

# **Preparing students for safe and confident practice in a changing optical sector**

**Education Strategic Review draft Education Standards and Learning Outcomes consultation**



## 1. Draft Education Standards and Learning Outcomes

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### Draft Education Standards

#### Introduction

We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. Our purpose is to protect the public by promoting high standards of education, performance and conduct amongst opticians. We currently register around 30,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

These education standards set out what we require from UK training establishments providing qualifications that lead to registration with us as an optometrist or dispensing optician, and for subsequent specialist registration as a contact lens optician or optometrist independent prescriber.

Our requirements for education and training are the start of a career-long journey of education, training and continuing professional development that all those registered with us will participate in. This is an important part of what it means to be an optical professional, to maintain public protection and to uphold the standards we set out in our Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.

We require all providers who are engaged in the education, training or assessment of student optometrists, dispensing opticians, and contact lens opticians to meet these standards. This is part of our regulatory framework to maintain public protection and safety. These standards apply to all academic, clinical and practical components of approved or provisionally approved UK-based education and training leading to registration with us, wherever or whoever delivers or contributes to the delivery of them. This could include employer organisations and professional bodies working together with universities and colleges.

Most of these standards are outcome-based and describe what the education and training activity will achieve and the supporting processes that will be in place to meet our standards and maintain public protection. They are directly related to the competencies that a person must be able to demonstrate in order to be granted a qualification as an optometrist, dispensing optician or contact lens optician. We express these as learning outcomes. We recognise that there may be a variety of ways to meet these standards and we encourage innovation.

We expect all providers to demonstrate ongoing continuous improvement and development of their education and training. We will periodically quality assure providers' activity by various means, to ensure they continue to meet these standards. Through our quality assurance and decision-making processes, we will ensure that all the education and training providers we approve have met our requirements to an equivalent standard.

We commit to taking a proportionate approach to our requirements and to our approval and quality assurance processes, which we will continue to develop. Where an education or training provider ceases to meet our standards we will take prompt action. In some circumstances this may include removal of approval.

Where our approval is removed, such qualifications would no longer provide a route to registration with us.	
<b>Standard 1: Patient Safety and Professionalism</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<i>Patient safety and professionalism are fundamental requirements to ensure students are equipped and supported to practise safely and competently in accordance with our Standards of Practice for optometrists and dispensing opticians throughout their professional lives. This is the case regardless of the practice settings in the UK where students go on to work.</i>
S1.1	Ensure that the development and delivery of the education provided is informed by and reflects the GOC's Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians, so that students can meet these professional standards when they become qualified practitioners.
S1.2	Show an ongoing commitment to public protection by reflecting annually on how programmes need to be developed to reflect changes in professional practice and patient needs, taking appropriate action to ensure they remain relevant, up-to-date and safe.
S1.3	Embed evidence of good clinical, professional and educational practice that is relevant to the provision of education in the UK.
S1.4	Ensure the education and training provided reflects knowledge and understanding of all relevant legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements, and all relevant clinical and professional standards.
S1.5	Provide opportunities throughout the programme for students to learn and participate regularly in reflective practice, including reflection on case-based discussion, peer review and clinical audit, so as to engage in a process of continuous learning and development.
S1.6	Cultivate and maintain a culture of openness, candour, compassion and mutual respect between staff and students, in designing and delivering education and training programmes.
S1.7	Ensure that education and training activity is free from unfair bias, conflicts of interest and inappropriate influence of third parties.
S1.8	Develop and maintain a culture that enables all students to understand and fulfil their professional obligations as students registered with the GOC, including upholding the GOC's Standards for Optical Students.
S1.9	Promote a culture of lifelong learning in practice.

<b>Standard 2: Safe, accessible and quality learning</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<i>The learning and practice environments must be safe, accessible and of the appropriate quality. This is important to protect all those who study, work and visit these environments in accordance with our Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.</i>
S2.1	Ensure all learning environments are safe and accessible to students, educators, training supervisors, patients and carers, and free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
S2.2	Ensure that students have access to support for their academic and welfare needs, and to careers advice.
S2.3	Refer promptly to the GOC concerns about the student's fitness to train or the fitness to practise of a qualified practitioner.
S2.4	Ensure that all devices and equipment are safe to use, in good working order, reflect the variety of devices and equipment used in professional practice settings, and are accessible to students.
S2.5	Ensure the staff-student ratio is sufficient to provide education and training that is safe, accessible and of the appropriate quality.
S2.6	Ensure that all relevant staff and supervisors are regularly available to students on an individual and group basis, and promote a culture of openness and accessibility.
S2.7	Ensure that mechanisms are in place at all times to ensure there is a reasonable workload for staff and students.
S2.8	Ensure that all staff involved in the design and delivery of programmes (including clinical experience) are professionally competent to fulfil their roles.
S2.9	Ensure that each programme is led by a GOC registrant with the qualifications, skills and educational leadership experience appropriate for the programme in question.
S2.10	Ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver each programme in accordance with these standards, including teaching and support staff, equipment and facilities, and access for students to all relevant forms of clinical experience.
S2.11	Ensure that all supervisors of student clinical experience, including during clinical placements, are supportive, accessible and competent to fulfil the supervisory role.

<b>Standard 3: Design, delivery and assessment of learning</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<i>It is the responsibility of education and training providers to make decisions about how they will design and deliver their programmes, including assessing student performance in order to meet these Standards. Providers should design, develop and deliver programmes that are innovative, can continue to evolve and reflect the needs of students, patients, the optical sector and wider health systems in the UK.</i>
S3.1	Develop and deliver curricula for each programme that enable students to successfully achieve all the GOC learning outcomes relating to the relevant route to qualification and registration.
S3.2	Ensure that students are clearly informed about the links between the content delivered and the skills, knowledge and behaviours they are gaining.
S3.3	Ensure that students are equipped to practise competently and safely in any part of the UK as an optometrist, dispensing optician, contact lens optician, or optometrist independent prescriber, and are aware that professional role requirements vary in different countries and regions of the UK.
S3.4	Deliver relevant aspects of their education and training with students of other healthcare professions as appropriate, taking into account the multi-professional working involved in the provision of eye health and vision services in the UK.
S3.5	Ensure that effective systems are in place to gain assurance, with supporting evidence, that students have fully demonstrated attainment of the relevant GOC learning outcomes. Ensure processes are in place to re-educate and assess students if specific GOC learning outcomes are not attained at final assessment prior to registration.
S3.6	Have in place effective systems to plan, monitor and centrally record student assessment, and to develop and review regularly assessment techniques and policies relating to, for example, moderation and compensation.
S3.7	Make regular use of formative student assessment, and periodic use of summative student assessment, at all relevant stages, and ensure that the pass mark for individual assessments is at a level that commands confidence and provides assurance of patient and public safety.

S3.8	Ensure it can be demonstrated that programme assessments enable students to meet all the relevant GOC learning outcomes and deliver valid, fair and reliable results.
S3.9	Embed the involvement of students, patients, the wider public and practising clinicians in the design and development of programmes and ensure that student, patient and public feedback is taken into account regularly.
<b>Standard 4: Access to early, frequent and varied clinical experience</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<i>Academic theory and clinical practice play a vital part in equipping students to become confident, competent and safe optometrists, dispensing opticians, contact lens opticians or optometrist independent prescribers. This means that an integrated mix of academic theory and clinical practice must be a clear feature of the education and training that leads to professional and specialist registration with the GOC.</i>
S4.1	Ensure that the integration of academic theory with clinical experience is appropriate to the stage of study and that relevant theory and evidence-based practice underpins all relevant practical elements.
S4.2	Ensure that students receive an appropriate amount and mix of observational and practical exposure to the range of clinical settings that they might reasonably encounter in professional practice in the UK, from the start of the education and training activity onwards.
S4.3	Ensure that students receive active, safe and competent clinical supervision that is quality assured periodically, together with appropriate induction to all clinical settings to maintain patient, student and staff safety and ensure that clinical experience is of the appropriate quality.
S4.4	Ensure that students only engage in any practical clinical experience that is consistent with their level of study and permitted by law.
S4.5	Ensure that there is clear responsibility for the assessment of students while they are gaining their clinical experience, and that this is recorded appropriately.
S4.6	Actively encourage and, where appropriate, support the development of teaching and supervisory opportunities for appropriately qualified and competent clinical practitioners from a range of practice settings and employer types.

S4.7	Put in place and maintain effective mechanisms to ensure that students are referred to, and are clearly identifiable, as 'students' or 'students under supervision' at all stages of their education and training until entered on the GOC's register as a qualified practitioner, or where they are already registered as an optometrist or dispensing optician and participating in training for specialist registration, that they are clearly identifiable as being 'in training'.
<b>Standard 5: Leadership, management and governance</b>	
<b>Introduction</b>	<i>Education providers must design, deliver and assess education that represent good value for students and equips them to practise confidently, competently and safely as qualified professionals in an eye health sector that is evolving in response to the changing needs of patients and commissioners, and developments in technology. This requires the effective leadership, management and governance of education programmes.</i>
S5.1	Ensure that all course marketing and information material remains up to date, relevant and correct.
S5.2	Make clear the regulatory requirements that students and professionals must meet, including in marketing materials and during the admissions and registration processes relating to education and training provision. This includes that students must be registered with the GOC.
S5.3	Provide prospective and current students and staff with clear, timely and accessible information about the programmes they are, or will be, participating in and how they relate to the GOC's learning outcomes.
S5.4	Ensure clear and accessible internal mechanisms are in place for supporting students and staff and that a prompt and fair response is received where students or staff might request a reasonable adjustment.
S5.5	Ensure that safe and accessible channels are in place to enable concerns and complaints to be raised and acted on promptly, and that you develop and maintain an environment in which it is safe for students, educators and patients to speak up.
S5.6	Seek to facilitate professional mobility for prospective students with experience of working in the eye health sector where this is feasible and, in doing so, take into account GOC guidance on the accreditation of prior learning.
S5.7	Ensure effective mechanisms are in place to gain feedback from students, staff, patients and partner organisations with a view to

	continuously improve the safety, accessibility and quality of your programme.
S5.8	Ensure that there are effective mechanisms to gain assurance that the clinical experience which students receive throughout their education and training is delivered in accordance with these standards.
S5.9	Ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to gain assurance in relation to the safety of students and patients in any clinical settings that students may attend.
S5.10	Ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to identify, record and respond to issues that may affect the safety, accessibility or quality of learning environments and to learn promptly from things that go wrong.
S5.11	Ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to regularly evaluate information about student performance, progression and outcomes with a view to continuously improving the quality of education design, delivery and assessment.



## **Draft Learning Outcomes for Optometry Students**

NB: The referenced standards in brackets following each learning outcome refer to our Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.

### **Domain 1. A knowledgeable and skilful clinician and scientist.**

1.1 Has a knowledge of relevant systemic and ocular development, anatomy, biology, physiology, pathophysiology and epidemiology to ocular conditions relevant to the role. **[Standard 7]**

1.2 Ability to conduct a safe and competent assessment for the purposes of the optometric consultation, including symptoms and, where necessary, any relevant medical, family and social history of the patient. This may include personal beliefs or cultural factors. **[Standard 7]**

1.3 Understands and is able to perform a wide range of ocular examination techniques and diagnostic procedures and is able to use diagnostic drugs to examine the eye health of the patient. **[Standard 7]**

1.4 Understands and applies knowledge of visual processing to the measurement and management of normal and abnormal visual function including binocular vision and its development. **[Standard 7]**

1.5 Understands and applies knowledge of geometric and visual optics, and accommodation, to measure and manage refractive error and binocular vision, and to prescribe spectacles, contact lenses or dispense low vision devices. **[Standard 7]**

1.6 Ability to analyse and process the information obtained during assessment and examination of the patient to form a differential diagnosis. Able to make a reasoned diagnosis using professional judgement. **[Standard 7]**

1.7 Ability to diagnose and manage a wide range of normal and abnormal ocular conditions and diseases, and appropriately advises and/or refers patients where necessary to the most appropriate professional, including those external to the practice. **[Standard 7]**

1.8 Understands and applies knowledge of pharmaceuticals, pharmacology and microbiology to patient care. Understands the principles of independent prescribing and the legislation relating to the use and supply of exempt and controlled drugs. **[Standard 7]**

1.9 Understands and fulfils own role as part of a multidisciplinary healthcare team diagnosing and managing ocular conditions and diseases. **[Standards 7 and 10]**

1.10 Understands and applies the methods of selecting and fitting of contact lenses (including complex lenses) and the importance of safe aftercare regimes for patients with both rigid and soft contact lenses to maintain ocular health. **[Standard 7]**

1.11 Ability to safely and competently fit contact lenses, monitor anterior eye health and address any signs or complications that may arise through these processes. **[Standard 7]**

1.12 Understands and applies knowledge of spectacle frames and lenses, contact lens (including therapeutic and prosthetic) and low vision aid design and materials, to

provide patients with suitable optical appliances based on their visual function, lifestyle, and occupational, sporting and protective needs. **[Standard 7]**

1.13 Has the ability to prepare, communicate and manage effective support and aftercare plans in collaboration with patients and other colleagues where appropriate. **[Standard 7]**

1.14 Demonstrates an understanding and ability to communicate with patients with diverse needs, including people with disabilities. **[Standards 7 and 2]**

1.15 Understands and able to use peer-reviewed and clinical literature to make sound clinical judgements, and is able to adapt to emerging standards or technology. **[Standard 5]**

1.16 As a newly qualified optometrist, has all necessary knowledge and clinical skills for the delivery of primary eye care service contracts in the UK.

## **Domain 2. A trusted eye health and vision professional**

2.1 Understands the need to put patients' interests first and demonstrates care and compassion for patients. **[Standards 1 and 4]**

2.2 Has knowledge of what is required for valid consent and how to gain this from patients. Shows an awareness and understanding of the differences in the law surrounding consent in the different nations of the UK. Understands the differences around obtaining consent for children, young people and vulnerable adults. **[Standard 3 in full]**

2.3 Understands and recognises the need for professional boundaries in practice, particularly to avoid exploiting or unduly influencing patients or the public, whether politically, financially, sexually or by other means. **[Standards 15 in full]**

2.4 Understands and respects the principles and laws relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, and does not discriminate when providing patient care. **[Standard 13]**

2.5 Is able to communicate effectively with patients, carers and colleagues and is able to adapt communication style where necessary. Demonstrates a sensitive and supportive approach when communicating difficult news and is able to pick up on unspoken signals which could indicate a lack of understanding, discomfort or lack of consent. **[Standard 2 in full]**

2.6 Understands own personal responsibility to protect and safeguard patients, colleagues and others from harm. Possesses knowledge of the legal requirements related to safeguarding, particularly in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults. **[Standards 11]**

2.7 Understands and demonstrates the ability to maintain confidentiality in accordance with legislation. **[Standard 14]**

2.8 Understands and complies with the law and ethical principles. Able to recognise and appropriately manage uncertainty by using professional judgement. **[Standards 6 and 16]**

2.9 Understands and demonstrates the need for honesty and integrity to maintain public trust and confidence in the profession. **[Standard 16]**

2.10 Understands the professional duty of candour and is able to demonstrate the elements of candour when things go wrong. **[Standard 19 in full]**

### **Domain 3. A safe and competent practitioner**

3.1 Understands and is able to critically evaluate research and developments in optometry and vision science, including technology, and translates theory into practice in varied clinical settings across the range of conditions and patient groups reflective of patient need. **[Standard 5]**

3.2 Demonstrates knowledge, understanding and complies with the law and current regulatory standards relating to optical practice, including the role of the General Optical Council and the requirements of registration. **[Standards 9 and 17]**

3.3 Understands the need to raise concerns promptly if patient or public safety might be at risk. Demonstrates knowledge and ability of how concerns can be raised and escalated and has confidence to engage in difficult conversations regarding concerns. **[Standard 11]**

3.4 Demonstrates the ability to maintain accurate, up-to-date and accessible patient records containing all necessary information, and able to adapt to a range of systems and formats including written and electronic. **[Standards 8 in full and 9]**

3.5 Understands the need for lifelong learning/continuing professional development in order to maintain, enhance and develop their practice for the good of patients and the public. Has the ability to reflect on their own practice alone and with others, drawing on a wide range of different information sources, such as significant events analysis, clinical audit, patient feedback and peer review. **[Standard 5]**

3.6 Understands that there are limits to their professional competence, knowledge, skills and experience and works within their scope of practice. **[Standard 5]**

3.7 Understands and is able to describe what is required for a safe environment for patients and their own responsibility to ensure this is delivered. Has the confidence to take appropriate action if an environment is compromising patient safety. **[Standard 12]**

3.8 Has the ability to apply skills and professional judgement doing the right thing and putting the patient first. **[Standard 7]**

3.9 Is able to deal appropriately and promptly with an emergency situation in practice, whether an eye-related or medical emergency, taking into account their own scope of practice and training. **[Standard 12]**

### **Domain 4. A collaborative and effective colleague and manager**

4.1 Understands the differences in healthcare systems in each of the four nations of the UK and can describe from the varied scope of individual experience and the range of settings in which patients receive care, including in remote and urban environments. **[Standards 13 and 17]**

4.2 Recognises the social, commercial/financial, legal and political context in which optometric practice is undertaken and has ability to manage these aspects of the role without compromising professional standards and patient care. **[Standard 16]**

4.3 Respects and values the roles and contributions of other health and social care professionals within the healthcare system. Has the ability to work effectively in multi-disciplinary health and social care teams across a range of health and social care settings and across organisational boundaries. **[Standards 10 and 13]**

4.4 Understands that there will be times when they need to consult with or refer to other colleagues within or outside of the optical sector and is aware of different referral mechanisms within the healthcare system. **[Standard 6]**

4.5 Understands the role of eye health and sight loss services within the wider public health context and the need for all health professionals to play a role in health promotion to address changing patient and social demographics. **[Standard 1]**

4.6 Understands the concept of clinical governance which may include, but is not limited to, infection control, information security, operating a complaints mechanism and using data from clinical audit or patient feedback to review and improve practice. Is able to use secure information management systems, clinical guidance and protocols, and has the ability to adapt to different regimes at a local level by healthcare providers and employers and is able to adapt practice accordingly. **[Standards 5, 12 and 18]**

## **Draft Learning Outcomes for Dispensing Optician Students**

NB: The referenced standards in brackets following each learning outcome refer to our Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.

### **Domain 1. A knowledgeable and skilful clinician and scientist**

1.1 Has a knowledge of systemic and ocular development, anatomy, biology, physiology, pathophysiology and epidemiology to ocular conditions relevant to the role. **[Standard 7]**

1.2 Understands a wide range of ocular examination techniques, diagnostic procedures and diagnostic drugs. **[Standard 7]**

1.3 Understands and applies knowledge of theory, product and advancement in technology of ophthalmic lenses, in order to provide patients with the most appropriate optical appliances based on their visual function, lifestyle, occupational, leisure and protective need. **[Standard 7]**

1.4 Understands and applies knowledge of anatomical features and development (especially in paediatric patients), and frame materials, features and construction, in order to provide (and adapt where necessary) the most appropriate fit of frame, mount or appliance to all patients. **[Standard 7]**

1.5 Understands and applies knowledge of geometric and visual optics, and accommodation, in order to dispense spectacles and understands the methods of assessing vision, refractive error, binocular status and visual acuity in all patients. **[Standard 7]**

1.6 Understands and applies knowledge of low vision optics, to conduct a low vision assessment, and to dispense the most appropriate low vision devices. **[Standard 7]**

1.7 Accurately interprets clinical and refractive data to dispense the most appropriate optical appliance for the patient's needs, and recording how and why any adjustment against the prescription is made. **[Standard 7]**

1.8 Understands and recognises a range of common normal and abnormal ocular conditions and appropriately advises and/or refers patients where necessary to the most appropriate professional, including those external to the practice. **[Standard 6 and 7]**

1.9 Understands and fulfils own role as part of a multidisciplinary healthcare team in effectively dispensing complex prescriptions and can adapt to the requirements of the professional environment. **[Standards 6 and 10]**

1.10 Understands the methods of selecting and fitting of contact lenses and the importance of aftercare regimes for patients with both rigid and soft contact lenses to maintain ocular health. **[Standard 7]**

1.11 Has the ability to prepare, communicate and manage effective support and aftercare plans in collaboration with patients, and other colleagues where appropriate. **[Standard 7]**

1.12 Demonstrates an understanding and ability to communicate with patients with diverse needs, including dispensing patients with disabilities. **[Standards 7 and 2]**

1.13 Understands and able to use peer-reviewed and clinical literature to make sound clinical judgements and is able to adapt to emerging standards or technology. **[Standard 5]**

## **Domain 2. A trusted eye health and vision professional**

2.1 Understands the need to put patients' interests first and demonstrates care and compassion for patients. **[Standards 1 and 4]**

2.2 Has knowledge of what is required for valid consent and how this is obtained from patients. Shows an awareness and understanding of the differences in the law surrounding consent in the different nations of the UK, in particular the law around obtaining consent from children, young people and vulnerable adults. **[Standard 3 in full]**

2.3 Understands and recognises the need for professional boundaries in practice, particularly to avoid exploiting or unduly influencing patients or the public, whether politically, financially, sexually or by other means. **[Standard 15 in full]**

2.4 Understands and complies with the law relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, and does not discriminate when providing patient care. **[Standard 13]**

2.5 Is able to communicate effectively with patients, carers and colleagues and is able to adapt communication style where necessary. Demonstrates a sensitive and supportive approach when communicating difficult news, and is able to pick up on unspoken signals which could indicate a lack of understanding, discomfort or lack of consent. **[Standard 2 in full]**

2.6 Understands their own personal responsibility to protect and safeguard patients, colleagues and others from harm. Possesses knowledge of the legal requirements related to safeguarding, particularly in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults. **[Standard 11]**

2.7 Understands and demonstrates ability to maintain confidentiality in accordance with legislation. **[Standard 14]**

2.8 Understands and complies with the law and ethical principles. Able to recognise and appropriately manage uncertainty by using professional judgement. **[Standards 6 and 16]**

2.9 Understands and demonstrates the need for honesty and integrity to maintain public trust and confidence in the profession. **[Standard 16]**

2.10 Understands the professional duty of candour and is able to demonstrate the elements of candour when dispensing goes wrong. **[Standard 19 in full]**

## **Domain 3. A safe and competent practitioner**

3.1 Understands and is able to critically evaluate research and developments in optical and vision science, including technology, and translates theory into practice in varied clinical settings across the range of conditions and patient groups reflective of patient need. **[Standard 5]**

3.2 Demonstrates knowledge and understanding and complies with the law and current regulatory standards relating to optical practice, including the role of the General Optical Council and the requirements of registration. **[Standards 9 and 17]**

3.3 Understands the need to raise concerns promptly if patient or public safety might be at risk. Demonstrates knowledge of how concerns can be raised and escalated and has confidence to engage in difficult conversations regarding concerns. **[Standard 11]**

3.4 Demonstrates the ability to maintain accurate, up to date and accessible patient records containing all necessary information, and is able to adapt to a range of systems and formats including written and electronic. **[Standards 8 in full and 9]**

3.5 Understands the need for lifelong learning/continuing professional development in order to maintain, enhance and develop their practice for the benefit of patients and the public. Has the ability to reflect on their own practice alone and with others, drawing on a wide range of different information sources, such as significant events analysis, clinical audit, patient feedback and peer review. **[Standard 5]**

3.6 Understands the limits of their professional competence, knowledge, skills and experience and works within their scope of practice. **[Standard 5]**

3.7 Understands and is able to describe what is required for a safe environment for patients and their own responsibility to ensure this is delivered. Has the confidence to take appropriate action if an environment is compromising patient safety. **[Standard 12]**

3.8 Has the ability to apply skills and professional judgement doing the right thing and putting the patient first. **[Standard 7]**

3.9 Is able to deal appropriately and promptly with an emergency situation in practice, whether eye-related or medical emergency, taking into account their own scope of practice and training. **[Standard 12]**

#### **Domain 4. A collaborative and effective colleague and manager**

4.1 Understands the differences in healthcare systems in each of the four nations of the UK and can describe from the varied scope of individual experience the range of settings in which patients receive care including in remote and urban environments. **[Standards 13 and 17]**

4.2 Recognises the social, commercial/financial, legal and political context in which optical practice is undertaken and has ability to manage these aspects of the role without compromising professional standards. **[Standard 16]**

4.3 Respects and values the roles and contributions of other health and social care professionals within the healthcare system. Has the ability to work effectively in multi-disciplinary health and social care teams across a range of health and social care settings and across organisational boundaries. **[Standards 10 and 13]**

4.4 Understands when to consult with or refer to other colleagues within or outside of the optical sector and is aware of different referral mechanisms within the healthcare system. **[Standard 6]**

4.5 Understands the role of eye health and sight loss services within the wider public health context and the need for all health professionals to play a role in health promotion to address changing patient and social demographics. **[Standard 1]**

4.6 Understands the concept of clinical governance which may include, but is not limited to, infection control, information security, operating a complaints mechanism and using data from clinical audit or patient feedback to review and improve practice. Is able to use secure information management systems, clinical guidance and protocols and has the ability to adapt to different regimes at a local level by healthcare providers and employers and is able to adapt practice accordingly. **[Standards 5, 12 and 18]**



## **Draft Learning Outcomes for Contact Lens Opticians in training**

NB: The referenced standards in brackets following each learning outcome refer to our Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.

### **Domain 1. A knowledgeable and skilful clinician and scientist.**

1.1 Has a knowledge of systemic and ocular development, anatomy, biology, physiology, pathophysiology and epidemiology to ocular conditions relevant to the role. **[Standard 7]**

1.2 Understands and is able to apply a range of ocular examination techniques, diagnostic procedures and diagnostic drugs relevant to the role. **[Standard 7]**

1.3 Ability to conduct a safe and competent assessment for the purposes of the contact lens consultation, including symptoms and, where necessary, any relevant medical, family and social history of the patient. This may include personal beliefs or cultural factors.

1.4 Understands and applies knowledge of contact lens materials, features, construction and product technology in order to provide (and adapt where necessary) the most appropriate contact lenses to all patients based on visual function, lifestyle, occupational, leisure and protective need. **[Standard 7]**

1.5 Understands and applies knowledge of geometric and visual optics, and accommodation, in order to evaluate refractive error, and to properly fit the most appropriate contact lens for the use and needs of the patient. **[Standard 7]**

1.6 Understands and applies knowledge of ocular conditions which benefit from therapeutic and prosthetic contact lenses. **[Standard 7]**

1.7 Accurately interprets clinical and refractive data to dispense the most appropriate contact lens for the patient's needs, recording how and why any adjustment against the prescription is made. **[Standard 7]**

1.8 Sufficiently understands and applies knowledge of microbiology to accommodate the scope of patient care required. **[Standard 7]**

1.9 Understands and recognises a range of common normal and abnormal ocular conditions, and appropriately advises and/or refers patients where necessary to the most appropriate professional, including those external to the practice. **[Standards 6 and 7]**

1.10 Understands and fulfils own role as part of a multidisciplinary healthcare team in effectively fitting complex contact lens specifications and can adapt to the requirements of the professional environment. **[Standards 6 and 10]**

1.11 Understands and applies the methods of selecting and fitting of contact lenses and the importance of safe aftercare regimes for patients with both rigid and soft contact lenses to maintain ocular health. **[Standard 7]**

1.12 Has the ability to fit contact lenses, monitor anterior eye health and address any signs or complications that may arise through these processes **[Standard 7]**

1.13 Has the ability to prepare, communicate and manage effective support and aftercare plans in collaboration with patients, and other colleagues where appropriate. **[Standard 7]**

1.14 Demonstrates an understanding and ability to communicate with patients with diverse needs, including fitting people with disabilities. **[Standards 7 and 2]**

1.15 Understands and able to use peer-reviewed and clinical literature to make sound clinical judgements, and is able to adapt to emerging standards or technology. **[Standard 5]**

## **Domain 2. A trusted eye health and vision professional**

2.1 Understands the need to put patients' interests first and demonstrates care and compassion for patients. **[Standards 1 and 4]**

2.2 Has knowledge of what is required for valid consent and how this is obtained from patients. Shows an awareness and understanding of the law surrounding consent in the different nations of the UK, in particular the law around obtaining consent for children, young people and vulnerable adults. **[Standard 3 in full]**

2.3 Understands and recognises the need for professional boundaries in practice, particularly to avoid exploiting or unduly influencing patients or the public, whether politically, financially, sexually or by other means. **[Standard 15 in full]**

2.4 Understands and complies with the law relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, and does not discriminate when providing patient care. **[Standard 13]**

2.5 Is able to communicate effectively with patients, carers and colleagues and is able to adapt communication style where necessary. Demonstrates a sensitive and supportive approach when communicating difficult news, and is able to pick up on unspoken signals which could indicate a lack of understanding, discomfort or lack of consent. **[Standard 2 in full]**

2.6 Understands their own personal responsibility to protect and safeguard patients, colleagues and others from harm. Possesses knowledge of the legal requirements related to safeguarding, particularly in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults. **[Standard 11]**

2.7 Understands and demonstrates ability to maintain confidentiality in accordance with legislation. **[Standard 14]**

2.8 Understands and complies with the law and ethical principles. Able to recognise and appropriately manage uncertainty by using professional judgement. **[Standards 6 and 16]**

2.9 Understands and demonstrates the need for honesty and integrity to maintain public trust and confidence in the profession. **[Standard 16]**

2.10 Understands the professional duty of candour and is able to demonstrate the elements of candour when dispensing goes wrong. **[Standard 19 in full]**

### **Domain 3. A safe and competent practitioner**

3.1 Understands and is able to critically evaluate research and developments in optical and vision science, including technology and translates theory into practice in varied clinical settings across the range of conditions and patient groups reflective of patient need. **[Standard 5]**

3.2 Demonstrates knowledge and understanding and complies with the law and current regulatory standards relating to optical practice, including the role of the General Optical Council and the requirements of registration. **[Standards 9 and 17]**

3.3 Understands the need to raise concerns promptly if patient or public safety might be at risk. Demonstrates knowledge of how concerns can be raised and escalated and confidence to engage in difficult conversations regarding concerns. **[Standard 11]**

3.4 Demonstrates the ability to maintain accurate, up to date and accessible patient records containing all necessary information, and is able to adapt to a range of systems and formats including written and electronic. **[Standards 8 in full and 9]**

3.5 Understands the need for lifelong learning/continuing professional development in order to maintain, enhance and develop their practice for the benefit of patients and the public. Has the ability to reflect on their own practice alone and with others, drawing on a wide range of different information sources, such as significant events analysis, clinical audit, patient feedback and peer review. **[Standard 5]**

3.6 Understands the limits of their professional competence, knowledge, skills and experience and works within their scope of practice. **[Standard 5]**

3.7 Understands and is able to describe what is required for a safe environment for patients and their own responsibility to ensure this is delivered. Has the confidence to take appropriate action if an environment is compromising patient safety. **[Standard 12]**

3.8 Has the ability to apply skills and professional judgement, doing the right thing and putting the patient first. **[Standard 7]**

3.9 Is able to deal appropriately and promptly with an emergency situation in practice, whether eye-related or a medical emergency, taking into account their own scope of practice and training. **[Standard 12]**

### **Domain 4. A collaborative and effective colleague and manager**

4.1 Understands the differences in healthcare systems in each of the four nations of the UK and can describe from the varied scope of individual experience the range of settings in which patients receive care, including in remote and urban environments. **[Standards 13 and 17]**

4.2 Recognises the social, commercial/financial, legal and political context in which optical practice is undertaken and has ability to manage these aspects of the role without compromising professional standards. **[Standard 16]**

4.3 Respects and values the roles and contributions of other health and social care professionals within the healthcare system. Has the ability to work effectively in

multi-disciplinary health and social care teams across a range of health and social care settings and across organisational boundaries. **[Standards 10 and 13]**

4.4 Understands when to consult with or refer to other colleagues within or outside of the optical sector and is aware of different referral mechanisms within the healthcare system. **[Standard 6]**

4.5 Understands the role of eye health and sight loss services within the wider public health context and the need for all health professionals to play a role in health promotion to address changing patient and social demographics. **[Standard 1]**

4.6 Understands the concept of clinical governance which may include, but is not limited to, infection control, information security, operating a complaints mechanism and using data from clinical audit or patient feedback to review and improve practice. Is able to use secure information management systems, clinical guidance and protocols and has the ability to adapt to different regimes at a local level by healthcare providers and employers and is able to adapt practice accordingly. **[Standards 5, 12 and 18]**

## **Draft Learning Outcomes for Independent Prescriber Students**

We have taken a different approach to the development of the learning outcomes for independent prescribers, taking into account the views of our ESR Expert Advisory Group and the CET Reference Group. We are proposing to adopt the Royal Pharmaceutical Council's Competency Framework for all Prescribers. This applies to all healthcare professionals who prescribe, including optometrists who have qualified as independent prescribers, while recognising that different groups of healthcare professionals treat different conditions using different medicines.

The framework covers the following 10 areas:

- assess the patient;
- consider the options;
- reach a shared decision;
- prescribe;
- provide information;
- monitor and review;
- prescribe safely;
- prescribe professionally;
- improve prescribing practice; and
- prescribe as part of a team.

Using this framework would mean that independent prescribers in the optical sector are required to meet the same standards as other healthcare professionals and are recognised as being capable of participating within the wider healthcare system. We will be testing this approach and engaging directly with independent prescribers to gain their views.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Council's Competency Framework for all Prescribers is published here: <https://www.rpharms.com/resources/frameworks/prescribers-competency-framework>