

# Education and training requirements for entry to the GOC register as a contact lens optician

## Overview

This consultation seeks your views on our proposals to update our requirements for specialist entry to the GOC register as a contact lens optician. These proposals are available to download at the bottom of this page under the 'related' section.

### What are we seeking your views on?

- Our proposed **Outcomes for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician** ('outcomes for approved qualifications') which describes the expected knowledge, skills and behaviours a dispensing optician must have for the award of an approved qualification for specialist entry to the GOC register as a contact lens optician.
- Our proposed **Standards for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician** ('standards for approved qualifications') which describes the expected context for the delivery and assessment of the outcomes leading to an award of an approved qualification for specialist entry to the GOC register as a contact lens optician.
- Our proposed **Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician** ('quality assurance and enhancement method') which describe how we will gather evidence to decide in accordance with the Opticians Act 1989 whether a qualification for specialist entry to the GOC register as a contact lens optician meets our outcomes for approved qualifications and standards for approved qualifications.
- Our **outline impact assessment**, which describes our assessment of the impact of our proposals to update our requirements for approved qualifications for specialist entry to the GOC register.

These proposals are available to download at the bottom of this page.

### What will our proposals replace?

Together, these documents will replace 'Visit Handbook Guidelines for the Approval of: A) Training Institutions; and B) Providers for Schemes for Registration for United Kingdom Contact Lens Opticians' (published November 2007) and the 'Contact Lens Speciality Core Competencies' published in 2011 including the list of required core competences, the numerical requirements for trainees' practical experiences, education policies and guidance contained within the handbooks, and our policies on supervision and recognition of prior learning, which are published separately. You can

read the documents we are proposing to replace, here; **handbook** [<user\\_uploads/contact\\_lens\\_handbook\\_final\\_nov\\_2007\\_pdf--28--2.pdf>](user_uploads/contact_lens_handbook_final_nov_2007_pdf--28--2.pdf) and **competencies** [<user\\_uploads/contact\\_lens\\_specialty\\_competencies\\_2011\\_pdf--18-.pdf>](user_uploads/contact_lens_specialty_competencies_2011_pdf--18-.pdf) .

### **Why are we consulting?**

We would like to hear your views and receive evidence of the impact of our proposals to update our education and training requirements for GOC approved qualifications for specialist entry to the GOC register to ensure that the qualifications we approve in the future are responsive to the changing landscape in the delivery of eye-care services and fit for purpose in each of the UK nations.

Our proposals mitigate the risk that our current requirements (contained within our quality assurance handbooks) become out of date.

The proposed outcomes and standards for approved qualifications and quality assurance and enhancement method together will ensure the qualifications we approve are responsive to the changing needs of patients and service-users and changes in higher education, not least as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, as well as increased expectations of the trainees, commissioners and employers.

### **What have we consulted on previously?**

These proposals are based on our analysis of our responses to our Call for Evidence, Concepts and Principles Consultation 2017-2018, feedback from our 2018-2019 consultation on proposals stemming from the Education Strategic Review (ESR) and associated research, and our public consultation held in July-September 2020 on proposals to update our requirements for GOC approved qualifications leading to registration as an optometrist or a dispensing optician. For more information, please see the GOC's consultation hub. For further information about the ESR, please visit the **ESR policy development and research page** [<https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/esr-policy-development-and-research.cfm>](https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/esr-policy-development-and-research.cfm) .

### **How have we developed our proposals?**

Our proposals have been guided by evidence-based policy making and draw upon best practice from other regulators, professional and chartered bodies. You can read our research, background and briefing papers **here** [<https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/esr-policy-development-and-research.cfm>](https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/esr-policy-development-and-research.cfm) .

In preparing this document we were advised by an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) with input from the Quality Assurance Agency and feedback from a range of stakeholder groups including our Education Visitors, our Advisory Panel (including the Education Committee), the optical sector and sight-loss charities.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to help us develop our proposals to ensure our proposed outcomes for approved qualifications, standards for approved qualifications and quality assurance and enhancement method protects and benefits the public, safeguards patients, and helps to secure the health of service-users.

You can read the EAGs' terms of reference and membership [here](#)

<<https://www.optical.org/en/Education/education-strategic-review-esr/expert-advisory-groups.cfm>> .

## What are our key proposals?

### Key proposals

- a. Candidates will acquire a qualification approved by the GOC leading to specialist entry to the GOC register as a contact lens optician.
- b. The approved qualification will be either an academic award or a regulated qualification at a minimum of Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) (or equivalent) level 6.
- c. There will be no proposed minimum/maximum or recommended time or credit volume for an approved qualification or specified location or duration of clinical experience, other than the requirement that an approved qualification leading to specialist entry to the GOC register as a contact lens optician must integrate approximately 225 hours of learning and experience in practice.
- d. The provider of the approved qualification must, in the design, delivery and assessment of an approved qualification, involve and be informed by feedback from a range of stakeholders including patients, employers, trainees, supervisors, members of the eye-care team and other healthcare professionals.
- e. An outcomes-based approach is used to specify knowledge, skills and behaviours using an established competence and assessment hierarchy known as 'Miller's Pyramid of Clinical Competence' (knows; knows how; shows how; and does).
- f. Providers of approved qualifications are responsible for the measurement (assessment) of students' achievement of the outcomes at the required level (on Miller's Pyramid) leading to an award of an approved qualification.
- g. Providers of approved qualifications will be responsible for recruiting and selecting trainees onto a programme leading to an award of an approved qualification. Recognition of prior learning can be deployed to assist the progression of trainees whose progress to specialist registration has stalled.

## What do I need to do?

If you are a member of the public, a patient or service-user, you may only be interested in reading our proposed outcomes for approved qualifications and answering questions 1, 2 and 3 in section 1 (which should take about five minutes to complete in addition to reading the document) along with questions in section 2 (which we are asking everyone to answer) about the impact of our proposals. However, you may well be interested in reading our proposals in full and answering all the questions we've asked in section 1.

If you are a GOC registrant, or an employer of GOC registrants, or you are responding on behalf of a provider of a GOC-approved qualification, a professional membership or third sector body, or another organisation or regulator, you may be interested in reading our proposals in full and answering some or all of the questions in section 1 (which should take about 15-20 minutes to complete in addition to reading the documents.)

Towards the end there are some questions for everyone to answer about the impact of our proposals (section 2, which will take about five minutes to complete).

We recognise our proposals are detailed, with a range of impacts on different stakeholder groups, so if you wish to answer all the questions in both sections of the questionnaire, please do so.

Consultation data will be securely shared with our research partner for this work, Enventure Research, for independent analysis and reporting. We will be receiving data on a regular basis and will adjust our approach to engagement with the sector as guided by Enventure Research.

## **Privacy statement**

The information you provide to us, the GOC (as data controller), will be processed and used in line with our statutory purpose under the Opticians Act as a public task in order to set standards for optical education and training, performance and conduct. For more information regarding how we process your data please see the **full privacy statement** <[https://www.optical.org/en/about\\_us/data-and-information/privacy-statement.cfm](https://www.optical.org/en/about_us/data-and-information/privacy-statement.cfm)> on our website.

## **Right to erasure**

Article 17 of the General Data Protection Regulations provides data with the right to erasure; this is known as the right to be forgotten. Right to erasure requests should be sent to the Data Protection Officer (FOI@optical.org) and will be responded to within one calendar month of receipt.

## **Data controller**

We are registered as a data controller with the Information Commissioner's Office, registration number Z5718812. We are committed to maintaining robust information governance policies and processes to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Any information you supply will be stored and processed

by us or on our behalf, by approved and verified third parties, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.

## Introduction

It is helpful for us to know a little bit about you. If you do not wish to provide your name and email address you can leave Q1 and Q2 blank.

### 1 What is your name?

Name

### 2 What is your email address?

If you would like to receive further updates about our proposals please provide your email address.

Email

## About you

In order to ensure we ask you the right questions, we would like to know a little more about you.

### 1 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

(Required)

*Please select only one item*

Yes  No

## About your organisation

### 1 On behalf of which organisation are you responding?

Please answer (Required)

## 2 Which of the following categories best describes your organisation?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Provider of GOC approved qualification(s)     Optical professional body  
 Optical business registrant     Other optical employer     Current CET or CPD provider  
 Optical defence/representative body     Optical insurer  
 Commissioner of optical care     Healthcare regulator     Other (please specify)

If you selected 'other', please specify

## About you (continued)

### 1 Knowing who you are helps us to ask you the right questions. Which category best describes you?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Member of the public     Recent optical patient/service user (or their carer)  
 Dispensing optician     Contact lens optician     Trainee contact lens optician  
 Optometrist     Independent prescribing optometrist     Optometry student  
 Dispensing optician student     Other (please specify)

If you selected 'other', please specify

## Section 1: Consultation questions

### 1 Have you read the 'Outcomes for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' before answering the next two questions?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes     No

**2** What impact, if any, will introducing the proposed 'Outcomes for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' have on the expected knowledge, skill and behaviour of future contact lens opticians?

(Required)

*Please select only one item*

- Very positive impact     Positive impact     No impact     Negative impact  
 Very negative impact     Don't know

**3** Is there anything in the criteria in the 'Outcomes for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' that is missing or should be changed?

(Required)

*Please select only one item*

- Yes     No     Don't know

If you ticked 'yes' please provide details.

**4** Have you read the 'Standards for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' before answering these questions?

*Please select only one item*

- Yes     No

**5** What impact, if any, will introducing the proposed 'Standards for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' have on the expected knowledge, skill and behaviour of future contact lens opticians?

*Please select only one item*

- Very positive impact    Positive impact    No impact    Negative impact  
 Very negative impact    Don't know

**6** Is there anything in the 'Standards for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' that is missing or should be changed?

*Please select only one item*

- Yes    No    Don't know

If you ticked 'yes' please provide details.

**7** Have you read the 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' before answering these questions?

*Please select only one item*

- Yes    No



**8** Is there anything in the 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' that is missing or should be changed?

*Please select only one item*

- Yes    No    Don't know

If you ticked 'yes' please tell us what you think is missing or should be changed.

**9** To what extent do you agree with our proposal to replace our handbook for contact lens opticians and related policies with the proposed 'Outcomes for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician,' 'Standards for Approved Qualifications for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician' and 'Quality Assurance and Enhancement Method for Specialist Entry to the GOC Register as a contact lens optician'?

*Please select only one item*

- Strongly agree    Agree    Neither agree nor disagree    Disagree  
 Strongly disagree    Don't know

Please explain your response

**10** Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the education and training of future contact lens opticians?

Please answer

## Section 2: Impact of our proposals

We would like to ask everyone the following questions on impact of our proposals.

**1** We want to understand whether our proposals may discriminate against or unintentionally disadvantage any individuals or groups sharing any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Do you think our proposals will have a negative impact on certain individuals or groups who share any of the protected characteristics listed below? (Please select all that apply)

(Required)

*Please select all that apply*

- Age    Disability    Gender reassignment    Marriage and civil partnership  
 Pregnancy and maternity    Race    Religion or belief    Sex  
 Sexual orientation    None of the above    Don't know

Please provide details

**2** We also want to understand whether our proposals may benefit any individuals or groups sharing any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Do you think our proposals will have a positive impact on any individuals or groups who share any of the protected characteristics listed below? (Please tick all that apply)

(Required)

*Please select all that apply*

- Age    Disability    Gender reassignment    Marriage and civil partnership  
 Pregnancy and maternity    Race    Religion or belief    Sex  
 Sexual orientation    None of the above    Don't know

Please provide details

**3** Do you think any of the proposed changes will impact – positively or negatively – on any other individuals or groups (for example, trainees, patients and the public, current providers of approved qualifications, placement providers, employers and devolved nations)?

(Required)

*Please select only one item*

- Very positive impact    Positive impact    No impact    Negative impact  
 Very negative impact    Don't know

**4** Please describe the impact and the individuals or groups concerned. We are particularly keen to understand further any financial or other impacts we haven't considered in our accompanying impact assessment.

Please answer

## Further information

**1** Can we publish your response?

(Required)

*Please select only one item*

Yes  Yes, but please keep my name / my organisation's name private  No

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

We welcome consultation responses from everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

We don't want anybody to miss out or be disadvantaged because of the way we work and we try hard to make sure this doesn't happen. The following questions help us to understand who we are reaching with our surveys, so that we can make sure that everybody has the opportunity to get involved.

You do not have to answer these questions (just click 'Prefer not to say'), but we would be grateful if you did. Your answers to these questions will be treated as confidential and held securely in line with data protection requirements. They will not be considered or published alongside your name or anything else that might identify you.

For more information about how we use information like this across the General Optical Council, please visit the **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section of our website**  [<https://www.optical.org/en/about\\_us/equality-and-diversity.cfm>](https://www.optical.org/en/about_us/equality-and-diversity.cfm) .

**If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please do not respond to these questions.**

### 1 Age

*Please select only one item*

- Under 25    25-34    35-44    45-54    55-64    65+  
 Prefer not to say

### 2 Gender

*Please select only one item*

- Female    Male    Intersex    Non-binary    Prefer not to say

### 3 Gender identity

Is your gender identity different from the gender you were assigned at birth?

*Please select only one item*

- Yes    No    Prefer not to say

## 4 Sexual orientation

Please select only one item

- Bisexual
  Heterosexual/straight
  Gay/lesbian
  Other
  Prefer not to say

## 5 Marital status

Please select only one item

- Civil partnership
  Divorced or civil partnership dissolved
  Married
  Separated
  Single
  Widowed
  Prefer not to say

## 6 Ethnicity

Please select only one item

- White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
  White - Irish
  White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
  Other White background (please specify)
  Black or Black British - Caribbean
  Black or Black British - African
  Other Black background
  Asian or Asian British - Indian
  Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
  Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
  Asian or Asian British - Chinese
  Other Asian background
  Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
  Mixed - White and Black African
  Mixed - White and Asian
  Other mixed background
  Other - Arab
  Other ethnic group
  Prefer not to say

## 7 Religion/belief

Please select only one item

- No religion or belief
  Buddhist

Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)

- Hindu
  Jewish
  Muslim
  Sikh
  Other (please specify)

- Prefer not to say

If you have selected 'other', please specify

## 8 Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

*Please select only one item*

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

## 9 Pregnancy/maternity

Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?

*Please select only one item*

Yes  No  Prefer not to say

## 10 Carer responsibilities

Do you perform the role of a carer?

*Please select only one item*

Yes  No  Prefer not to say