	(1,624)

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You can get this plan in Welsh by visiting www.optical.org

The GOC is a charity registered in England and Wales (1150137)