



## The role and responsibilities of the mentor in the clinical placement

The College follows the GOC supervision policy in the administration of the TCFA Independent Prescribing Clinical Placement.

Trainees undertaking practice-based learning must practice under the supervision/mentorship of an appropriately qualified, registered and approved mentor.

For the purposes of the 2008 GOC handbook programmes\*, the mentor roles are defined as:

### **Overall Review Mentor (ORM)**

- A designated ophthalmologist with the specialism registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) register

### **Clinical Session Mentor/Supervisor**

- An ophthalmologist with the specialism registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) register
- A designated ophthalmic practitioner:
  - An ophthalmologist in specialist training for at least 2 years
  - An IP-qualified optometrist who has been on the specialist register for at least 2 years

The ORM will provide supervision, support and arrange appropriate clinical experience so that the optometrist can develop links between the theory and practice of prescribing. The session mentor/supervisor must report into the ORM if individual sessions are supervised by them.

Furthermore, the mentor will facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes specified by the General Optical Council (GOC).

It is not the ORMs or mentors' responsibility to formally assess the learning outcomes since these will be assessed by the University and The College of Optometrists.

During an initial meeting with the optometrist, the ORM can plan a training programme based on the optometrist's learning needs. During the placement the ORM should:

- facilitate learning by encouraging critical thinking and reflection



- provide dedicated time and opportunities for the trainee to observe how the ORM and/or clinical session mentors/supervisors conducts consultations with patients and the develops a management plan
- allow opportunities for the trainee to carry out consultations and suggest management and prescribing options, which are then discussed with the ORM and/or clinical session mentor/supervisor
- provide opportunities for case-based discussions to consolidate the learning experience

The ORM is responsible for ensuring that IP candidates are:

- competent in the assessment, diagnosis and management of the ophthalmic conditions for which candidates intend to prescribe
- able to recognise sight-threatening conditions that should be referred
- able to consult effectively with patients
- able to monitor the response to treatment, to review both the working diagnosis and to modify treatment, refer, consult or seek guidance, as appropriate
- able to make clinical decisions based on, and with reference to, the needs of the patient
- aware of your own limitations
- able to critically analyse and evaluate your ongoing performance in relation to prescribing practice

As the approach to teaching and learning is developed on an individual basis, it is difficult to predict how much time this will involve for the ORM. However, given that all those undertaking clinical placements are experienced optometrists, it is hoped that this will not be too onerous.

The optometrist will not need to spend the entire placement with the ORM, as other designated ophthalmic practitioners may be better placed to provide some of the learning opportunities. However, the ORM maintains overall responsibility for the trainee and will validate their clinical experience with the College by signing the logbook.

\*The College of Optometrists provides the Therapeutics Common Final Assessment IP (TCFA IP) exam for qualifications that are provided in line with the 2008 GOC handbook. ETR 2021 Programmes are those that began at Aston University in 2023 and Cardiff University in 2024, candidates who complete ETR 2021 programmes are not required to take the College of Optometrists TCFA IP exam.