

**GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the 13th Meeting of the Registration Committee  
held on 15 February 2007**

Present: Dr G Harris (in the Chair)  
Mrs M Alexander, Mr D Cameron, Dr P Kyle  
Professor A Tomlinson, Miss J Underwood,  
Mrs S Wilde.

In Attendance: Ms K Fielding, Mr P J Ireland

**Apologies for absence**

297. Apologies for absence were received from Miss K Devlin and Mr K Lewis.

**Chairman's Opening Remarks**

298. The Chairman noted that this meeting replaced the meeting of 18 January 2007 which was not quorate and at which no substantive business was conducted, except the uncontested election of himself as Chair and Miss K Devlin as Deputy Chair which could be transacted since no vote was necessary.

299. It was noted that this meeting would follow the original agenda from 18 January with one additional substantive item for the Committee to consider (**REG(06)07**) on the subject of information which registrants must declare at retention.

**Declaration of Interests**

300. Members were reminded of the requirement to declare to the meeting any matter to which they had or may be perceived as having a personal interest.

**Confidentiality**

301. Members were reminded that the proceedings of the Committee were confidential under Standing Orders 5.23 to 5.26 but that confidential items could be discloseable under a Freedom of Information request.

**Appointment of Advisers**

302. It was noted that the Committee did not presently have any Advisers and it was agreed to co-opt any individuals as and when it felt they were required.

**Composition of Working Groups**

303. It was agreed the composition of the CET Advisory Group should remain in its present format.

304. It was agreed that the role of the CET Audit Group, now that the CET Scheme had entered a new three-year cycle was twofold:

- (a) the ongoing management of the current scheme and how the Working Group would report in to both Registration and Education Committees; and

- (b) to ensure the GOC had the management processes in place for when the current contract with Vantage Technologies expires and how the present scheme would be renewed or replaced by mid 2010.

It was noted that the first of these roles was very much a collaborative approach with the scheme administrator but the work required to plan for the end of the Vantage agreement was confidential GOC business and would be conducted exclusively by the GOC.

The Chairman of the Committee agreed to liaise with the CET Audit Group to ensure that the CET Audit Group was properly constituted to meet both of the above objectives and would report back to the Committee in due course.

### **Minutes of the 12th Meeting held on 14 September 2006**

305. Members requested a quicker circulation of minutes than the present four or five month interval between meetings. It was agreed to circulate unconfirmed minutes by e-mail promptly following each meeting. Members would then e-mail any responses to the minutes via the Director of Corporate Resources who would co-ordinate such responses and circulate amongst the Committee for agreement. If agreed, the minutes would become the electronically confirmed minutes and posted on the Members' area of the GOC website. If Members could not agree, the minutes would remain unconfirmed until the next committee meeting.

306. It was proposed that such a system should also be referred to Finance and Procedure Committee for consideration as a means of speeding up the input into and circulation of all committee minutes.

307. The Minutes of the 12th meeting held on 14 September 2006 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting subject to:

- (a) deletion of the final sentence of Minute 276;
- (b) a correction to the first sentence of Minute 276 which should state "GOS" competency instead of "GOC" competency.

### **Matters Arising**

308. Members noted that under Minute 286, Council in November had approved a pro-rata registration fee for those students transferring to the full register, effective 1 April 2007.

309. Members felt that the processes in place for ensuring that all students were registered from commencement through to full registration were not complete. Specifically, the areas which needed to be tightened up included:

- (a) more regular updates from the GOC to universities and colleges on which students were not GOC registered;
- (b) guidance from the GOC to the educational establishments on what activities students should be excluded from in training if they fail to register;
- (c) how the GOC intended to deal with unregistered students in their pre-registration year;

- (d) consideration of a student restoration process for late/failure to register and what, if any, penalties this may involve.

It was agreed that officers would prepare a proposal to address these issues which would be circulated to Committee Members for input, and brought to the next meeting for discussion.

### **Retention and CET**

#### a) Retention

310 Members noted that, of a total database of 18,208 registrations including bodies corporate, a total of 7,693 retentions had been received as at w/e 9 February. This left a balance of 10,755 outstanding and to be completed by 31 March 2007.

While it was acknowledged the outstanding figure was lower than at the same week in the previous two years, there still remained a significant outstanding number of retentions.

311. The Committee noted that articles in the optical press and the GOC Spring Bulletin would highlight the need for retention amongst those who had yet to submit returns.

312. It was agreed that the Committee would be kept up-to-date on a weekly basis of progress.

#### b) CET

313. An updated CET progress report was tabled which identified that, as at w/e 9 February, 15,454 out of 16,458 (94%) had achieved their CET points requirement. A total of 280 registrants had not registered on CET optics website which meant that a total of 1,284 altogether had not passed as at w/e 9 February 2007. It was noted that historically approximately 500-600 registrants typically retired at the end of each registration year.

### **Registration and Retention Form Issues**

314. An additional Paper had been circulated following a recent written challenge from AOP, FODO and ABDO as to whether the GOC was entitled to ask registrants to declare at retention any PCT/Health Board investigations and also driving convictions dealt with by a fixed penalty notice.

315. The Committee considered that motoring offences dealt with by way of a fixed penalty were not criminal convictions and therefore do not need to be declared at the time of retention to the Register.

316. The Committee also considered whether the GOC had the legal right to ask registrants to declare information about a local PCT or Health Board investigation at the point of retention to the Register. It was noted that the GOC had taken legal advice on its position to seek this information and this advice had supported the GOC view that such information was in the public interest and refuted that it was acting *ultra vires* in requesting it.

317. The recommendation of the Committee was that a response to the joint AOP, FODO, ABDO letter would be drafted immediately, with legal input as necessary, then approved for issue to the optical bodies to confirm the GOC's position on both these issues.

The GOC would then issue a clarified response to its advice on these issues to all interested parties.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**

318. It was agreed that the GOC would continue to monitor the development of this legislation in order that it both understood its obligations to share relevant information with the Independent Barring Board and that it established the appropriate systems and processes to meet what was expected of it within the legislation.

319. It was agreed that an updated paper be issued following a recent briefing attended by GOC officers given by the Bichard Implementation Team.

### **EU Directive on Recognition of Professional Qualifications**

320. In the absence of the Registrar, it was agreed to defer the update on this subject to the next meeting of the Committee.

### **Making the Registers More Usable**

321. Concern was expressed at the value of the PPI Group research into the usability of regulatory bodies' registers. It was felt that more meaningful feedback could be gained from the recent GOC telephone questionnaire and it was agreed to publish these findings on the Members' area of the website.

322. It was suggested that a Council seminar could be an appropriate forum for Members to debate the public image of the GOC and how that should be developed and communicated.

### **Report to Registration Committee from the CET Audit Group**

323. The Committee noted the minutes of the latest CET Audit Group meeting held on 5 December 2006.

### **Registration Committee Workplan 2006/7**

324. It was agreed that additional work items for inclusion on the Committee's workplan for the future would need to include the European Legislation on recognition of professional qualifications, the work emanating from the outcome to Foster/Donaldson and the ongoing and future management of the CET contract.

### **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

325. The next meeting had been set for **Thursday 19 April 2007** at the amended time of 10:30am.