

Dispensing Optician Core Competencies

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
<p>1. Communication</p> <p><i>The ability to communicate effectively with the patient and any other appropriate person involved in the care of the patient, with English being the primary language of communication</i></p>	<p>1.1 The ability to communicate effectively with a diverse group of patients with a range of optometric conditions and needs</p>	<p>1.1.1 Obtains relevant history and information relating to general health, medication, family history, work, lifestyle and personal requirements.</p>	<p>Asks appropriate questions to obtain a full history. Employs appropriate strategies to understand the patient's needs by not interrupting and then summarising to check understanding.</p>
		<p>1.1.2 Elicits the detail and relevance of any significant symptoms.</p>	<p>Employs an appropriate mix of questions to elicit information from patients, for example, open and closed questions.</p>
		<p>1.1.3 Identifies and responds appropriately to patients' fears, anxieties and concerns about their visual welfare.</p>	<p>Establishes and maintains a good professional and clinical relationship with the patient to inspire trust and confidence. Recognises emotion in patients. Explores patient concerns and provides reassurance where appropriate, using explanations that are relevant to that patient.</p>
	<p>1.2 The ability to impart information in a manner which is appropriate to the recipient</p>	<p>1.2.1 Understands the patient's expectations and aspirations and manages situations where these cannot be met.</p>	<p>Conveys expert knowledge in an informative and understandable way, for example, not using jargon. Explores the patients' expectations and checks the level of understanding. Employs a patient-centred approach to understand the patient's perspective. Is able to empathise with and manage the patient's needs, resolving any problems to mutual satisfaction.</p>
		<p>1.2.2 Communicates with patients who have poor or non-verbal communication skills, or those who are confused, reticent or who might mislead.</p>	<p>Makes effective use of body language to support explanation. Demonstrates awareness of our own body language. Uses appropriate supporting material</p>
		<p>1.2.3 Discusses with the patient the importance of systemic disease and its ocular impact, its treatment and the possible ocular side effects of medication.</p>	<p>Provides a layman's explanation of the ocular impact of a particular disease Uses appropriate supporting material, for example, diagrams or leaflets, and uses a range of different explanations where required to avoid repetition. Understands limitations of knowledge, referring the patient for advice where necessary</p>

		<p>1.2.4 Explains to the patient the implications of their pathological or physiological eye condition.</p>	<p>Gives factually relevant information in a clear and understandable way, avoiding jargon and technical terms. Uses appropriate supporting material, for example, diagrams or leaflets, and uses a range of different explanations where required to avoid repetition. Understands limitations of knowledge, referring the patient for advice where necessary</p>
		<p>1.2.5 Communicates effectively with any other appropriate person involved in the care of the patient</p>	<p>Records and discusses advice and management in a clear and appropriate manner</p>

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
<p>2. Professional Conduct</p> <p><i>The ability to comply with the legal, ethical and professional aspects of practice</i></p>	<p>2.1 The ability to manage patients in a safe, appropriate and confidential environment</p>	<p>2.1.1 Adheres to Health and Safety policies in the practice including the ability to implement appropriate measures for infection control</p>	<p>Demonstrates a proactive approach to Health and Safety issues such as identifying hazards, risk assessment, first aid, etc, in order to produce a safe environment for staff and patients alike. Demonstrates appropriate personal hygiene, cleanliness of the practice, hygiene relating to instrumentation, contact lenses, disposal of clinical waste etc.</p>
		<p>2.1.2 Maintains confidentiality in all aspects of patient care</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge of the Data Protection Act (1987) and how this impacts on security, access and confidentiality of patient records.</p>
		<p>2.1.3 Shows respect for all patients</p>	<p>Recognises and takes into consideration patient's specific needs and requirements e.g. cultural diversity or religious belief</p>
	<p>2.2 The ability to comply with legal, professional and ethical issues relating to practice</p>	<p>2.2.1 is able to manage all patients including those who have additional clinical or social needs</p>	<p>Respects and cares for all patients and their carers in a caring, patient, sensitive and appropriate manner. Has knowledge of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), and ensures the patient environment is safe, inviting and user-friendly in terms of access and facilities for all patients. Has an awareness of different types of disabilities and patients with additional needs. Understands the criteria and process for appropriate referral.</p>
		<p>2.2.2 Is able to work within a multi-disciplinary team</p>	<p>Respects the roles of other members of the practice team and how working together gives the patient the highest possible level of care. Is aware of local and national shared care schemes and the roles of the practice staff within these schemes.</p>
		<p>2.2.3 Is able to work within the law and within the codes and guidelines set by the regulator and the profession.</p>	<p>Demonstrates knowledge of the advice and guidance set by the respective professional body. Demonstrates knowledge of the code of conduct set down by the General Optical Council. Demonstrates a knowledge of the relevant law relating to their role e.g. Opticians Act, GOS benefits, fees and charges.</p>
		<p>2.2.4 Creates and keeps full, clear, accurate and contemporaneous records.</p>	<p>Is able to produce records which are legible and contain all relevant patient details, measurements, results and advice Demonstrates how to handle payments appropriately, effectively and honestly. Explains clearly any GOS benefits, fees and charges to the patient and records accurately all dates relating to payments.</p>
		<p>2.2.5 Interprets and responds to existing records</p>	<p>Identifies, checks and responds to the significance of previous optical correction. Modifies measurements and advice appropriately based on current correction, present requirements and previous records</p>

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
3. Methods of Ocular Examination <i>An understanding of instrumentation used in the examination of the eye and related structures</i>	3.1 An understanding of the use of instruments used in the examination of the eye and related structures, and the implications of results	3.1.1 Understands the methods of measurement of corneal curvature and assessment of regularity	Understands the use and optical principle of the keratometer, one and two position instruments and fixed and variable doubling. Understands the principles and use of corneal topographers
		3.1.2 Understands the examination of the external eye and related structures by use of the slit lamp	Understands the features and operation of the slit lamp Understands how direct and indirect illumination can be achieved and how the eye should be examined in a logical sequence Understands the methods used for tear assessment
		3.1.3 Understands the examination of the fundus using either a direct or indirect ophthalmoscope	Understands ophthalmoscopy and conditions required to view the fundus Understands the differences between direct and indirect ophthalmoscopy in terms of optical principle, method of use, field of view and magnification
		3.1.4 Understands the methods of assessment of colour vision	Understands classification and description of colour vision defects, descriptions and use of the different tests available for colour vision defects
		3.1.5 Understands the instruments involved in visual field analysis and the results	Understands static and kinetic perimetry and different threshold measurements Understands the different types of field analysis instruments, for example: screens, arc and bowl perimeters, automated field instruments and the Amsler chart Understands the terminology related to defective fields and how this relates to the visual pathway
		3.1.6 Understands the use of a tonometer and the results	Understands the different types of tonometry, e.g. contact and non-contact and the relative procedures Understands the diurnal variations of the results, and the implications of the results

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
4. Optical Appliances <i>The ability to dispense an appropriate optical appliance</i>	4.1 The ability to interpret and dispense a prescription using appropriate lenses and frames or mounts.	4.1.1 Identifies anomalies in a prescription and implements the appropriate course of action	Identifies possible errors in a prescription and follows the appropriate course of action Identifies and explains any problems which may occur from the given prescription and offer solutions, for example, aniseikonia, anisometropia
		4.1.2 Dispenses and advises on a wide range of lenses and frames, taking into account the patient's needs and requirements	Demonstrates correct interpretation of prescriptions Understands the following lens parameters Lens form, design, materials, coatings and tints, availability, blank sizes Demonstrates understanding of frames covering the following: Size, materials, relationship between frame, lenses and face Demonstrates the appropriate lens and frame selection and justification (bearing in mind patient's lifestyle requirements)
		4.1.3 Measures and verifies optical appliances taking into account relevant standards where applicable.	Measures and verifies that lenses have been produced to a given prescription within BS tolerances Verifies that all aspects of the frame or mount has been correctly supplied Measures and verifies that the lenses are correctly positioned in the spectacle frame/mount within BS tolerances
		4.1.4 Matches the form, type and positioning of lenses to meet all the patient's needs and requirements and provides appropriate advice.	Provides all the necessary information for a pair of spectacles to be duplicated, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription • Lens type • Lens form • Centration and fitting positions • Frame details • Lens surface treatments
	4.2 The ability to advise on and dispense appropriate safety, vocational, and special optical appliances.	4.2.1 Advises on personal eye protection regulations and relevant standards, and appropriately advises patients on their occupational visual requirements.	Applies the relevant standards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VDU users, driving • EN standards, including markings standards BSEN 166 and legislation and sources Demonstrates a knowledge of visual task analysis including lighting Understands the legal responsibilities for employees, employers, dispensing opticians and optometrists Understands and identifies common ocular hazards and common or sight threatening leisure activities and occupations and the ability to advise patients.
		4.2.2 Recommends and dispenses special optical appliances where appropriate	Identifies and fits special optical appliances, explains their optical properties and features These will include sports, paediatric frames, safety, recumbent, reversible, flips, low vision appliances, specialist lenses, occluders, trigeminal spectacles etc

	4.3 The ability to fit, adjust and repair optical appliances	4.3.1 Identifies current and obsolete frame materials and considers and applies their properties when handling, adjusting, repairing and dispensing	Performs appropriate adjustments to ensure a correct fit Recognises all frame materials from associated features and handling the frames. Knows details of the manufacturing methods and how these affect the adjustment properties of the material. Demonstrates an awareness of the dermatological effects of the materials to be able to advise patients accordingly Knows whether the frame can be repaired and the appropriate repair method
		4.3.2 Demonstrates knowledge of frame and lens manufacturing and the application of special lens treatments.	Identifies the difference between glass and plastics materials and has a knowledge of the properties of each material, manufacturing methods and associated advantages and disadvantages Knows the different manufacturing methods of frames to include injection moulding, routing and wire formation. Knows of the different methods of tint and coating applications and the associated advantages and disadvantages of each
	4.4 The ability to dispense low vision aids	4.4.1 Understands conditions which cause visual impairment and to dispense the most appropriate low vision aid/advice	Identifies which patients would benefit from low vision aids and advice Understands the principles of magnification, field of view and working distance in relation to different aids Provides advice on the advantages and disadvantages of different types of simple low vision aids Understands the mechanisms of prescribing magnification including acuity reserve Gives correct instruction to a patient in the use of various aids, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which specs to use with aid • Lighting required • Appropriate working distance Provides basic advice on non-optical aids, use of contrast and lighting to enhance visual performance and daily living skills
	4.5 The ability to relate general anatomical features, including the development of a child's facial anatomy to the fitting of optical appliances	4.5.1 Accurately records facial measurements and dispenses the most appropriate appliance taking into account development, comfort, function and safety	Takes accurate facial measurements and appreciates the implications of anatomical features and how these relate to the final fitting position of the appliance Knows about special frame features, for example, inset bridges, and handmade frames Appropriately advises on paediatric frame fitting, including specialist bridge and side features

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
<p>5. Contact Lenses</p> <p>An understanding of the fitting and aftercare of patients with rigid and soft contact lenses</p>	<p>5.1 An understanding of the selection and fitting of the most appropriate contact lens for the planned use and clinical needs of the patient.</p>	<p>5.1.1 Understands contact lens types and materials, their benefits and disadvantages, and their most appropriate applications</p>	<p>Understands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the differences between RGP, soft and scleral contact lenses. • the advantages and disadvantages of all types of contact lenses <p>Has a knowledge of differences in contact lens materials currently used for RGP and all types of soft lenses including silicone hydrogels</p> <p>Understands the advantages and disadvantages of wearing contact lenses compared with spectacles</p> <p>Has a knowledge of other applications of contact lenses e.g. therapeutic lenses and in low vision</p>
		<p>5.1.2 Understands the initial contact lens selection and fitting of RGP and soft contact lens patients</p>	<p>Understands, at foundation level, the typical parameters of RGP and soft lenses and their relationship to corneal measurements</p> <p>Understands the shape of the normal cornea, the fitting philosophies of RGP and soft lenses, and the lens' behaviour on the eye</p>
	<p>5.2 Understands the patients instruction in contact lens handling, and all aspects of lens wear including care regimes</p>	<p>5.2.1 Understands 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</p>	<p>Knows the methods of insertion and removal of RGP and soft lenses by a contact lens wearer</p> <p>Understands how a suitably skilled practitioner should remove a lens in an emergency</p> <p>Knows the relative advantages and disadvantages of RGP and soft lens care regimes, the solutions' constituents and their purpose</p> <p>Understands the importance of wearing schedules and regular aftercare visits</p>
		<p>5.2.2 Understands both the aftercare of patients wearing RGP and soft contact lenses and the management of any complications</p>	<p>Understands the minor issues which can arise during adaptation or that are identified at the aftercare appointment, and how these are managed</p> <p>Understands the signs and symptoms of serious contact lens complications such as microbial keratitis, severe corneal abrasion, or misuse of solutions, and the appropriate referral procedure</p>

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
6.Low Vision <i>The management of low vision patients</i>	6.1 An understanding of the causes of low vision and their effects on vision	6.1.1 Considers the effectiveness of current refraction of patients with low visual acuity and to refer back where appropriate	Understands the main causes of low vision and the effect on vision Checks the date of the last eye examination and when the last spectacles were dispensed and if the patient is wearing those spectacles. Uses a pinhole and confirmation tests to check effectiveness and refer back if necessary Understands the referral procedure associated with unexplained/sudden vision loss Understands the criteria for visual impairment registration and referral
	6.2 The ability to assess a patient with low vision	6.2.1 Understands the assessment of visual function, including the use of specialist charts, the effects of illumination, contrast and glare	Knows the different types of test charts available for distance and near vision and assessment of contrast sensitivity Understands the effects of lighting, contrast and glare on vision
		6.2.2 Understands the assessment of the visual field of patients with reduced vision	Understands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need for visual field tests and the different types available the different types of field loss e.g. hemianopia, central field loss etc
		6.2.3 Understands binocular vision in relation to low vision appliances	Understands the indications for supplying binocular and monocular LVAs and the use of occlusion, for example, to combat convergence problems with high adds, suitable alignment of binocular telescopes etc
		6.3 The ability to advise on the use of and dispense appropriate low vision aids	6.3.1 Dispenses relevant optical low vision aids and common types of non-optical low vision aid
	6.3.2 Advises patients on illumination, glare and contrast		Advises patients on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the benefit of appropriate lighting in the home how to minimise different types of glare and how to improve the contrast out of doors and in the home environment, text type, etc can also benefit the patient selection of appropriate tints
	6.4 The ability to advise, refer and provide aftercare to low vision patients		6.4.1 Advises patients about their impairment and its consequences

		6.4.2 Understands the need for multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to low vision care	Understands the importance of a current eye examination, ophthalmological assessment/treatment Able to explain the process and criteria for registration and the associated benefits
		6.4.3 Refers low vision patients to other agencies where appropriate	Knows where and how to access additional support e.g. a resource centre, social services, etc
		6.4.4 Manages the aftercare of low vision patients	Understands factors affecting frequency of aftercare to include; likely progress of pathology, retraining with selected aids, the need for different/ additional aids

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
<p>7.Refractive Management</p> <p><i>An understanding of methods of assessing vision, refraction, binocular status and visual acuity in all patients</i></p>	<p>7.1 An understanding of refractive prescribing and management decisions</p>	<p>7.1.1 Understands the refraction of a range of patients by appropriate objective and subjective means</p>	<p>Understands retinoscopy and end-point subjective results Understands appropriate checking methods, e.g. +1.00D blur and use of pin-hole Understands determination of addition power and appropriate range</p>
		<p>7.1.2 Understands the use of ocular diagnostic drugs to aid refraction</p>	<p>Understands different types of ocular drugs and their purpose e.g. mydriatics, anaesthetics, diagnostic stains etc Understands the mode of action, dosage, function and effects and the regulations affecting use and storage of ophthalmic drugs</p>
		<p>7.1.3 Understands the methods of refracting children, cycloplegic drugs and their effects, and understands prescribing and management decisions</p>	<p>Understands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the different distance and near test methods designed for children • the function and effect of cycloplegic drugs • the critical period and paediatric prescribing decisions and their purpose, e.g. early onset myopia
		<p>7.1.4 Understands refraction of patients with reduced visual acuity</p>	<p>Understands the testing methods involved with reduced visual acuity, for example LogMar, and the related terms to record low levels</p>
		<p>7.1.5 Understands 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</p>	<p>Understands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signs and symptoms and causes of binocular vision anomalies • the different methods of classification e.g. cover test, pin hole etc • how the patient may be managed, e.g. surgery, prescribed prisms etc
		<p>7.1.6 Understands the objective and subjective tests necessary to investigate binocular vision status</p>	<p>Understands the different objective tests available to assess deviation, e.g. cover and motility tests Understands the different subjective tests available to assess deviation, e.g. fixation disparity tests</p>
		<p>7.1.7 Understands likely management options related to the prescribing of the appliance</p>	<p>Understands the options to include; vision training, refractive correction, modified refractive correction, prismatic correction</p>

		7.1.8 Understands the investigation and management of patients presenting with incomitant deviations, including the recognition of symptoms and referral advice	Understands the use of cover test and motility. Takes accurate history and symptoms – new/longstanding Understands diplopia management options – prisms, occlusion and surgery
		7.1.9 Understands diagnostic methods for patients with field defects	Understands different types of field loss and the causes Understands the adaption of examination techniques e.g. fixation target for cover test/ocular examination

Unit of Competency	Elements of Competence	Performance Criteria	Indicators
8.Ocular Abnormalities <i>An understanding of the relevance of ocular disease</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	8.1.1 Identifies common diseases of the external eye and related structures	Recognises signs and symptoms of external eye and adnexa, for example; keratitis, iritis, blepharitis, chalazion, ectropion, entropion, epicanthus, hordeolum, ptosis, stye, xanthelasma, conjunctivitis, melanoma, pinguecula, subconjunctival haemorrhage
		8.1.2 Understands symptoms associated with internal eye disease	Understands symptoms associated with internal eye disease such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal vascular disorders, retinitis pigmentosa, retinal and vitreous detachment, macular degeneration, for example
		8.1.3 Understands the clinical treatment of a range of significant ocular diseases/disorders and conditions	Understands the surgical treatments, drug treatments and self-treatment such as hot compresses, hygiene regimes, etc
		8.1.4 Understands the clinical treatment of a range of systemic diseases with ocular manifestations and adverse ocular reactions to medication	Understands treatment of a range of systemic diseases, for example, diabetes and hypertension Understands adverse ocular reactions to medication
		8.1.5 Understands the implications of the manifestations of eye disease	Understands how the disease will progress with or without treatment and the prognosis in terms of affecting the vision and likelihood of reoccurrence Demonstrates an awareness of diet and vitamin and mineral supplements that may also be beneficial
		8.1.6 Recognises and deals with ocular emergencies	Recognises an ocular emergency and refers the patient in an appropriate manner.