



**THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL STAGE 2 CORE COMPETENCIES  
FOR OPTOMETRY**

**The following are the REVISED competencies for registration as an optometrist**

**APPROVED BY THE GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL ON**

**1 JULY 2004 and ratified 30 June 2005**

**Achievement of ALL the Core Competencies must be demonstrated at some stage  
during the period of the scheme**

**The GOC has placed the competencies in to three categories for assessment  
purposes:**

**High assessment competencies – in bold**

*Medium assessment competencies – in italics*

Standard assessment competencies – in standard type

## **Core Subject 1: Communication Skills**

### **The ability to communicate effectively with the patient and with professional colleagues**

1.1	The ability to take an accurate history from patients with a range of optometric conditions.
1.2	The ability to elicit significant symptoms.
1.3	The ability to elicit relevant family history.
1.4	The ability to elicit issues pertaining to the patient's general health, medication, work, sports, lifestyle and special needs.
1.5	The ability to impart to patients an explanation of their physiological or pathological eye condition.
1.6	An ability to understand a patient's fears, anxieties and concerns about their visual welfare, the eye examination and its outcome.
1.7	The ability to discuss with a patient the importance of systemic disease and its ocular impact, its treatment and the possible ocular side effects of medication.
1.8	An ability to understand the patient's expectations and aspirations and manage empathetically situations where these cannot be met.
1.9	The ability to communicate with patients who have poor, or non-verbal, communication skills, or those who are confused, reticent or who might mislead.
1.10	The ability to communicate bad news to patients in an empathetic and understandable way.

## **Core Subject 2: Professional Conduct**

### **An understanding of professional conduct and the legal aspects of professional practice**

2.1	The ability to manage patients in a safe, ethical and confidential fashion.
2.2	The ability to create and to keep clear, accurate and contemporaneous patient records.
2.3	The ability to interpret and respond appropriately to existing records.
2.4	The ability to make a judgement regarding referral and an understanding of referral pathways.
2.5	The ability to demonstrate an understanding of the legal, professional and ethical obligations of a registered optometrist.

### **Core Subject 3: Visual Function**

#### **An understanding of, and the ability to assess visual function**

3.1	<i>The ability to refract a range of patients with common optometric problems by appropriate objective and subjective means.</i>
3.2	<i>The ability to make appropriate prescribing and management decisions based on the refractive and oculomotor status.</i>
3.3	<i>The ability to use appropriate ocular diagnostic drugs to aid refraction.</i>
3.4	The ability to assess children's visual function using appropriate techniques.
3.5	The ability to assess patients with impaired visual function.
3.6	The ability to advise visually impaired patients about their impairment, disability or handicap.
3.7	The ability to assess a patient's colour vision and to determine whether it achieves the standards required by various vocational groups.
3.8	An understanding of the special examination needs of patients with learning and other disabilities.
3.9	An understanding of the special examination needs of patients with severe visual field defects.

## **Core Subject 4: Optical Appliances**

### **The ability to prescribe and to dispense appropriate optical appliances**

4.1	The ability to advise on and to dispense the most suitable form of optical correction taking into account durability, comfort, cosmetic appearance and lifestyle.
4.2	The ability to measure and verify optical appliances, taking into account relevant standards.
4.3	The ability to advise on the use of, and to dispense simple low vision aids including: hand and stand magnifiers, typoscopes and hand held telescopes.
4.4	The ability to advise on the use of and to dispense complex spectacle lens forms, including: multifocals, high corrections, and their application to specific patient needs.
4.5	An understanding of prismatic effect, and the manipulation of lens form and setting to obtain the desired control of prismatic effects.
4.6	<i>An understanding of eye protection regulations, and relevant standards, and the ability to advise on occupational visual requirements.</i>
4.7	The ability to prescribe and dispense spectacles for vocational use.
4.8	An understanding of the application of complex low vision aids e.g. spectacle-mounted telescopes, CCTV.
4.9	The ability to manage non-tolerance cases.

## **Core Subject 5: Ocular Examination**

### **The ability to perform an examination of the eye and related structures**

5.1	The ability to use instruments in ocular examination and to understand the implications of the findings in terms of subsequent examination techniques.
5.2	The ability to assess the external eye and adnexa.
5.3	The ability to assess the tear film.
5.4	The ability to assess pupil reactions.
5.5	The ability to use a slit lamp.
5.6	The ability to use diagnostic drugs to aid ocular examination.
<b>5.7</b>	<b>The ability to examine fundi using direct and indirect techniques.</b>
5.8	The ability to use instruments to measure corneal curvature.
5.9 part	The ability to investigate visual fields <b>and to analyse and interpret the results.</b>
5.10	The ability to use a contact tonometer to measure intraocular pressure and analyse and interpret the results.
5.11	The ability to make an assessment of the fundus in the presence of media opacities.
5.12	The ability to use a slit lamp to detect anterior chamber signs of ocular inflammation.
5.13	The ability to assess visual fields of patients with reduced visual acuity.
5.14	Demonstrate an understanding of techniques for assessment of vision in infants.
5.15	An understanding of the assessment of visual function, including the use of specialist charts for distance and near vision, and the effects of lighting, contrast and glare.

## Core Subject 6: Ocular Abnormalities

### The ability to identify and manage ocular abnormalities

6.1	The ability to interpret and investigate the presenting symptoms of the patient.
6.2	<i>The ability to develop a management plan for the investigation of the patient</i>
6.3	<i>The ability to identify external pathology and offer appropriate advice to patients not needing referral,</i>
6.4	An understanding of risk factors for common ocular conditions.
6.5	<i>The ability to recognise common ocular abnormalities and to refer when appropriate.</i>
6.6	<i>The ability to manage a patient presenting with a red eye.</i>
6.7	<i>The ability to manage a patient presenting with reduced vision.</i>
6.8	The ability to identify abnormal colour vision and to appreciate its significance.
6.9	<i>The ability to manage a patient presenting with cataract.</i>
6.10	<i>The ability to evaluate glaucoma risk factors, to detect glaucoma and refer accordingly.</i>
6.11	<i>The ability to manage a patient presenting with macular degeneration.</i>
6.12	<i>The ability to recognise, evaluate and manage diabetic eye disease and refer accordingly.</i>
6.13	<i>The ability to evaluate and manage a patient presenting with symptoms suggestive of retinal detachment.</i>
6.14	An understanding of the treatment of a range of common ocular diseases.
6.15	The ability to recognise ocular manifestations of systemic disease.
6.16	An understanding of the role of optometrists in shared care schemes.
6.17	The ability to assess symptoms and signs of neurological significance.
<b>6.18</b>	<b>The ability to manage patients presenting with sight- threatening eye disease.</b>
6.19	An ability to recognise adverse ocular reactions to medication.

## **Core Subject 7: Contact Lenses**

### **The ability to manage patients with contact lenses**

7.1	The ability to insert and remove contact lenses and instruct patients in these procedures.
7.2	<i>The ability to fit soft contact lenses.</i>
7.3	The ability to manage the aftercare of patients wearing soft contact lenses
7.4	The ability to advise on contact lens materials and care regimes
7.5	The ability to manage the aftercare of patients wearing rigid gas permeable contact lens.
7.6	<i>The ability to fit rigid gas permeable contact lenses.</i>
7.7	An understanding of, and the ability to fit contact lenses to patients with astigmatism.
7.8	An understanding of the techniques used in fitting contact lenses and to advise patients requiring complex visual correction.

### **Core Subject 8: Binocular Vision**

#### **The ability to assess and manage patients with anomalies of binocular vision**

8.1	<i>The ability to assess binocular status using objective and subjective tests.</i>
8.2	<i>An understanding of the management of a patient with an anomaly of binocular vision.</i>
8.3	The ability to investigate and manage adult patients presenting with heterophoria.
8.4	The ability to manage an adult patient with heterotropia
8.5	The ability to manage children at risk of developing an anomaly of binocular vision.
8.6	The ability to manage children presenting with an anomaly of binocular vision.
8.7	<i>The ability to manage a patient presenting with an incomitant deviation.</i>