

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

**Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the Registration Committee
held on 19 April 2007**

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

In Attendance: Mr P C Coe, Ms K Fielding, Mr P J Ireland
Mr S Heatherington

Apologies for absence

326. There were no apologies for absence.

Declaration of Interests

327. 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

328. 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.

Minutes of the 13th Meeting held on 15 February 2007

329. The minutes of the 13th meeting of the Committee held on 15 February 2007 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

Matters Arising

330. There were no matters arising.

White Paper 'Trust, Assurance and Safety - The Regulation of Health Professionals in the 21st Century'

331. The Committee noted the constitution of the Project Board and Work Streams which had been set up following Council's seminar on 22 March 2007. The Project Board had met 'virtually' on 13 April and agreed its terms of reference and those of the four Work Streams. The next meeting of the Project Board would be 2 May 2007 and dates for the availability of Members to meet in their Work Streams were being co-ordinated for May and June.

332. Despite early indications from the Department of Health of an initial rapid timetable for progress, no programmes had yet been confirmed. The Project Board and Work Streams were awaiting DH legislative priorities before they could schedule their own agendas.

333. The Committee noted that it would be essential for good communications that the work of the Work Streams be circulated across the statutory committees and via the Members' area of the GOC website.

Retention and CET

CET Final Position

334. The Committee acknowledged the excellent support from the professions in achieving such a high level of compliance for CET in its first 3-year cycle. Overall, less than 2 percent of registrants (319 individuals) had failed to reach their CET points target by the deadline of 15 March 2007.

335. It was agreed to undertake some simple research on the outcomes of this CET cycle. For example, whether registrants had ceased undertaking CET once they had achieved their required points total. Also to contrast registrants who had not achieved their points targets with those who had and try to determine the reasons for this.

Retention Outcome

336. The final retention results showed that 283 registrants had failed to renew their registration by the deadline and were removed from the Register on 1 April 2007. This figure excludes 258 individuals who had indicated that they wished to withdraw from the Register. To date 123 of these had subsequently restored.

Student Registration

337. **Paper REG(09)07** raised the question of what sanctions would be appropriate to impose on students who failed to register with the Council by the statutory deadline. A paper was tabled from the BUCO group which supported the general principle of patient protection but highlighted the legal constraints within which the universities had to operate and their available resources to administer GOC sanctions.

338. It was agreed to consider if all students could be registered with the GOC at the point of enrolment with their university or college. The training establishments could provide the GOC with students' contact details and the GOC would pursue students for their signed forms, fees etc. Students who failed to respond to the GOC would be de-registered and be subject to GOC sanctions. It was agreed to circulate a paper to the committee by the end of June 2007.

Europe

339. The Committee noted that European Directive 2005/36/EC allowed registrants registered in other EU States right of access to practise in the UK on a temporary and occasional basis and the GOC would have to establish temporary registers when this legislation came into effect in October.

340. The Registrar advised that discussions were ongoing with the Department of Health and DFES over what activities overseas practitioners could perform, how the GOC could assess individuals' competencies and whether they were required to have UK professional indemnity insurance. The Committee would be kept informed of progress.

341. A "Certificate of Current Professional Status" was proposed to replace the present "Letter of Good Standing" which is provided to registrants wishing to practise

outside the UK. It was agreed to take some legal advice on the issue of this replacement document before asking Finance and Procedure Committee to consider its introduction.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

342. The Committee asked that it be kept informed of progress of this piece of legislation which is due to be introduced in late 2008. The Registrar and Director of Standards have a meeting with the Bichard Implementation Team on 15 May 2007 which is intended to address the implications for all healthcare regulatory bodies.

Report from the CET Audit Group

343. The unapproved minutes of the CET Audit Group meeting held on 9 February 2007 were duly noted. It was agreed that the ongoing day-to-day management of the CET Scheme would continue to report to the Registration Committee.

344. However, the Audit Group had recommended that a new Policy and Development Group be established to consider the future arrangements for the scheme at the conclusion of the current contract with Vantage. It was envisaged that this group would report directly to Council and would contain representatives from across Education, Standards and Registration Committees with optometrist, dispensing optician and ophthalmologist representation. By virtue of its terms of reference, it could not include any representation from Vantage Technologies.

Registration Committee Workplan 2006/7

345. The Committee Workplan for 2007/8 had been updated to include new items on the forthcoming EU Directive on Professional Qualifications; the ongoing management of the CET Scheme; potential future work related to the Government White Paper and plans for the developments to the GOC website.

346. It was noted that some changes would now be required to consider on Council's Protocol for Handling Criminal Convictions with the need to consider inclusion of 'criminal charges' brought by the police in addition to convictions.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

325. The next meeting had been set for **Thursday 13 September 2007 at 2.00 p.m.**