

Citation for the award of Honorary Fellowship of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

Professor Roger Buckley

(Presented by Christopher Liu, Admissions Ceremony 2021)

Professor Roger Buckley is an outstanding ophthalmologist who has had a huge impact on the teaching and regulation of the optical professions and the transformative development of the profession of optometry. He has worked tirelessly to improve relationships between those professions and that of ophthalmology through 20 years' service as the Royal College of Ophthalmologists' representative of the General Optical Council, of whose Standards Committee he was also the founding Chairman. Most notably he played a leading role in securing independent prescribing rights for appropriately qualified optometrists – a development which has benefited millions of patients across the UK by making the treatment of minor eye conditions more accessible while ensuring that rigorous safety provisions are in place.

An important part of preparing the case for a change in the law on prescribing was to show that optometrists could extend their prescribing capabilities with safety. Roger helped secure Government agreement that the College of Optometrists would produce detailed Clinical Management Guidelines for a large number of conditions – currently around 60 – and he worked with the College of Optometrists in producing these. The Guidelines remain in use today and are updated every two years, and extended in range, by a small team at the College of Optometrists of which he is part. They are also available as a free resource and can be downloaded from the College of Optometrists' website. Thousands of eye health professionals from around the world have taken the opportunity to do so.

Roger's contributions to the profession of optometry were recognised when in 2002 he was awarded Honorary Fellowship of the College of Optometrists.

Roger's first ophthalmological appointment was as House Surgeon to Harold Ridley and John Winstanley at St Thomas's Hospital in 1970. He worked in the clinics at Moorfields Eye Hospital for three years before being appointed as Registrar to 'the House' in 1975. His consultant appointment followed in 1981, when Roger also became Director of the Contact Lens and Prosthesis Department which at that time had a staff of 50. This clinical service, unique in the UK, provided a comprehensive, state-of-the-art opinion on all aspects of contact lens practice. Roger was among the first to introduce optometrists into his clinics at Moorfields.

Working with Dr Emil Sherrard in the Institute of Ophthalmology he provided a unique corneal specular photomicrography service to Moorfields and to referring hospitals. He has for many years been a leading authority on allergic eye disease as well as tear dysfunction, ocular infection and ocular immunity. At the Vision and Eye Research Institute in Cambridge he oversaw the installation of a sophisticated Controlled Environment Chamber for tear film and other environmental research.

In total Roger's ophthalmic career spans five decades, including 31 years working at Moorfields Eye Hospital. His research activities, which continue to this day, have resulted in nearly 100 peer-reviewed papers, 16 book chapters and numerous other publications. He has also lectured extensively at conferences and symposia both at home and overseas.

In 1997 Roger was appointed Professor of Ocular Medicine at City University in London, the first such appointment in a UK optometric training institution. In 2005 he was enabled to transfer his Chair to Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge, a post he still holds, in an Emeritus capacity, as Professor of Ocular Medicine.

In 2019 he was appointed an Honorary Visiting Professor at City, University of London (formerly City University).

In government work, Roger was a member of the Committee on Dental and Surgical Materials, and Chairman of its Sub-Committee on Ophthalmic Products. He was a co-opted member of the Committee on Safety of Medicines (now the Commission on Human Medicines). In this way he has had a huge impact on the safety of the public through the regulation of drugs and contact lens solutions.

When in 1999 an announcement by the Department of Health threatened the continued use of diagnostic contact lenses and instruments that touch the ocular surface, on account of a remote theoretical risk of the transmission of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, it was clear that a rigorous rationalisation was needed. At subsequent meetings with the Department, Roger represented the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, Moorfields Eye Hospital and the General Optical Council. Protocols for the re-use of lenses and instruments were eventually agreed by all parties, and Roger's detailed research helped to allay fears and reassure the public.

Roger was a co-opted member of the Professional Standards Committee of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and served as the College's Contact Lens Advisor. He is a past President of the British Contact Lens Association, a past President of the Medical Contact Lens Association and a former Vice-President of the International Society for Contact Lens Research. He is President of the Keratoconus Group, a patient-led self-help organisation.

He was a Founder Member of the Executive Committee of Allergy UK (formerly the British Allergy Foundation) and is currently Patron and a member of its Health Advisory Panel.

His name currently appears on several International Editorial Boards and he acts as peer reviewer for a dozen scientific publications. For 20 years he was an Honorary Medical Adviser to the British National Formulary.

In reflection of his passion for music, Roger was Honorary Medical Adviser to the Musicians' Benevolent Fund, the Royal Society of Musicians, and the British Performing Arts Medicine Trust. Four years ago he realised a long and dearly-held ambition, which was to complete a Doctorate in Musicology.

At City, University of London Roger lectures regularly on courses held for the training of prescribing optometrists. At Imperial College London, he contributes regularly to the MSc course on Allergy. As you would expect, he has acted as external examiner to the degree courses of other universities, and has supervised and examined a large number of higher degrees.

In my opinion and that of many other senior figures in ophthalmology, Professor Roger Buckley more than meets many of those conditions necessary for being made an Honorary Fellow of our College. In a highly distinguished career over 50 years, he has demonstrated exemplary service and certainly changed things for the better. He has:

- Contributed to an improved relationship between the professions of ophthalmology, optometry and dispensing opticians through his work for the GOC
- Played a significant part in securing independent prescribing rights for appropriately qualified optometrists
- (Roger was therefore well ahead of time, as we now talk about new ways of working, involving optometrist, ophthalmic nurses, orthoptists and ophthalmic technicians to help expand capacity for ever increasing demand)

Roger has also:

- Contributed, through various government committees, to the safety of the public through the regulation of drugs and contact lens solutions
- Promoted the understanding of cross-infection, including that caused by dangerous pathogens, in the practice of eye health care
- Promoted through sustained service on the committees of the British Contact Lens Association an understanding of the overwhelming importance of safety over commercial interests

He has undertaken most of this work on professional medical organisations and government committees on a voluntary basis, dedicating thousands of hours work to the benefit of patients beyond his hospital positions.