

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

Education Committee

Unconfirmed Minutes of the 151st Meeting of the Education Committee held on 20 September 2007.

Present:	Professor R Anderson	Mr K Lewis
	Miss R Bailey	Mr D Pyle (Chair)
	Mrs J Brower	Dr S Roxburgh
	Mr D Cartwright	Prof. M Salmon
	Mr K Cavaye	Professor A Tomlinson
	Dr P Kyle	Miss J Underwood
Advisers:	Mr R Carswell	Mrs R Shipley
	Dr A Jennings	
In Attendance:	Mr P Coe	Ms LS Oakley
	Mrs H Robinson	Mrs J D Taylor
	Miss A Knapik	
Apologies for Absence	Mr P Carroll	Dr G Harris
	Mr C Wass	

Apologies for absence and Chairman's Announcements

5035. Apologies were received from Mr P Carroll, Dr G Harris and Mr C Wass.

5036. The Chairman welcomed Mr Stuart Heatherington, a recently appointed lay member to the GOC who was observing the Committee as part of his induction. Mr Heatherington was also present in his role of Chairman of the GOC's Governance Workstream, to hear the debate on the White Paper [*Trust, Assurance and Safety*].

Declaration of interests

5037. Members and Advisers were reminded that any interest in an issue for consideration by the Committee which could have, or may be perceived as having an influence on their judgement must be declared pursuant to standing orders 2.7 to 2.10

Confidentiality

5038. Members and Advisers were reminded that the proceedings of the Committee are Confidential under Standing Orders 6.23 to 6.26

Minutes and Strictly Confidential Minutes of the 150th Meeting ED(07)2M & SC(07)2M (10:05:07)

5039. Minutes and Strictly Confidential Minutes of the 150th meeting held on 10 May 2007 were attached for Members' consideration.
5040. Strictly Confidential Minute 6571 was amended to read as follows:
'The Committee received Paper ED(6)07 for discussion, which raised issues relating to the supervision of teaching of student dispensing opticians and optometrists. The Paper was prepared by the Registrar. The Registrar withdrew items [1] and [3] of the paper from the discussion pending further clarification from the College of Optometrists.'
5041. With this amendment the minutes and strictly confidential minutes were confirmed as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising

Minute ED5008 Directive on Professional Qualifications

5042. The Registrar reported on meetings with the Department of Health which had concluded in the Department revising its position on the insurance and CPD requirements for EU Nationals providing temporary services under the new Directive when this comes into force in October 2007.
5043. On insurance, the DH had been persuaded to the view that Regulation 8 of the General Systems Regulations, says that the competent authority must not restrict the freedom of a person to provide services, but it is subject to the following regulations 9-17, which include the requirement that regulators must require migrants to provide details as to insurance in their declaration. It is now argued by the DH that a health professional with no insurance is not entitled to provide services.
5044. On CPD the DH has now concluded that it will remove the disapplication in the draft regulations which totally exempts migrants who provide services on a temporary and occasional basis from CPD requirements. However the DH intend to amend the Opticians Act to make it clear that in the case of service providers this requirement will only apply where there is no CPD requirement in their home member state, that it need not be undertaken in the UK, and that it will be applied in a flexible and proportionate manner (on the basis it would not be reasonable to expect the same amount of CPD from someone who has only provided a few days' services in the UK as from someone who has done so for a considerable period).
5045. The Committee was gratified to note the movement in the DH thinking on insurance and CPD requirements for temporary providers of service.

Minute ED5023 – Training chairs of Visits

5046. The Chairman reported that four members of the visitor panel: Reg Davies, David Whitaker, Bernard Gilmartin and Lisa Gerson had attended training

to enable them to take up the Chairs of the visit teams. These individuals will take over the chair of Visits in the future.

Minute ED5024 – Review of Optometry training programme handbook

5047. The Chairman reported that a review of the Optometry programme handbook had taken place in consultation BUCO universities. The amended document was now to be sent to BUCO for comment, then finalised for February Education Committee and [hopefully] approval by Council in March 2008.

5048. It was anticipated that training establishments will take the revised Handbook on board from the start of the 2008 academic year. However, if, following a visit which took place in 2006/07, any university was currently under an obligation to report on details of course provision, going forward, the standard applicable for reporting purposes should be the revised standard to be implemented from 2008 onwards and not the standard operating when the 2006/07 visit actually took place.

Minute 5027 Funding E-Assessment

5049. It was confirmed that a letter had been sent to the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers indicating the Committee resolution.

Minute ED5031 - QAA Benchmark

5050. It was reported that the consultation period on the QAA revision to the benchmark statement had come to a close and the GOC had responded.

Strictly Confidential Minutes

Minutes SC6587 - ARU Foundation Degree

5051. The Chairman reported that Visitors had considered the additional information provided by the University and had resolved that the university could proceed with the intakes in January.

Projects/Working Groups

5052. The Committee received updates on the progress of the Education Working Groups which are still active.

Project 1 - Movement of professionals across borders

5053. The committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2007. Professor Salmon chairman reported that the Group had received confirmation from Utrecht that the university does wish to proceed with its request for GOC approval of the Dutch optometry course.

5054. Professor Salmon said that the Group was also in discussion with the Opticians Board Ireland with a view to carrying out a fact finding visit to the Republic to update the GOC's understanding of the content of optometric training and education in the Republic. Under the Directive, the GOC has accepted that there are no significant differences between the legal scope of practice in the UK and Ireland, and the GOC wishes to reassure itself that there have been no significant developments in Ireland which would alter its understanding of Irish practice. It was unlikely that a visit to the Republic could be arranged before the spring of 2008.
5055. The committee was reminded that the ECOO proposal to establish a European Academy was a matter for discussion at this meeting. The Chairman said that this was an important piece of work and that the GOC should lead in Europe to safeguard the standards of UK ophthalmic dispensing and optometry.

Project 2 - Entry Standards, Dispensing Opticians

5056. The Committee received Paper ED(7)07 being a letter sent to training establishments and the scheme provider summarising the conclusion reached after observing the first year of operations of the revised dispensing optics courses and the preliminary examinations.

Project 3 - Scheme for Registration (Optometry)

5057. The Committee received the minutes of the last meeting [held 2 May] with the College on the Scheme for Registration. The Chairman reported that the Visitors Group had visited Final Assessment in June and visited several practice placements to see how the practice based learning element of the Scheme is working. The Group had met with COpt on 19 September and reviewed the work to date. The College is proposing to develop the Scheme over a two year period and to introduce OSCE examinations (objective structured clinical examination to the Final Assessment).
5058. The Chairman reported that the Visitor view is that the Routine and CL exams in the Final Assessment could be moved to the PBL. The College have accepted this advice and so in July 2008 there will a pilot to test the operation of routine and CL in the workplace. If the pilot is successful the change will be formally introduced from 2009 and these two elements will disappear from the Final Assessment. In due course the intention is that the ODA and (CDM exams will be replaced in the Final Assessment by an OSCE). The Copt is to develop in the next year these two latter changes to be piloted in May 2008 and will start training examiners in March 2009 with a view to introducing the final format for the Final Assessment from July 2009. Consequently a two year programme of revision is envisaged. The Visitors have supported the changes and will watch the development giving feedback to the Committee.

5059. The Chairman reported that there has been some discussion in the press about pass rates and the Visitor Group has questioned the College about this. The first time pass rates of the old system was about 30%; in 2006 this increased to 50% in the new scheme and 43% this year.
5060. The Chairman explained that the College and Visitor Group are working towards achieving a better balance between the assessed PBL and the Final Assessment. There has been much work which is ongoing and the Chairman congratulated the Copt on the work that they have been doing.

Project 5 - Overseas Routes to UK Registration (OQ Sub-Committee)

5061. Professor Tomlinson, Sub-Committee Chairman, reported that Dr Adrian Jennings had agreed to take over the role of Optometry Adviser to the Sub-Committee to replace Professor Woodward. There had been some difficulty in finding a suitable replacement for Professor Jalie and discussions are ongoing.
5062. A revised optometry non EEA route is progressing with the Copt and Professor Tomlinson reported that he will be able to report shortly on the future requirements for non EEA optometrists can register with the Council.
5063. Professor Tomlinson reported that applications for registration under the European Directive are remaining at a steady level, although the Sub-Committee has seen an emergent number of applications from the Eastern block.

Scheme for Student Registration, including the requirement for teachers to be registered Paper ED(8)07

5064. The Committee received a Strictly Confidential Paper ED(8)07 and was asked to consider recommended Council action on the further development of a GOC Scheme for Student Registration.
5065. The Chairman said that the debate that the Committee had at its May meeting on the need for teacher registration has highlighted the need for the GOC to provide greater clarity on several aspects directly or indirectly related to student registration. The Chairman explained that the discussion would potentially straddle the Registration Committee, Standards Committee and Education Committee. The chairs of all three committees are clear that there are several issues which require resolution and the Deputy Registrar has expressed her concerns and the need for a methodology to consider the issues and to provide clarification to registrants and GOC officers. The matter had been discussed at an earlier meeting of the Standards Committee and had resolved that a cross committee working group be established to consider the matters in hand. The paper will also be considered by the Registration Committee in due course.

5066. **RESOLVED:** that [a] the Committee advise the establishment of a working group from across the Education, Standards and Registration Committees to provide clarity on the Student Registration issues highlighted in paragraphs 5[a] to [n] of Paper ED[8]07; and [b] that the Chairman and Director of Education enter into discussions with the Chairmen of Standards and Registration Committees on the constitution of such a group.

Monitoring CET Provision

5067. The Committee received for consideration **Paper ED[9]07**, with attached form being recommended action for the monitoring of CET provision.
5068. It was reported that in 2006, the CET Advisory Panel and CET Audit Group considered the form to be used for the audit of CET events. Some CET Providers were asked to use the form and to report back on its usability. The Providers were also asked to indicate on the usefulness of the audit exercise.
5069. Comments on usability were received and the form amended accordingly. Providers advised that the most valuable aspect of the exercise would be to audit the match between the CET as *approved* and the eventual content and mechanisms as *delivered*.
5070. The Committee was asked to advise on how the audit form might be used in practice.
5071. **RESOLVED:** that the matter be referred to the Registration Committee for further consideration, with the advice that Vantage Technologies Ltd, as the CET Administrator carry out this audit function.

ECOO Academy, Accreditation of European Qualifications and Courses

5072. The Committee received Appendix ED05 and was asked to consider the ECOO proposal on the establishment of a European Academy.
5073. Mr Carswell, Secretary General of ECOO reported that this was the first tentative step by ECOO towards the establishment of an Academy and the outcome will be determined by the resources that can be found to underpin it. Secondly if there was a will in ECOO to go ahead with the proposal the Academy would take over the role of AESCO.
5074. More importantly, from the GOC's point of view, the essential role of the Academy will be to take over the European diploma so that it is seen less directly under the control of ECOO; to accredit the courses that are being

run at schools and universities to take the exams for the European diploma; and thirdly to provide an academic forum similar to that currently held by the US Academy. If the proposal progresses then ECOO would invite tenders for the management of the Academy by such bodies as the College of Optometrists.

5075. Committee Members offered support for the initiative and considered that an ECOO Academy would, for example, have the natural mandate for organizing conferences. Other Members suggested that the Academy could be used as a vehicle raise the level of optometry and optics throughout Europe.
5076. Mr Carswell said that currently no university is a member of ECOO and that the Academy might provide a forum for universities and schools to meet from time to time.
5077. Mr Carswell said that the proposal will receive an initial consideration at the ECOO meeting in Lisbon in October and if it were to find favour then tenders for management would be invited in 2008 with a view to an Autumn 2008 establishment with a first academic conference being held in Amsterdam in 2009.
5078. Mr Carswell undertook to report back to the Committee on the outcome of the ECOO consideration of the proposal held at the Lisbon meeting in October 2007.

Bradford College - Foundation Degree Submission

5079. The Committee received for consideration Paper ED(10)07 being a submission from Bradford College for GOC approval of a Foundation Degree in Dispensing Optics. The Committee was invited to give initial consideration to and to comment upon the submission; and asked to agree a mechanism to give detailed consideration to the submission.
5080. The Chairman reported that the proposal had been approved by Leeds University, as the validating university partner to Bradford College. It was anticipated that Leeds Metropolitan University would also be asked to validate the Bradford College certificate course.
5081. Bradford College are desirous for the foundation degree programme to commence in 2008. The College did not anticipate that the new programme would be added to the current workstream.
5082. The Committee noted that the proposal had not been presented against the GOC Handbook.
5083. The Committee was asked to indicate whether it considered that the proposal was sufficiently robust for the College to be given authority to proceed.
5084. Members agreed that while the proposal would need to be re-submitted against the GOC Handbook template, that it was a stronger course and much more work based.

5085. **RESOLVED:** that the GOC's ESDO Visitor Group be asked to consider the details of the proposal and report back to the Committee on their recommendation.

CANDI proposal for a new registrable qualification – BTEC National Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing

5086. The Committee received for its consideration Paper ED(12)07 being a submission from CANDI for a new registrable qualification – BTEC National Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing - as a GOC approved qualification enabling registration to practise as a dispensing optician. The proposal envisaged that the current CANDI full time diploma, part time day release and e-learning programmes would all lead to CANDI's own professional qualification, which would include as an integral part of the qualification, all the practice based elements of training.
5087. The Chairman reported that since an outline proposal was presented to the Committee in May the ESDO Group have visited CANDI and held discussions with the College. Trevor Hunter has been appointed as Head of Department since the retirement of Tony Botten. The Chairman said that the ESDO Group plan to have a meeting with Trevor Hunter on the 21 September to discuss a whole range of issues over the documentation received. The Chairman indicated that he would welcome the advice of the Committee in advance of his meeting with Mr Hunter.
5088. Committee members noted the importance of the development. It would mean that if successful CANDI would offer a full qualification which goes beyond testing students' professional skills in laboratory setting. Members noted that there was no mention of in-practice training and assessment or how CANDI intend to manage PBL and the professional assessment processes. Members felt strongly that CANDI should be closely questioned on their management of these elements which will be new to the College.
5089. CANDI had expressed a wish to introduce the new programme in September 2008, but had already been informed by the GOC ESDO Group that their students would have to complete parallel assessments for a number of years to enable the GOC to be satisfied that the CANDI was equivalent to the current ABDO scheme.
5090. The Committee was reminded that the GOC must follow due process. The GOC has received a proposal from CANDI to establish a new scheme for the registration of dispensing opticians. Under section 12 of the Opticians Act the GOC must consider the proposal. GOC protocol states (as detailed in the Handbooks) that when the GOC receives a new proposal that the Committee will work with the submitting institution for a number of years until it is satisfied that the proposal meets the stated standards. Points of concern about the CANDI proposal raised by Committee members were valid and will have to be raised, discussed and resolved with CANDI.

5091. **RESOLVED:** that [a] the meeting between the ESDO Visitor Group and CANDI representative to consider the proposal for a new scheme for registration of dispensing opticians should proceed and [b] the visitors should report back to the Committee on the outcome of discussions.

Ulster University

5092. The Committee received Paper ED(12)07 being a submission from University of Ulster for a revision to the optometry degree programme.
5093. It was reported that the university optometry programme received a GOC Panel Visit in March 2007. During the Visit the Visitors ascertained that the University had revised the course curriculum. The Standing Condition given in the GOC Handbook for the approval of optometry training establishments states:
- 'The university should inform the council of any amendments to changes in the student experience, and any planned or real changes in the student intake numbers of more than 10% of the previous annual first year intake, or resources for their teaching, learning support and assessment'* [Appendix 9, Paragraph 1]
5094. Accordingly, the Visitors required the University to submit to the GOC's Education Committee details of the revised course curriculum currently in place. The report of the March 2007 visit will be presented to the Committee at its February 2008 meeting.
5095. The Committee was invited to consider the University's submission; and to agree a mechanism to determine the appropriateness of the changes to the programme.
5096. Professor Anderson Head of Department at Ulster was asked to comment before leaving the room. He asked for further guidance from the GOC on when it was necessary to inform the Council of curriculum changes.
5097. Professor Anderson left the room.
5098. The Chairman reminded the Committee that there had been discussion in May 2007 between the GOC and the optometry training establishments when the content of the GOC Handbook for optometry degree programmes had been reviewed.
5099. The committee considered that a clearer definition of significant curriculum change should be agreed with the GOC and HEIs for the benefit of all parties.
5100. **RESOLVED:** that the GOC Group responsible for the review of the Optometry Handbook clarify the GOC's expectations of the HEIs in respect of the Standing Conditions at Appendix 9 of the Handbook.

Manchester/Aston Universities Therapeutic Programme Proposal

5101. The Committee received for consideration a joint proposal from Manchester and Aston Universities for a Therapeutics Programme (Paper ED(13)07). The Committee noted that the Universities wished to start the programme in 2009.
5102. The Chairman reminded the Committee that the Government announcement on optometry independent prescribing (IP) was published on 28 August 2007. Following recent meetings between the College of Optometrists and Royal College of Ophthalmologists, to discuss the content of clinical management guidelines, work is now progressing on writing the details of the guidelines.
5103. The guidelines will define the scope of practice of the optometry independent prescriber.
5104. The GOC will have responsibility to define the education and training requirements to achieve the IP learning outcomes. The GOC will also seek approval for amendment of the Registration Committee Rules (2005) and CET Rules to enable it to establish a registrable independent prescribing specialism.
5105. Members gave their initial reaction to the proposal and expressed concern that there was a degree of naivety on the part of the universities about the necessary extent of any IP course to provide adequate knowledge and skills required to deal and manage the range of conditions identified by the guidelines. Members also expressed concern about the lack of ophthalmological input in the proposed programme. Notwithstanding these reservations, Member acknowledged that the Government is intent on the introduction of optometry IP and the Committee and Council has a responsibility to meet with the Universities to give support and guidance in the development of their proposed IP programme.
5106. The Registrar reported that the Department of Health had indicated to him that there will be a delay in introducing legislation to enable IP. This was due to a shortage of legal time available. Therefore the POM order will not be available before next spring. Consequently, solicitors are currently drafting rules, which it is anticipated should be available to the GOC Council meeting in March 2008. The Registrar warned that because of the delay to the POM Order there will be a further delay in introducing optometry IP consultation paper to June 2008 at the earliest and the universities cannot commence any programmes until all the legislation is available, which will mean a delay in commencing actual programmes to 2009.
5107. **RESOLVED:** **that [a] the Committee write to the Aston and Manchester Universities thanking them for their IP proposal and indicating that until legislation is available [at the earliest June 2008] no further progress can take place; and**

[b] indicate that when the GOC is in a position to discuss the proposal further with all HEIs the Council will offer a seminar to all potential providers to clarify what will be required, in terms of education, training and practice placed learning.

Therapeutics Handbook – Additional Supply and SP

5108. The Committee received the revised Handbook for additional Supply and Supplementary Prescribing specialisms. The Chairman reminded the Committee that the previous initial version of the handbook had been used to guide the approval of three therapeutic prescribing courses offered by GCU, City and IoO. The Handbook had subsequently been reviewed as a result of the experience of the original visits to the additional and supplementary therapeutics programmes and the revised version was now before the Committee for consideration.
5109. The Chairman said that the AS/SP Handbook will be used as the basis of the IP Handbook. Members confirmed that an AS/SP optometrist would have prior learning taken into account in defining the extent of any IP training required and that the IP Handbook would need to acknowledge and take account of the prior learning gained by an AS/SP optometrist.
5110. **RESOLVED:** **to recommend to Council the approval of the revised and updated version of the Therapeutic Handbook**

Equality and Diversity

5111. The Committee received the draft GOC Equality and Diversity Scheme, which was being consulted upon and a final version will be presented to Council for consideration at its meeting in November. Members were asked to note the proposed action required of Education Committee under the Scheme.
5112. Members from training establishments urged that the Council seek evidence from the training establishments of the existence of the HEI equality and diversity measures. Should GOC visitors then not be satisfied with the adequacy of the HEI overall arrangements more detailed questioning could then ensue.

Dates of Education Committee 2008

5113. The Committee was asked to note for information the dates and times for Education Committee in 2008:
- **10.30 a.m. 7 Feb 2008**
 - **10.30 a.m. 8 May 2008**
 - **10.30 a.m. 2 October 2008**

