



Scheme for Registration supervisor arrangements for trainees, 2020/21

Introduction

1. The General Optical Council (GOC) updated its requirements on the supervision of optometry students following consultation in August 2020. They can be accessed [here](#). The updated requirements, while referring to students, relate to trainees on the Scheme for Registration. The changes to GOC requirements are temporary, but will remain in place until further notice.
2. The GOC confirmed on 18th September 2020 its approval of College proposals for supervision arrangements for the Scheme for Registration in 2020/21. In addition to fulfilling GOC requirements, the College's changes to supervisor arrangements are designed to do the following:
 - Respond to the optometry practice conditions created by Covid-19 and to support employers and supervisors provide placements for new trainees
 - Strengthen how trainees' supervised practice reflects changes in optometry practice and service delivery (both those arising from and sped up by Covid-19 and broader changes in models of patient care)
 - Ensure the quality of trainees' supervision is maintained and that patient safety is upheld.

Updated requirements

3. The College's modified supervision arrangements comply with the GOC's Temporary Supervision Requirements (August 2020). They apply to all current and future trainees on the Scheme for Registration and while the GOC temporary supervision requirements remain in effect.
4. The modified arrangements **can** apply to trainees who enrolled on the Scheme for Registration before August 2020, if this increases the flexibility and responsiveness of individual arrangements to current circumstance and need. However, they do not create the need for changes to be made to supervision arrangements that were put in place for individual trainees who enrolled on the Scheme before August 2020.
5. The key changes to the Scheme supervisor requirements are as follows:
 - We have changed our eligibility criteria so that all supervisors have to have accrued **at least two years' continuous registration with the GOC**, rather than length of qualified practice being variable (this now fully aligns with the GOC's minimum criteria for supervisors)

- We have defined the role of a 'principal' supervisor and the criteria for taking on this role and the responsibilities attached to the role (see para.7 below and **Appendix A**)
- We have expanded the number of trainees for whom a supervisor can take responsibility, and defined arrangements for this to uphold the quality of trainees' experience (see para.10 below)
- We recognise the value of other optometrists and a broader range of eye health professionals contributing to trainees' supervision through acting as additional supervisors
- We have defined the criteria to be met for contributing as an additional supervisor, with this role replacing that of temporary and secondary supervisors
- We have specified how trainees need to record their supervision arrangements in their logbook (see **Appendix B**).

Role of the supervisor

6. The role of the supervisor within the Scheme for Registration is as follows:

- To support, observe and mentor a trainee
- To provide a sufficient and suitable learning environment for a trainee
- To ensure a trainee has access to the appropriate equipment to meet the requirements of the Scheme for Registration
- To be familiar with the Scheme assessment requirements, guidelines and regulations
To seek to ensure that a trainee practising under supervision is clearly identified as such to patients/carers and that the supervisor's own role and identity is also made clear to them.

Principal supervisor

7. We have defined the role of principal supervisor as including the following:

- Is the named supervisor for an individual trainee, in line with the conditions for a trainee's enrolment on the Scheme
- Takes primary responsibility for arrangements for an individual trainee's supervised practice
- Co-ordinates the broader supervision arrangements for an individual trainee, including the safe, appropriate input of additional supervisors
- Manages the involvement of additional supervisors for an individual trainee to ensure safe, appropriate arrangements are in place at all times for the individual trainee.

8. A principal supervisor must meet the following criteria:

- Be a fully-qualified optometrist with at least two years' continuous registration with the GOC and comply with the GOC code of conduct in their professional practice
- Be a member of the College of Optometrists and have signed up to the College's Code of Conduct
- Have completed the College of Optometrists' Introduction to Supervision course
- Adhere to the GOC's Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (which include Section 9: Ensure that supervision is undertaken appropriately and complies with the law)
- Have agreed to and signed the College's Supervisor Terms and Conditions (see **Appendix A**)

- Be able to act as a principal supervisor for at least 50% of a trainee's supervised practice time.¹
9. Individual optometrists' fulfilment of the above criteria must be approved by the College of Optometrists prior to the trainee practising under their supervision.
10. When directly supervising the trainee, the principal supervisor must do the following:
- Be on the premises and in a position to oversee the work undertaken by the trainee
 - Intervene in the trainee's practice, if necessary, in order to ensure protection of the patients being seen
 - Retain clinical responsibility for patients seen by their trainee
 - Take active steps to seek to ensure that no untoward consequences to the detriment of a patient can arise from the trainee's actions
 - Comply with all legal requirements governing the activity being supervised.
11. An optometrist can be the principal supervisor for a maximum of three pre-registration trainees at any one time, providing that no more than two of the trainees are at the same stage in the Scheme for Registration at the same time. This means that an individual optometrist may be the principal supervisor for the following combinations of trainees:
- Three trainees, of whom two are at Stage One and one is at Stage Two
 - Three trainees, of whom one is at Stage One and two are at Stage Two
 - Three trainees, of whom one is at Stage One, one is at Stage Two and one is preparing to sit the OSCE*
 - Three trainees, of whom one is at Stage One and two are preparing to sit the OSCE*
 - Three trainees, of whom none is at Stage One, two are at Stage Two and one is preparing to sit the OSCE*.
- * While strongly recommended, it is not a requirement that trainees remain in supervised practice once they have completed Stage Two of the Scheme and are preparing to sit the OSCE.
12. We recognise the need for some leeway in the above arrangements as a principal supervisor's individual trainees transition from one stage of the Scheme to the next, given trainees' progression from one stage to the next is unlikely to happen at exactly the same time. Deviation from the maximum combinations in point 10 should not occur for more than two months at a time. If this risks being for longer, due to trainees' relative progression, the principal supervisor should contact the College Lead Assessor for advice.
13. It is also appropriate for two optometrists to share the role of principal supervisor to the same trainee, where this helps to increase flexibility and enhance a trainee's practice experience, and does not compromise the quality of the supervision arrangements. Joint arrangements can also be made across more than one practice where they can be agreed and co-ordinated across the practices.
14. If shared arrangements are put in place, all parties must ensure clarity on the following:

¹ This percentage does not relate to the overall time that a trainee may spend in a practice undertaking a broader range of activities.

- How shared responsibility for co-ordinating the trainee's overall supervision arrangements will be enacted
- How the effectiveness of the shared responsibility will be kept under active review, with any issues addressed to ensure their continued effectiveness
- How the trainee's practice will appropriately and safely supervised at all times, including through additional supervisors appropriately contributing to the co-ordinated supervision arrangements and to specific elements of supervised practice (see below).

15. If the role of principal supervisor to a trainee is shared between two optometrists, the two supervisors need to register as joint principal supervisors with the College.

Additional supervisors

16. Providing a trainee has an approved principal supervisor, other regulated eye health practitioners, including within the multi-disciplinary team, can contribute to a trainee's supervision.

17. Additional supervisors can be other optometrists, dispensing opticians or contact lens opticians. They could also be orthoptists, ophthalmic nurses or ophthalmologists. However, it is recognised that current placement capacity, in the context of Covid-19, are unlikely to mean that broader members of multi-disciplinary teams will be able to contribute in this way.

18. Additional supervisors have clinical responsibility for the activity undertaken by a trainee under their supervision at that point in time. The principal supervisor(s) retains responsibility for co-ordinating the individual trainee's supervision arrangements and for ensuring the appropriateness of these for different elements of supervised practice.

19. Additional supervisors must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a qualification in an eye care field and be a regulated health care professional with at least two years' continuous registration with the relevant regulator
- Be sufficiently qualified, experienced and current in their scope of practice to undertake the functions they are supervising
- Comply with the GOC code of conduct, and/or equivalent regulator's conduct standards, in their professional practice
- If an optometrist, be a College member
- For the elements of supervision that they provide be both on the premises and in a position to oversee the work undertaken by the trainee, such that they can intervene, if required, to maintain patient safety and avoid any untoward consequences for patients that could arise from the trainee's actions
- Comply with all legal requirements relating to the activity that they are supervising.

20. The principal supervisor is responsible for checking additional supervisors' fulfilment of the above criteria.

21. Additional supervisors replace the College's previous secondary and temporary supervisor policy.

22. Additional supervisors should not be responsible for supervising the activity of more than three trainees at the same time.

Registering supervisor arrangements

23. At the point of registering/enrolling on the Scheme for Registration, an applicant trainee must do the following:

- Nominate a principal supervisor(s) and provide their details
- Be accepted by the named principal supervisor(s)
- Await confirmation from the College of their principal supervisor arrangements before practising under supervision on the Scheme.

24. Trainees may change their principal supervisor at any time once registered/enrolled on the Scheme. They can do this by completing the College's [form for this purpose](#).

Recording supervisor arrangements

25. Each additional supervisor must be recorded in a trainee's logbook. They must be approved by the principal supervisor, who must sign the trainee's logbook to affirm that they have checked each additional supervisor's eligibility and are satisfied that they meet the criteria above. The following information should be recorded and verified:

- Full name, as recorded on the GOC, or equivalent regulatory register
- GOC number, or equivalent regulatory registration number
- College membership number, if an optometrist
- Job title/role.

26. If using the 2019/20 or earlier logbook, trainees should download and keep a log of their supervisors using the template in **Appendix B**.

27. All patient encounters logged by the trainee must have the initials recorded on the patient record of the supervisor who supervised the encounter. The initials of the supervisor must also be documented in the trainee logbook for each encounter. The supervisor must be listed in the trainee's logbook whose eligibility has been checked by the trainee's principal supervisor. If two supervisors have the same initials a clear differentiation needs to be made e.g. Adan Patel (AP), Amanda Peters (AmP).

Recording the fulfilment of any outstanding GOC Stage One competencies and/or patient episodes

28. The GOC has given its approval for individual optometry graduates to carry a small number of GOC Stage One competencies and/or patient episodes into the Scheme for Registration as a specific temporary change in the context of Covid-19. This reflects the impact of the pandemic on how third-year students were able to complete their university studies in the spring/summer of 2020. The approved arrangement is designed to support individuals' safe progression towards full registration with the GOC.

29. The College will receive information from universities on whether individuals have any outstanding GOC Stage One competencies and/or patient episodes. This information will be shared with supervisors once a trainee is registered/enrolled on the Scheme. Trainees should also be in receipt of this information from the university from which they

graduated and advised that the information will need to be shared to enable their supported, safe progression to full registration as an optometrist.

30. The GOC has agreed to a 'light touch' approach to any outstanding Stage One competencies and/or patient episodes being signed off in a trainee's supervised practice. This sign-off should be recorded in the trainee's logbook by the principal or an additional supervisor in line with para. 22 above. This sign-off will then be reviewed by the trainee's College assessor. Separate College guidance is being supplied on this.

Principal Supervisor terms and conditions

By accepting these terms and conditions, you are undertaking to comply with the College of Optometrists' criteria for acting as a principal supervisor for a trainee enrolled on the Scheme for Registration.

Eligibility

1. I confirm that I am currently on the General Optical Council (GOC) register and have been registered continuously with the GOC for at least two years.
2. I confirm that I am a member of the College of Optometrists and, as such, recognise that I am bound by The College of Optometrists' Code of Conduct.
3. I confirm that I have completed The College of Optometrists' supervision training via the College's website.
4. I recognise that as an optometrist and supervisor, I must adhere to the GOC's Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.

Trainee employment arrangements

5. I will seek to ensure that my employer provides the following arrangements for a trainee for whom I act as the principal supervisor:
 - Written conditions of service and terms of employment
 - Remuneration at least at the minimum wage for the duration of the contract
 - Cover under its liability insurance.

Trainee supervision

6. I understand and accept that as a supervisor I will follow [GOC Standards of Practice, Section 9](#)
7. I understand as the supervisor that, should there be an allegation of deficient professional performance or misconduct, I will be subject to investigation by the GOC, as well as the trainee.
8. I undertake to give my continuous personal supervision to the trainee and accept full responsibility for the trainee's actions. I know that in accordance with the GOC's 'The Testing of Sight by Persons Training as Optometrists 1993' the GOC has taken the view that the phrase 'continuous personal supervision' requires the presence of the supervisor on the premises whilst the person training as an optometrist is testing sight, and the supervisor must ensure that no untoward consequences to the detriment of the patient can arise from the actions of the trainee.
9. I will be close enough to intervene if there is a problem. This means that, in the very early stages of the placement, or when the trainee is undertaking a procedure that carries risk such as contact tonometry, I will be in the room during the consultation. As the trainee progresses I will use my professional judgement about how near the consultation room to be. I will be near enough to intervene or help my trainee if necessary. This means that where a practice is in two or more buildings, I will be in the same building. I undertake to be directly available on the premises for a minimum of 50% of the trainee's supervised practice, or make formalised arrangements to share this responsibility with the joint principal supervisor to a trainee, with whom I share the principal supervisor responsibilities.

10. Where appropriate and safe for the trainee's supervised practice experience, I will draw in other eye health regulated professionals to act as additional supervisors to the trainee for whom I am the principal supervisor (see para.10 below). This includes if I have to leave the practice premises temporarily. I recognise that I remain accountable for the supervision arrangements for my trainee.
11. In making arrangements for additional supervisors to contribute the supervision arrangements of a trainee for whom I am the principal supervisor, I will ensure the following:
 - Practitioners fulfil the criteria to act as an additional supervisor
 - Individuals have agreed to undertake the additional supervision responsibilities for the named trainee
 - It is clear the elements of practice for which an additional supervisor can provide safe, appropriate supervision (in line with their profession's scope of practice and their current scope of practice as an individual practitioner)
 - The specific additional supervision arrangements are clear to all parties
 - The supervision arrangements for specific elements of the trainee's experience are recorded and signed off in their logbook.
12. If I am no longer able to act as the trainee's principal supervisor due to absence from the practice at which my trainee is based for a continuous period of more than six weeks, I will ensure that The College is notified of the registered optometrist who will act as the trainee's principal supervisor for that period.

Trainee support

13. I will ensure, where appropriate, the trainee is given the opportunity to attend extended tutorials, revision courses or gain further experience.
14. I will make arrangements for the trainee to the requisite experience to meet the GOC requirement of a minimum of 520 patient encounters, and to fulfil College requirements to ensure an appropriate balance of patient encounters, prior to applying to sit the final Scheme assessment.
15. I will support my trainee to engage with and complete the online hospital eye service (HES) resource provided by The College if an observational visit at the hospital is not available.
16. I will take an active interest in helping the pre-registration trainee gain the experience necessary for registration by:
 - Ensuring that the trainee gains experience relating to the Scheme competencies² and related patient encounters
 - Regularly observing the trainee during the year carrying out complete examinations and afterwards commenting on the trainee's performance
 - Discussing cases with the trainee, including to guide and support their clinical activity, management and advice
 - Encouraging the trainee to obtain the widest possible range of patient experience in support of their learning and development and fulfilment of the Scheme requirements
 - Working with the trainee to ensure that they follow and complete the action plans agreed with the assessor after each assessment visit.

Trainee facilities

17. I will give the trainee sole access to a consulting room for the testing of sight for a minimum of 10 hours per week.

² The Scheme competencies are the same as the GOC Stage Two performance criteria, as specified under the GOC units of competency and elements of competence.

18. I will ensure that the trainee has access to equipment in the practice that is normally required for eye examinations, contact lens appointments and dispensing, and receives practical experience in using this equipment. This includes access to visual fields equipment, colour vision evaluation tests, facilities for measuring intra-ocular pressure, and equipment for the evaluation of the ocular motor state and binocular perception. If possible, the trainee should also have access to imaging equipment and practical experience in using this.

19. Specifically, I will ensure that the trainee will have access to the equipment listed below in their consulting room, and that all equipment listed will be in working order and fit for purpose. I understand that a Scheme for Registration assessor may check to verify that the items listed are present via an assessment visit.

- Access to a wash basin
- Amsler charts manual
- Colour vision test x 2
- A condensing lens for binocular indirect ophthalmoscopy with the slit lamp
- Direct ophthalmoscope*
- Distance and near oculomotor balance tests
- Distance vision tests (adults and children)
- Focimeter
- Frame rule*
- Keratometer
- Means for measuring peripheral visual field
- Measuring device for accommodation
- Near vision tests (adults and children)
- Near vision unit; for example Mallett unit
- Pen torch*
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Retinoscope*
- Slit-lamp biomicroscope
- Test for stereopsis
- Threshold controlled visual field equipment
- Tonometer – both contact applanation and non-contact applanation (and calibration equipment)
- Trial lenses, trial frame and accessories including pinhole.

* The trainee should normally own these pieces of equipment to support their professional development.

20. I will give access to, and encourage the use under supervision of, those drugs and contact lens solutions normally used in the practice of optometry; e.g. cycloplegics, mydriatics, topical anaesthetics and stains.

21. I will give access to, and encourage the use of, a range of contact lens types used in contact lens practice. If the contact lens types, mode of fitting, and after care are limited

in the practice, then I will arrange for the trainee to receive sufficient experience to become confident and competent in relation to the core competencies.

22. I acknowledge that I may, from time to time, be required to furnish information about staff, premises, equipment, etc., and will permit authorised representatives of the College to visit the premises at any time.

Trainee assessment

23. I will ensure that my trainee and I arrange times and dates for assessments with the trainee's College assessor when requested, with these arrangements agreed to and confirmed in writing by all parties. In the event that the visit has to be cancelled, I will ensure that we give the trainee's assessor at Stage One and the College at Stage Two at least seven days' notice. If a visit is cancelled without seven days' prior notice, I understand the College reserves the right to raise additional charges for the expenses incurred as a result of any additional visit required.
24. I will ensure that the trainee is directly and solely available to the assessor for the duration of the assessment visit and that a suitable room is provided with sight testing facilities and any necessary equipment in the case of a face-to-face assessment. Although I will not attend the assessment, I will be available for a discussion with the trainee and assessor following the assessment visit, including those conducted remotely.
25. I will ensure, when required, that the trainee provides a suitable patient for a face-to-face assessment visit.
26. I will read the completed assessment report forms and agree to carry out any further actions recommended by the assessor. If I am not in agreement with any of the actions, I will contact the assessor to discuss them.
27. I will complete the monthly supervisor training review score forms with my trainee. As part of my support and to allow my trainee to prepare for assessment visits, I will complete the supervisor score on the framework assessment document prior to each visit.
28. I will review the trainee's logbook on a monthly basis.
29. I will ensure that the action plan agreed after an assessment visit is carried out by the trainee.

Fitness to practise

30. I have read and understand the College of Optometrists' Supervisor Fitness to Practise Policy.
31. I will notify the College, as required in the policy, should my status on the GOC register change.

Performers List

32. I will notify the College if I am removed from the NHS Ophthalmic Performers List.

Information sharing

33. In order to facilitate the timely payment of the pre-registration training supervision grants, The College of Optometrists will share with NHS organisations in the devolved nations the name, GOC number, training start date and practice address for pre-registration trainees and the name, GOC number and practice address for trainees' supervisors. This information will be shared once a year. The purpose of this information sharing is solely to support the payment of pre-registration training supervision grants.

Privacy

34. As a supervisor, I understand I will have access to my trainee's personal data, including their assessment results and, if applicable, information regarding reasonable adjustments and exceptional circumstances applications. I will not share this data and

will take all reasonable steps to ensure its security and protect it against accidental loss, damage or destruction.

35. When the trainee has completed the Scheme for Registration and/or leaves my employment, I will destroy all records relating to their enrolment on the Scheme.



Supervisor Record Log Template

Principal Supervisor(s)*

Name	Initials	GOC number	College membership number	Job role

Additional Supervisors

Name	Initials	GOC number/ Professional body details	College membership number**	Job role	Principal Supervisor Signature	Date

*Where two principal supervisors are listed, they must be registered with the College as joint principal supervisors.

** Optometrist supervisors only