

# Blink

STUDENT NEWSLETTER - SPECIAL EDITION

DECEMBER 2005

## Registration deadline looms for students

The General Optical Council has warned that the 'grace period' for student registration will come to an end on 31 December 2005. After that time, unregistered students undertaking clinical practice will be liable to prosecution under the Opticians Act 1998

### GOC registrar Peter Coe said:



"We have to now take the issue of unregistered students very seriously. Students who don't register in the next month risk failing their course and seriously damaging their future career, all for the sake of £20."

"Pre-registration students who fail to register also run the risk of having entries in their logbooks discounted, going back to 1 September."

"Students who are not registered are breaking the law. One very real concern is that, in most cases, this means they won't be covered by the supervisor's or university's professional indemnity insurance policy".

### The AOPs Head of Legal Services, Fiona Mitchell said



"In any event a student is covered by his/her supervisor's indemnity, who will be registered with the GOC. The AOP takes the view that in circumstances such as these it is extremely unlikely there would be any issue of public protection for want of insurance cover supervisors with AOP membership. Nevertheless the AOP joins the GOC in urging students to register immediately. If any student is unsure or has queries in respect of registration they should contact us on 020 7261 9661 for assistance."

At 28 November, just over 3,500 students were on the Registers. An estimated 670 students, including 185 pre-registration students, have yet to return their forms.

## Register with your Primary Care Trust

**DON'T FORGET** to register with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) in the area you want to practise in. You can do this up to three months before you qualify, in order that you do not have to wait to be registered with the PCT TO start practising when you qualify.

Registration can take up to three months, so you should apply up to three months before you are due to complete your pre-registration training period.

You can find the PCT through your local optometric committee which you will find on the AOP website at [www.aop.org.uk](http://www.aop.org.uk)

## AOP Student Membership

All undergraduate trainees and pre-registration trainees are AOP members, free of charge



As pre-registration trainees, in order to receive OT fortnightly and a copy of the AOP Members Handbook, you must let us know your address.

Please visit our website [www.aop.org.uk](http://www.aop.org.uk) for information to help you during your pre-registration year.

**The majority of optometrists in the UK are AOP members. The AOP is here to assist members and answer their enquiries. Members can call upon us for assistance with work-related and other matters including:**

\*Optometric and legal advice

\*A range of services to support members in practice and outside of work

\*The AOP's Legal defence team of specialists defends members against claims by patients alleging negligence.

For now, enjoy your undergraduate studies, speak to your student representatives regarding how the AOP can assist you, or visit the AOP website at [www.aop.org.uk](http://www.aop.org.uk) or contact Steven King, the AOPs Head of Member Benefits. You can email him at: [stevenking@aop.org.uk](mailto:stevenking@aop.org.uk) or telephone 020 7207 2197.

You may receive two copies of this newsletter. This is because we have sent it to all pre-registration students who have registered with us and, in order to inform students who have not yet registered with the General Optical Council we have asked the universities to forward copies of this newsletter to their optometry students who graduated this year.

# Why join the AOP?

*The AOP will defend you.*



**An AOP member who was employed by a company recently contacted us.**

His employer provided professional indemnity cover for their employees, but knowing the benefits of AOP membership he had joined the AOP.

A patient was suing his employers for his alleged negligence. His employer's insurer wanted to admit liability and pay the patient to drop the claim, because the earlier a claim is settled the less costly it is for the insurer.

The member insisted he had not been negligent and asked the AOP to defend the claim on his behalf. The AOP defended the claim that much further than the employer's insurers had been willing to do and the claimant dropped the claim.

Had the employer's insurers settled the claim there may at least have been a black mark against the optometrist in his employment record, or disciplinary or dismissal action might have been taken. Had disciplinary or dismissal action been taken the AOP would have been there to assist the member. Had he not been an AOP member, who would he have turned to for support? A solicitor? And, whoever he had turned to for support, would they have had the expertise that the AOP has in assisting optometrists?

## Income protection

While joining the AOP is a kind of general insurance for members to fall back upon – we are here when members need us – optometrists should also consider taking out insurance cover to protect their income should they be unable to work through accident or illness.

Permanent Health Insurance will provide regular income during a period of absence from work where you cannot earn income owing to accident or illness.

For information on Permanent Health Insurance and other insurance cover when you qualify contact Habs Rana at Origen Financial Services.

You may e-mail him at [habsrana@origenfs.co.uk](mailto:habsrana@origenfs.co.uk) or telephone him on 020-70 61 58 56.

Origen

## Benefits of AOP membership on qualifying

\*Reduced membership for newly qualified optometrists

\*Start work knowing that your own individual interests will be looked after by the AOP's professional team.



\*Most AOP members may never have to contact the AOP during their working life, but they can work and sleep soundly in the knowledge that we are here to help them should they need assistance.

\*Your membership subscription is tax deductible so the cost to you could be 20% or 40% less.

**Contact Samantha Hope in the AOP Membership**

Department: e-mail :[samanthahope@aop.org.uk](mailto:samanthahope@aop.org.uk)

Telephone: 020 720 266 57

## How the AOP helps optometrists in practice

The AOP looks after members working in all modes of practice and represents the profession as a whole in its lobbying activities with government and regulatory bodies to set and develop the environment in which optometrists work.

## Revision Tutorials

If you are looking to improve your chances of success in the final assessment, consider taking revision tutorials.

For revision tutorials offered by Hirji Associates visit their website at [www.hirji.co.uk](http://www.hirji.co.uk).

Professor Nizar Hirji is an experienced educator, a senior Examiner and an Assessor for the College. He also runs successful courses for students sitting qualified exams.



## Equipment insurance



Insurance cover for your equipment, both as a pre-registration trainee and when you qualify, is available through Aon Insurance's PracticeShield policy, which Aon developed with the AOP specifically for optometrists and dispensing opticians. It is available only to AOP members.

To insure your equipment telephone Aon on 0845 608 5084 and say that you are an AOP member.