

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Governance Committee

DATE: March 1, 2022

SUBJECT: 7.2 Enhancements to the Election Process

☒ For Decision

☐ For Information

☐ Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To consider whether to shorten the election voting period to 14 days.

Background:

Prior to 2018, board elections were carried out by mailing paper ballots to all opticians who were eligible to vote in a given year and requiring those opticians to mail their ballots back to the COO. The voting period was kept open for at least 30 days to give opticians enough time to ensure their ballots could arrive at the COO by regular mail before the deadline.

Since 2018, however, the elections have been held entirely via electronic means, which has resulted in a more streamlined and efficient process. Opticians can now participate in elections by logging into their registrant portal and casting a ballot electronically. The online voting period is open for 30 days.

With the establishment of the pre-election competency framework in 2021, all candidates seeking nomination for election must participate in a screening interview. Interviews must take place in the period after the close of nominations and before voting opens to opticians.

For Consideration:

The original rationale for a 30-day voting period was to allow enough time for paper ballots to be physically mailed to the COO. Now that voting takes place electronically, it may not be necessary for the voting period to remain open as long.

The approval of a pre-screening interview process for candidates for election has introduced a new procedural step that must take place in the time period between when the nomination period closes and the election opens. Reducing the voting period to 14 days would permit a wider window in which to carry out screening interviews and provide a buffer in the event that it becomes necessary to open up a supplementary call for nominations. A reduced voting period will still provide opticians with a reasonably ample time to cast their online ballots.

Based on a review of voting patterns, it has been observed that the majority of ballots tend to be cast in the first few days after the election period opens.

Public Interest Considerations:

The election process must be fair and transparent and ensure that registrants have a reasonable amount of time to cast their ballot.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Considerations:

The election process should not result in unnecessary barriers to voting.

Recommendation:

That the Board approve the proposal to reduce the election voting period from 30 days to 14 days as recommended by the Governance Committee.