



THE COLLEGE OF  
OPTOMETRISTS

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F E L L O W S H I P  
B Y  
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I N T R O D U C T I O N   A N D   G U I D A N C E  
O N   A P P L Y I N G   F O R   F E L L O W S H I P

# FELLOWSHIP BY PORTFOLIO

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The College's Fellowship is a mark of achievement, held in high esteem, to which all members can aspire. Portfolio submission offers a flexible route to Fellowship that allows members to apply based on evidence of impact in one or more aspects of a wide variety of optometry-related work. College members can demonstrate their achievements in the workplace or other areas related to the advancement of optometry. The portfolio route is intended to be supportive and encourage members from diverse backgrounds to aim for recognition of their accomplishments by their peers.

Information and documentation about Fellowships by Portfolio can be found on our website:

<https://www.college-optometrists.org/professional-development/fellowship-by-portfolio>

## ELIGIBILITY FOR FELLOWSHIP

A Fellow is someone who has been recognised by the College as having demonstrated work that has had a significant impact in their field of practice at local, national and/or international levels.

Applications for fellowship must provide evidence of

- Registration with the GOC. Overseas members should be registered with the appropriate regulatory authority.
- Current membership of The College of Optometrist, continuous over at the last five years
- A significant contribution to the practice of optometry, showing excellence and/or innovation in one or more of the following categories
  - Clinical practice
  - The provision of visual or wider healthcare
  - Optometric research
  - Optometric education
  - The management of visual healthcare
  - Higher qualifications in vision science

## APPLYING FOR FELLOWSHIP BY PORTFOLIO

### THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Using the templates provided you will need to prepare a portfolio of evidence against one, any or all of the six categories of achievement set out above. If you apply under only one category, you will have to demonstrate excellence in greater depth in that field. If you apply under several categories, the breadth of your contribution will carry more weight. The portfolio should reflect your past and current roles and activities.

If you have any pending or upheld formal complaint, breach of terms of service, litigation or referral to the GOC (or for overseas members the appropriate regulatory authority) you must declare and provide details of such.

For each category in which you have submitted evidence, you must identify a referee who can verify your evidence. You can use the same referee for multiple categories, provided they can verify the evidence provided. Where this is not possible, you should use multiple referees.

Once submitted, College nominated assessors will evaluate your application.

1. Download all the relevant documents from the [Fellowship by Portfolio](#) area of the College of Optometrists website.
2. Please check that you meet all the criteria and have completed all the relevant paperwork before submitting your application. A checklist is provided in the application form for this purpose.
3. Contact your referees, send them the referee form with the evidence for them to complete and email to the College.
4. Submit all your Fellowship application paperwork to [fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org](mailto:fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org)
5. We will respond with confirmation that we have received your application and an invoice for the application processing fee will be posted in your "My College" area for payment.
6. Pay the Application Fee.
7. Once we receive your payment and Referee Declaration forms we will proceed with the application assessment process.
8. We will notify you of your application outcome, setting out any modifications requested if appropriate.
9. If your application is unsuccessful, we will provide feedback. You may appeal against the decision on procedural grounds only by contacting [fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org](mailto:fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org). Appeals must be made within 30 days of notification of the result.
10. If your application is successful, you will be entitled to use the affix FCOptom and will be invited to the next available Diploma Ceremony to receive your Fellowship Award.

If you are unsure about any aspect of applying to become a Fellow, please seek support from the College by emailing: [fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org](mailto:fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org).

## THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. Two assessors will consider your application independently against the following headings
  - a. The scale of your achievements
  - b. The quality of supporting evidence provided
  - c. The impact, or potential impact, of the achievements on the practice of optometry
  - d. The number of stakeholders, geographical sphere of influence and leadership demonstrated by your dissemination activities
  - e. Your reflections on your achievements and the influence these have had on your work
2. Each assessor will make one of the following recommendations:
  - a. Recommend for Fellowship
  - b. Do not support for Fellowship
3. After considering the application, the assessors may discuss their outcome recommendations with each other if they wish to clarify any points of disagreement.

4. If, after discussion, the assessors are still in disagreement, a third assessor will be asked to review the application and make a recommendation, which will determine the outcome.

## PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

Once you have checked that you meet the eligibility criteria and downloaded the forms you will need to draft your application. Be careful to complete all the required elements.

### CATEGORIES

Evidence can be submitted in any number of categories. Your evidence may demonstrate an outstanding and far-reaching achievement in a single specialist field, or multiple contributions made across several categories over an extended period. You should remember that the assessors will consider the overall profile of your achievements and will pay particular attention to your analysis of, the impact they have had, or will potentially have. Your reflections on your achievements and how these have influenced your own work are also key to a successful application. As an indicative guide, applications against only one category are very rare, and will represent a very significant contribution to progress in that area, with impact across multiple organisations and large numbers of stakeholders. Equally, applications spanning all categories are rarely successful in demonstrating impact in every one, so it can be worth focusing on a few key strengths for which there is strong evidence.

### HOW MUCH EVIDENCE DO YOU NEED TO PROVIDE?

We recognise that it might be difficult to decide which of your accomplishments will be worthy of Fellowship. To help you decide on the type of achievements that might lead to Fellowship, we have set out some examples under each category in the table below. The examples are not exhaustive, nor do all the listed items carry equal weight. Remember that the award of Fellowship is held in high esteem and signifies an achievement above the norm. However, it is intended to be achievable through success in a wide variety of optometry-related activities and recognise contribution in whatever form it is found.

Some example profiles that meet the criteria for Fellowship can be found in Annex A.

Category	Major impact	Minor impact
Clinical	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Significant event auditing, resulting in a change in clinical practice or procedures across a department, or group of practices</li> <li>b. Examples of innovative practice that has been evaluated and adopted by others.</li> <li>c. Evidence of accreditation for enhanced services in local co-management arrangements.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Verifiable statements from clinical colleagues who have standing in their own profession, explaining how you are providing an advanced standard of care, including accurate referrals.</li> <li>b. Patient satisfaction surveys or thank you letters from patients.</li> <li>c. Examples of clear communication with patients</li> </ol>

		<p>resulting in good attendance and compliance.</p> <p>d. Documentary evidence of multiple recent satisfactory appraisals.</p> <p>e. Evidence of demonstrable change made as a result of patient involvement.</p> <p>f. Examples of using specialist skills in your practice.</p>
The provision of visual or wider healthcare	<p>a. Developing and evaluating a project which has made a difference to community or acute eye care locally or nationally.</p> <p>b. Developing and evaluating a project, which has had a significant impact in improving eye care internationally.</p> <p>c. Developing and evaluating a project working with doctors or other healthcare professionals, which has resulted in improved eye care services locally or nationally.</p> <p>d. Developing and evaluating a project that has had an impact on the social and public health agenda locally or nationally.</p>	<p>e. Charitable work in optometry that has made a difference to those who would not otherwise benefit from eye care.</p>
Optometric research	<p>a. A significant contribution to practice-based research which has had a significant impact locally, nationally or internationally.</p> <p>b. A significant contribution to technical innovation which has reached the wider market.</p> <p>c. Editorship or membership of the editorial board of an eye care journal which includes peer-reviewed research papers.</p>	<p>a. Publications in peer-reviewed journals.</p> <p>b. Contribution to the literature by acting as a funding panel reviewer or publication referee</p> <p>c. A contribution to optometric research through a research post in a university department or a significant role in a research network.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. A significant contribution to research capacity building.</li> <li>e. A professorial appointment in a university department.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Invitations to present research work at national and international conferences.</li> <li>e. Supervising successful PhD students in visual science.</li> </ul>
Optometric education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A significant contribution to improving optometric education nationally.</li> <li>b. Invitations to present optometric education work at national and international conferences.</li> <li>c. Publications in peer-reviewed education journals.</li> <li>d. Authorship of or contribution to significant textbooks used in optometric education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A significant contribution to designing an innovative training programme.</li> <li>b. A significant contribution to the Scheme for Registration, or other College qualifications, as a supervisor, assessor or examiner.</li> </ul>
The management of visual healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Impact on Government policy</li> <li>b. Chairmanship of, or other major role on, an optometric committee, or a Local Optical Society or similar body, which has a significant impact on optometric practice locally or nationally.</li> <li>c. Chairmanship of, or other major role on, a committee which decides optometric policy.</li> <li>d. President of a national optometric body.</li> <li>e. Significant contribution to a committee which has an important contribution to national optometric practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Promoting the understanding of and higher standards for eye care through contributions in newspapers, magazines, radio and television,</li> <li>b. An MBA or other Masters Degree in business or administration, which you have used to influence your management of optometric practice.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>f. Specialist advisor to other optometrists.</li> <li>g. A significant contribution to organisational work within the NHS which has had an important impact on eye care locally or nationally.</li> </ul>	
Higher qualifications in vision science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. PhD in Optometry</li> <li>b. MSc in Advanced Practice</li> <li>c. Multiple higher level College Higher qualifications (Higher Cert, Dip)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Other study for higher qualifications in vision science.</li> <li>b. A specialist qualification such as Independent Prescribing.</li> <li>c. A College Higher qualification.</li> </ul>

#### SETTING OUT YOUR EVIDENCE

Set out details of your past and current roles and activities, giving specific examples that demonstrate your achievements under each of your chosen categories. You may draw on achievements from throughout your career.

Explain how your achievements meet the criteria by:

- a. Giving concrete examples as evidence of your achievements
- b. Analysing the impact, or potential impact, of your achievements on the practice of optometry
- c. Explaining how your leadership has influenced practitioners and the practice of optometry, locally, nationally or internationally, and how you maximised this through dissemination activities
- d. Reflecting on what you have learned from your achievements and the difference this has made to your own work.

You may find that you want to refer to a single piece of evidence under several achievement categories. If this is the case, choose one category with which that evidence is most strongly aligned and present it in detail in that section. You should not repeat the evidence in the other categories; rather, you should refer to it and explain the impact it has had in those other areas.

Your submission should not be longer than 3,000 words overall.

Include a numbered list of supporting documents that form the evidence for your assessment, and that have been supplied to your referees for verification purposes. It is acceptable to provide hypertext links to publicly accessible documents where possible instead of attaching the actual documents. Publications in the peer-reviewed literature do not need to be attached. There should be no more than 40 documents total.

#### REFEREES

The role of your referees is to verify that the evidence you provide is authentic and credible. They will check your statement and supporting documents. Accordingly, Fellowship Assessors and members of the Board of Trustees may not act as referees.



Referees must be of sufficient standing to be able to attest to the accuracy of your evidence and confirm that they know of no reason why you should not be considered for Fellowship. If you are supplying evidence from more than one area of work you may need more than one referee, as the referee must be able to verify each piece evidence in the appropriate context.

Referees may include other Members or Fellows of the College, Members or Fellows of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, British and Irish Orthoptist Society or any person of appropriate standing who can verify your submission. For overseas applicants referees may be members of equivalent bodies in that country.

You need to ask your referees to complete the referee declaration form to verify your application and the evidence you are submitting, and email it to [fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org](mailto:fellowship.help@college-optometrists.org)

## ANNEX A: EXAMPLE PROFILES OF FELLOWS

### CATRIONA BRYDON: MANAGEMENT OF VISUAL HEALTHCARE AND CLINICAL PRACTICE

Catriona Brydon has been an optometrist in Birmingham for 15 years. She is an Optometric Advisor to the Birmingham PCT. She:

- Has been a member of the Local Optical Committee for the last seven years, during which time she
  - Played a major role in setting up a shared care scheme for diabetes, including negotiating with the local PCT Commissioners, diabetologists, ophthalmologists, GPs (etc), agreeing the training, accreditation and revalidation processes, equipment, logistics and software standards, referral criteria and fees for the provision of this service.
  - Has been involved in drawing up other local protocols (eg direct referral, Choose & Book, etc) and took particular responsibility for communicating the new protocols to local optometrists.
- Was instrumental in rallying local optometrists to contact their local MPs during the early stages of the Health Bill to ensure they understood the impactful issues relating to the provision of local eyecare services.
- Has been the Area AOP Representative for 6 years.
- Has provided talks on eye care to the local community (including schools etc), which have helped to increase local awareness of the need for regular eye care and the role of the optometrist.
- Is currently undertaking a course in Therapeutics: Supplementary Prescribing and Additional Supply.

### HENRY CROSSHILL: OPTOMETRIC EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Henry Crosshill qualified as an Optometrist 10 years ago. An interest in research fuelled by his final year project led to him returning after the Professional Qualifying Examinations (PQE) Part 2 to undertake a College of Optometrists sponsored PhD on the epidemiology of refractive error.

Following completion of his PhD, Henry obtained a post at St Swithin's Hospital as an Optometrist working within the Ophthalmology Department. In his first two years he was instrumental in setting up a glaucoma shared care scheme, both with clinical input and by acting as an intermediary with the Optometric Advisor and LOCs in the Hospital Catchment Area

He has now attained the Senior Optometrist post at the Hospital and runs several clinics including the glaucoma triage unit that analyses referral and prioritises patients.

He maintains a keen interest in research and has had several papers published in peer reviewed journals over the years. He also uses his knowledge to lecture to students and clinicians and writes CET articles for the optical press.

### BRIAN GOGGLES: MANAGEMENT OF VISUAL HEALTHCARE, CLINICAL PRACTICE, HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS IN VISUAL SCIENCE

Brian Goggles is the Clinical Development Manager (CDM) for Eyescratchers, a small chain of optical practices in the Yorkshire Area. He qualified 12 years ago, first as the optometrist in his local practice and became CDM five years ago.

- His responsibilities include the recruitment and retention (including training, continuing education and development) of the Group's optometrists, dispensing & contact lens opticians, selection of the equipment and management of the customer complaints.
- He still works two days a week in clinical practice
- He is a Member of FODO's Professional Development and Standards Committee.
- He is a member of the LOC.
- He has taken several modules from City University and gained an MSc and has achieved a Diploma in Contact Lens Practice, which he has used in his role as Development Manager to create training programmes for staff.

JAMES CAMPBELL: THE MANAGEMENT OF VISUAL HEALTHCARE

Qualified in 1987 with a 2.1 degree from Glasgow Caledonian University.

Has served on the local Area Optometric Committee (AOC) for 15 years and has been Secretary and Chairman. In this role has been instrumental in developing the Clinician-to-Clinician contact group involving the AOC, Health Board, local GPs and Ophthalmologists in round table forum. This has led to development of shared care schemes in Glaucoma monitoring and a Red Eye scheme. For both of these he was involved in preparing the business case and in the negotiation, both clinical and financial, that allowed them to proceed.

He was shortlisted for a place on the local Community Health Partnership Committee but was unsuccessful at the final stage (the chair of the Local Pharmaceutical Committee eventually being chosen).

He served on the College of Optometrists Council for three years during which time he sat on the PDS committee and the Guidance Review Group.

He has been accredited for the Glaucoma monitoring and the Red Eye scheme by the local Eye Hospital consultants. He has also completed six modules at City University – Therapeutics 1,2 and 3, Glaucoma, Diabetes and Children's eye-care.

RACHEL PAULSON: CLINICAL PRACTICE, THE PROVISION OF VISUAL OR WIDER HEALTHCARE, THE MANAGEMENT OF VISUAL HEALTHCARE

Rachel Paulson has been an optometrist in Surrey for 15 years. During this time she has:

- Been Area Principal Optometrist for a group of opticians and managed the optometrists and dispensing opticians.
- Led a Patient Involvement Group within her company which has targeted optometric services to local needs such as Occupational Optometry Advice Clinics, colour overlays for learning difficulties and domiciliary services for the elderly.
- Been Secretary of the Local Optometric Committee for eight years and led a group which commissioned acute ophthalmology referrals on behalf of community optometrists.
- Advised the Primary Care Trust (PCT) on clinical governance issues to monitor community optometric services to which acute cases had been referred on the triaging of primary ophthalmological acute conditions.
- Been a regular contributor to optometric journals on changes and opportunities in the local PCT and opportunities for practice-based commissioning.
- Awarded an MBA at Surrey University in 2004, with a final dissertation on *Community optometry – a business*.

**ASHOK PATEL: THE PROVISION OF VISUAL OR WIDER HEALTHCARE, THE MANAGEMENT OF VISUAL HEALTHCARE, HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS**

Ashok Patel graduated from City University in 1984 with a first Class Honours Degree. He was awarded a PhD from Bradford University in 1988. He is based in South London

Since then he has:

- Undertaken sessional work in paediatric and binocular vision clinics in a multi-disciplinary team.
- Worked full time in a hospital post since 1995 during which time he:
  - Identified a need in primary care so developed a direct referral scheme, a referral feedback scheme and choose and book scheme using a secure email link between the hospital and community optometrists.
  - Restructured clinics with optometrist-led glaucoma clinics, teaching other optometrists and trainee ophthalmologists.
  - Developed a clinical management forum including optometrists, ophthalmologists, orthoptists, GPs, ophthalmic nurses, PCT administrators and commissioning staff.
  - Been a member of the Staff Representative Council.
  - Negotiated with local management, Department of Health and lobbied politicians about the effects of planned service changes on the viability of the hospital service.
- Been a member of the Local Optometric Committee since 1991 and chair from 2000-2005.
- Been a member of the AOP Hospital Optometrists Committee and chair from 2000-2002.