



## Optometrists and the provision of MECS and CUEs services

All registered optometrists must have demonstrated a range of competencies and outcomes in order to qualify. These include demonstrating competence in identifying and managing minor eye conditions (posterior, anterior and neurological).

The tables below lay out relevant competencies and outcomes from the two most recent GOC qualification frameworks, as evidence of the training and capabilities that are core to all Optometry registrants.

These evidence that optometrists have the core training for providing relevant minor, acute and urgent eye care services without further accreditation. All optometrists are also required to maintain their scope of practice through completing statutory [Continuing Professional Development](#) (CPD) in order to practise safely and protect their patients.

### Relevant competencies (taken from the GOC's [Optometry Handbook 2015](#))

**Unit of Competency: 6. Ocular Disease** The ability to identify and manage ocular abnormalities  
**Element of Competence: 6.1** The ability to manage patients presenting with eye disease, including sight threatening eye disease

Performance Criteria	Indicators
6.1.1 Understands the risk factors for common ocular conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understands the risk factors for developing common ocular conditions including:</li><li>• Glaucoma, cataract, diabetic, retinopathy and ARMD</li></ul>
6.1.2 Interprets and investigates the presenting symptoms of the patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asks appropriate and relevant questions to follow up presenting symptoms</li><li>• Recognises a significant symptom (including reduced vision)</li><li>• Investigates the presenting symptom</li><li>• Interprets the results</li></ul>
6.1.3 Develops a management plan for the investigation of the patient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognises that there is a need for action and further investigation within the primary care setting</li><li>• Chooses and carries out an appropriate technique for that investigation</li><li>• Interprets the results and acts in line with College of Optometrists and NHS guideline</li></ul>
6.1.4 Identifies external pathology and offers appropriate advice to patients not requiring referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses an appropriate method for looking at the external eye, grades what is seen at the initial check and at follow up covering:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ External eye and ocular surfaces</li><li>○ Lids, lashes, lumps/bumps and red eye</li></ul></li><li>• Gives the correct advice/treatment and review period</li><li>• Aware of pharmaceutical agents available (legal status, indications, contraindications, and side effects and uses appropriate sources of medicines information)</li><li>• Explains clearly to the patient and checks their understanding</li></ul>
6.1.5 Recognises common ocular abnormalities and refers when appropriate	<p>Recognises, using appropriate technique/s, all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cataract</li><li>• Glaucoma or glaucoma suspects</li><li>• Anterior eye disorders e.g. blepharitis, dry eye, meibomian gland, dysfunction, lid lesions</li><li>• AMD and macular abnormalities Manages appropriately</li></ul>



Performance Criteria	Indicators
6.1.6 Manages patients presenting with cataract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understands the impact of cataract on patients' lifestyle</li><li>• Provides advice on minimising impact on lifestyle- non surgical management</li><li>• Shows awareness of HES management-understands the risk and benefit of surgery</li><li>• Provides appropriate advice and management including, when necessary, referral for cataract extraction</li></ul>
6.1.7 Manages patients presenting with red eye/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtains relevant information from the patient</li><li>• Uses appropriate methods of examination to enable differential diagnosis</li><li>• Appropriately manages the patient after diagnosis</li></ul>
6.1.8 Evaluates glaucoma risk factors, to detect glaucoma and refer accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discusses the key risk factors</li><li>• Identifies findings suggestive of open and closed angle glaucoma from clinical examination</li><li>• Uses above information to determine if referral is appropriate</li><li>• Decides on urgency and pathway of referral</li></ul>
6.1.9 Manages patients presenting with macular degeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distinguishes between wet and dry AMD from symptoms and clinical findings</li><li>• Establishes patient needs and visual function</li><li>• Makes appropriate recommendations for management or referral</li><li>• Understands potential treatments both medical and 'in practice' options</li></ul>
6.1.10 Recognises, evaluates and manages diabetic eye disease and refers accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognises and names correctly the stage of diabetic eye disease</li><li>• Gives local referral route and the appropriate timescales for referral for the following diabetic retinopathies:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Background/Maculopathy/ Pre-proliferative/ Proliferative</li></ul></li></ul>
6.1.11 Understands the treatment of a range of common ocular conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates a basic understanding of the treatment regimes of cataract, AMD, glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and minor anterior eye problems</li><li>• Can discuss the treatment options for 2 of the above conditions</li></ul>
6.1.12 Evaluates and manages patients presenting with symptoms of retinal detachment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifies, evaluates and investigates significant symptoms</li><li>• Assesses risk factors</li><li>• Carries out an appropriate eye examination</li><li>• Manages the findings according to local protocol</li></ul>
6.1.13 Recognises ocular manifestations of systemic disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides evidence of examining patients and recognising ocular manifestations of systemic disease in hypertension and diabetes</li><li>• Answers questions and recognises a range of ocular conditions from images provided by the assessor and relates these to the systemic disease</li></ul>
6.1.14 Assesses symptoms and signs of neurological significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assesses the relevant symptoms and signs</li><li>• Understands which signs/symptoms could relate to a neurological condition and the follow up information required to make a differential diagnosis</li><li>• Understands the significance and relative importance of the findings</li><li>• Manages appropriately</li></ul>



Performance Criteria	Indicators
6.1.15 Recognises adverse ocular reactions to medication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shows awareness relating to sources of information of adverse reactions</li><li>• Provides evidence of the recognition of an adverse reaction to medication (systemic or topical)</li><li>• Identifies and/or lists the Ocular Adverse reactions to a range of common medications (systemic or topical)</li><li>• Describes the reporting scheme</li></ul>

**Relevant GOC Outcomes for Optometrists (from the [Requirements for Approved Qualifications in Optometry or Dispensing Optics \(2021\)](#))**

03.5b (iii) Makes informed decisions on the treatment and management of ocular abnormalities and disease
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigates and interprets individual patients' presenting symptoms and risk factors and identifies the clinical signs of potential abnormality and disease</li><li>• Selects and deploys appropriate methods of clinical examination</li><li>• Analyses the results of an examination to make a differential diagnosis</li><li>• Advises individual patients on the implications and care options arising from the detection of common ocular abnormalities and disease, making referrals in line with professional guidance and local pathways, when in patients' best interests so that they receive timely, efficacious care.</li><li>• Designs and implements an appropriate management plan arising from a clinical examination and differential diagnosis, in line with individual patients' clinical need and preferences</li><li>• Assesses and evaluates signs and symptoms of neurological significance</li><li>• Manages patients presenting with a range of anterior and/or posterior ocular conditions.</li><li>• Detects the ocular manifestations of systemic disease and advises and refers in line with individual patients' need</li></ul>
03.5b (iv) Accurately identifies patients' conditions and their potential need for medical referral in a timely way, including when urgent or emergency attention is required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interprets the results of history-taking and clinical findings (i.e. a recognition of abnormality and correct interpretation of common investigative tests) to formulate an appropriate management plan, recognising and acting when a referral is appropriate</li><li>• Identifies the signs of disease progression or change in individual patients' clinical status and adapts and advises on their management plan in line with this</li><li>• Appraises the need for and urgency of making a patient referral, using relevant local protocols and national professional guidance, and acts accordingly</li><li>• Recognises the clinical signs of sight- and life-threatening conditions that require immediate treatment and takes appropriate action</li><li>• Detects adverse ocular reactions to medication and advises, manages and refers in line with individual patients' need.</li></ul>
03.5b (v) Uses common ophthalmic drugs, safely to facilitate optometric examination and the diagnosis / treatment of ocular disease.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adheres to legal requirements for the use and supply of common ophthalmic drugs</li><li>• Appraises the appropriate use of common ocular drugs to aid refraction and assessment of the fundus</li></ul>



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Obtains individual patients' informed consent to use common ophthalmic drugs to aid investigation, examination, diagnosis and treatment, including by advising on the potential side effects and associated risks of specific drugs</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administers common ocular drugs appropriately, effectively and judiciously, exercising caution to ensure patient safety.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognises the indications and contraindications of commonly-used ophthalmic drugs and responds in light of these to uphold patient care and safety</li></ul>   |