

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL
The Revised Core Competencies for Registration as
DISPENSING OPTICIAN
(Ophthalmic Dispensing Profession)
APPROVED BY THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL ON
1 JULY 2004

1. Communication Skills

The ability to seek and communicate relevant information from and to patients in an effective and appropriate manner.

<i>Critical competencies:</i>
1.1 The ability to communicate effectively with the patient, taking into account his/her physical, emotional, intellectual and cultural background, and to take accurate history from patients with a range of ophthalmic problems and needs.
1.2 The ability to deal effectively with patient concerns and complaints.

<i>Applied Knowledge and skills:</i>
1.3 An understanding of the importance and significance of family history, signs and symptoms including a recognition of the importance of the patient's health status, medication, work, sports, lifestyle and special skills.
1.4 The development of the key skills of listening to patients and explaining and discussing with them ophthalmic matters, taking into account relevant individual characteristics.
1.5 The ability to understand patients' fears, anxieties and concerns about their visual welfare in the eye examination and its outcome.
1.6 The ability to discuss with the patient an understanding of systemic disease and its ocular impact, its treatment and the possible ocular side effects of medication.
1.7 The ability to understand the patient's expectations and aspirations and managing situations where these cannot be met.
1.8 The ability to recognise cultural diversity, and to communicate with patients who have poor or non-verbal communication skills, or those who are confused, reticent or misled.

2. Professional Conduct

In fulfilling his/her duty of care a Dispensing Optician must have an understanding and working knowledge of the relevant legislation and civil laws, as well as codes of conduct and professional guidance to be able to care for, respect and protect the rights, dignity, privacy and confidentiality of patients.

<i>Critical competencies</i>

2.1 The demonstration of the ability to manage a patient's care in a safe, ethical and confidential environment.

2.2 The demonstration of the ability to keep clear, accurate and contemporaneous patient records, which record all relevant findings and decisions made.

<i>Applied Knowledge and Skills</i>
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2.3 Have an understanding and working knowledge of health care delivery systems to be able to demonstrate an ability to care for patients who have additional clinical or social needs.

2.4 Demonstrate the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to patient records and other relevant information. Demonstrate the ability to work within a multi-disciplinary team and within the guidelines and codes set of the profession.

2.5 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of their legal and ethical responsibilities in relation to the publication, advertising and broadcasting information of services, facilities and goods.
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2.6 Demonstrate the ability to act with probity in professional practice. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous records of financial transactions relating to fees and vouchers and other financial information;• the provision of information about payment of fees by all means and other costs relevant to patients needs and wants;• a knowledge and understanding of professional guidance in relation to conflicts of interest.
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2.7 Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of Health and Safety issues in the workplace, for themselves as employees and for patients.
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3. Refractive Management

An understanding of methods of assessing vision, refraction, binocular status and visual acuity in all patients.

<i>Critical competence</i>
3.1 An understanding of refractive prescribing and management decisions.

<i>Applied Knowledge and Skills</i>
3.2 A knowledge and understanding of the use of ocular diagnostic drugs to aid refraction.
3.3 An understanding of the methods of refracting children, a knowledge and understanding of cycloplegic drugs and their effects, and an understanding of prescribing and management decisions.
3.4 An understanding of the refraction of patients with reduced visual acuity.
3.5 An understanding of the investigation and management of patients presenting with heterophoria, heterotropia and amblyopia based anomalies of binocular vision, including the relevance of history and the recognition of any clinical symptoms.
3.6 An understanding of the objective and subjective tests necessary to investigate binocular status.
3.7 An understanding of likely management options including: vision training, refractive correction, modified refractive correction and prismatic correction, related to the prescribing of the appliance.
3.8 An understanding of the investigation and management of patients presenting with incomitant deviations, including the recognition of symptoms and referral advice.
3.9 An awareness of the special examination needs of patients with learning and other disabilities.
3.10 An awareness of the diagnostic methods for patients with field defects.

4. Optical Appliances

The ability to dispense an appropriate optical appliance.

<i>Critical competencies;</i>
4.1 The ability to interpret and dispense a prescription using appropriate lenses and facial and frame measurements.
4.2 The ability to advise on and dispense appropriate spectacle frame types and materials and lens forms and materials.
4.3 The ability to dispense optical low vision aids
4.4 The ability to relate the development of a child's facial anatomy to the fitting of optical appliances.

<i>Applied Knowledge and Skills</i>
4.5 The ability to identify anomalies in a prescription and implement the appropriate course of action
4.6 The ability to measure and verify optical appliances including the replication of existing spectacles, taking into account relevant standards where applicable.
4.7 The ability to match the form, type and positioning of lenses to meet all the patient's needs and requirements.
4.8 Demonstrate a knowledge of personal eye protection regulations and relevant standards, and the ability to appropriately advise patients on occupational visual requirements.
4.9 The ability to recommend and dispense special optical appliances.
4.10 Demonstrate a knowledge of frame and lens manufacturing and the application of special lens treatments.
4.11 The ability to identify current and obsolete frame materials and consider their properties when handling, adjusting, repairing and dispensing.

5. Contact Lenses

An understanding of the choice, fitting and management of contact lenses.

<i>Critical Competence</i>

5.1 An understanding of the symptoms and signs of serious contact lens complications.
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<i>Applied Knowledge and Skills</i>
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5.2 An understanding of contact lens types and materials, their benefits and disadvantages, and their most appropriate applications.
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5.3 An understanding of the initial contact lens selection and fitting of RGP and soft contact lens patients.

5.4 A knowledge of the different methods of contact lens removal and the ability to remove the lens in an emergency, if feasible and the ability to discuss the use of care regimes .

5.5 An understanding of both the aftercare of patients wearing RGP and soft contact lenses and the management of any complications.

6. Low Vision

The management of low vision patients.

<i>Critical competencies</i>
6.1 An understanding of the causes of low vision and their effects on vision.
6.2 The ability to assess a patient with low vision.
6.3 The ability to advise on the use of and dispense appropriate low vision aids.

<i>Applied knowledge and skills</i>
6.4 The ability to <u>consider</u> the effectiveness of current refraction of patients with low visual acuity and to refer back where appropriate.
6.5 An understanding of the assessment of visual function, including the use of logMAR and other specialist charts, and the effects of illumination, contrast and glare.
6.6 An understanding of the assessment of the visual field of patients with reduced vision.
6.7 An understanding of binocular vision in relation to low vision appliances.
6.8 A knowledge of the relevance of optical low vision aids and of common types of non-optical low vision aid.
6.9 The ability to advise low vision patients on illumination, glare and contrast.
6.10 The ability to advise patients about their impairment and its consequences.
6.11 An understanding of the need for multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to low vision care.
6.12 The ability to refer low vision patients to other agencies where appropriate.
6.13 After-care management of low vision patients.

7. Ocular Examination and Technique

An understanding of the technologies used in the examination of the eye and adnexa.

<i>Critical competence</i>	
7.1	An understanding of the purpose and use of the instruments used in the examination of the eye and adnexa, and the implications of results.

<i>Applied knowledge and skills</i>	
7.2	An understanding of the examination of the external eye and anterior segment by use of the slit lamp.
7.3	An understanding of the appropriate ocular diagnostic drugs to aid ocular examination and investigation.
7.4	An understanding of the examination of the fundus using either a direct or indirect ophthalmoscope.
7.5	An understanding of the methods of assessment of colour vision.
7.6	An understanding of methods of assessment of corneal shape and integrity.
7.7	An understanding of the instruments involved in visual field analysis and of the results.
7.8	An understanding of the use of a tonometer and of the results.

8. Ocular Abnormalities

An understanding of the relevance of ocular disease.

<i>Critical competencies</i>
8.1 The ability to recognise conditions and symptoms requiring referral and/or emergency referral and the demonstration of the ability to take appropriate action.

<i>Applied knowledge and Skills</i>
8.2 The ability to identify common diseases of the external eye and adnexa.
8.3 An understanding of symptoms associated with internal eye disease.
8.4 An understanding of the clinical treatment of a range of significant ocular diseases/disorders and conditions.
8.5 An understanding of the clinical treatment of a range of systemic diseases with ocular manifestations and adverse ocular reactions to medication.
8.6 An understanding of the implications of the manifestations of eye disease.
8.7 The ability to recognise and deal with ocular emergencies.

GLOSSARY
Words and Phrases

Competency Title	One of the eight competencies areas identified by the GOC
Stem Statement	An over-arching statement which explains and expands the competency title.
Critical Competency Competencies	Those competencies which a candidate must demonstrate before entry to the Opticians Register.
Foundation Knowledge & Skills	Refers to knowledge and skills which are required to be achieved by students in order to prepare for achievement of applied knowledge and skills. <i>Note: Foundation Knowledge and Skills are given in outline form reflecting aspects of the current curriculum. It would be for the training institutions to interpret and determine the extent to which these are taught, bearing in mind the necessity to have sufficient learning time to achieve the applied knowledge and skills.</i>
Applied Knowledge & Skills	Refers to knowledge and skills which are required to be achieved by students in order to be able to meet the required relevant critical competencies.
Ability to..	Being able toand/or permitted to under current legislation
Understanding	To comprehend, to perceive the meaning of but not necessarily having the ability to do it.....
Communication	All forms of inter-personal communication 'written forms' 'asking' 'listening' 'explaining' 'discussing'.
Ophthalmic	Includes all disciplines within optics
Special Optical Appliances	An optical appliances with or without the means of correcting a refractive error for medical, vocational or any other specified purpose.