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Diploma in Contact Lens Practice Syllabus 2023

2024 Portfolio Guidance for trainees

Pre-Qualification Period

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Contents

WELCOME to your programme of study to become a contact lens optician. These guidelines have been designed to help you with your case studies and portfolio completion. Please read everything carefully to facilitate your journey and avoid unnecessary complications.

Your Pre-Qualification Period (PQP) portfolio is a supervised record of your patient-facing history throughout your practical placement. It is the evidence to prove you have passed the required criteria, in order to be entered for the Practical Examinations (Unit 4) and subsequent registration with the General Optical Council (GOC) for a contact lens specialty.

You will be eligible to sit your Contact Lens Practical examinations (unit 4) on condition that you have completed and passed your practice visit and submitted your portfolio inclusive of:

- *A minimum of 225 supervised hours*
- *Evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)*
- *Final declaration*
- *15 completed case records*
- *A reflective statement based around your experiences.*

INITIAL DECLARATION: Before any work may be completed, you must submit your initial declaration found within the portfolio information link available on the ABDO website. No case records or logged hours can be counted until your main practice and Practice Education Lead (PEL) have been registered with ABDO Examinations and Registration and a date of commencement confirmed. Please note that anyone involved in the supervision of a trainee Contact Lens Optician must be suitably qualified and registered (such as a Contact Lens Optician, Optometrist or Ophthalmologist.

Practice Education Lead (PEL):

- is your main supervisor, the person you spend the greatest number of logged hours with
- must be qualified and on the GOC register as a full member, for a minimum of 2 years, and maintain registration for the duration of your studies
- should have previous experience in supervision and/or consider or have evidence of undertaking supervisor training, such as ABDO CPD accredited course or equivalent (e.g. College of Optometrists)
- allow allocated time to provide peer support with full oversight of your training and progress
- ensure your training and supervision is appropriate to your level of progress
- provide oversight, feedback and sign off portfolio case records
- complete interim and final declarations
- submit agreed list of Practice Task Supervisors, this must be completed prior to a PTS undertaking any supervision of tasks or dispenses

Practice Task Supervisors (PTS):

- additional registered professionals that may supervise your tasks at any stage of your training
- must be recorded on the list of additional supervisors submitted by your PEL to ABDO
- must be on the register of the appropriate governing body (eg GOC), they may be newly qualified
- be suitably qualified for the task they are supervising
- consider, or have evidence of, undertaking supervisor training, such as ABDO CPD accredited course or equivalent (e.g. College of Optometrists)
- help to document, reflect and sign the experience in the case record and logged hours
- liaise with the PEL to provide updates on your progress
- Due to the clinical nature of the training, we recommend limiting the number of PTS as much as possible, in order to maintain consistency of advice

Date of commencement: You will be issued with this date upon receipt of your initial declaration. Only case records fitted and hours logged after this date will be accepted.

ABDO and GOC membership: You must maintain both memberships throughout your academic studies. Any lapse in either membership will deem any case records, hours, examinations/assessments completed during this time null and void.

Supervisor registration: Any lapse in PEL and/or PTS registration will deem any case records and hours completed during this time null and void.

Supervisors based in the Republic of Ireland: In order for a trainee undertaking their Contact Lens training in the Republic of Ireland to commence the diploma in contact lens practice then they would normally undertake one of two routes.

The first route applies if they are already registered with the GOC in the UK, are already registered with ABDO as a full member and are supervised by a GOC registered PEL (who meets all the usual supervision requirements). Any trainee meeting those criteria can be awarded the full diploma qualification on successful completion of all examinations and training. Any trainee that undertakes their training in the Republic of Ireland under the supervision of a PEL registered with the Irish Regulator but not the GOC will be treated as a European qualified and will be awarded FBDO (overseas) and must apply to register with the GOC via the EU Directive if they want to practice in the UK in the future. Please be aware that any trainees meeting those criteria must become full (overseas) members for the duration of their training, qualification and examinations.

Change of PEL or main practice: Please notify ABDO Examinations and Registration as soon as any changes occur. The relevant paperwork (Change in details form) can be downloaded from the ABDO website.

If you know you are about to change your main practice, it is advisable to ensure all your signatories are up to date. You must ensure your previous supervisor(s) complete and sign the ABDO PQP case record authentication form which can be downloaded from the ABDO website.

You must also update your practice details with ABDO Membership, GOC Membership and your education institute. Please note if you change supervisor or practice you will receive acknowledgment from the examinations department, once the details have been verified.

Practices and supervisors: You may complete your PQP at multiple practices, a list of PTS must be submitted to ABDO by your PEL, for each practice in which you will be working, recording your logged hours and patient experience.

Your PEL and listed PTS may only sign records for work they have themselves supervised.

Specialist clinic supervisors: If a certain category of cases prove difficult to complete at your practice, we advise you to make arrangements for this experience to be gained elsewhere, obtaining approval from ABDO Examinations and Registration via a 'specialist clinic supervisor form'

This will allow you to register a specialist supervisor for specific experience, for a fixed period of three months.

Audit trail: You should be able to produce a corresponding patient record held within your practice, to match the anonymous details on any of your case records. A separate notebook with names and codes against your case record numbers, is recommended. This must remain within the practice at all times and will be required for verification during your practice visit.

Data Protection Act: In order to comply with the Data Protection Act, you should obtain written permission from the patients for a third party (ie your ABDO practice visitor) to view their original records. Please ensure your patients are aware that your portfolio records contain no patient identification details whatsoever. However original records may be viewed to check for authenticity. A data protection form template can be downloaded from the ABDO website.

Practice visit: Between 6-12 months prior to you taking your practical examinations (Unit 4) you will need to apply for your practice visit. This will be conducted by an ABDO examiner using the appropriate forms which can be downloaded from the ABDO website.

Your allocated practice visitor will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time for your visit to take place. The appointment may be made on a day where there is a clinic running. However, you must allow time for you and your PEL to talk privately with the visitor. The purpose of the visit is to verify that your working environment is conducive to training, to assess some of your Outcomes for Registration (OfR) through observation and VIVA and to support both you and your PEL as much as possible.

You are responsible for your portfolio and tracking sheets being available during the practice visit. They are required to allow the visitor to verify the authenticity of your records in conjunction with your audit trail.

PQP Submission

The submission of your PQP and successful completion of your practice visit are the entry requirements to apply for your practical examinations.

You will be required to submit:

- Tracking sheet of hours with a minimum of 225 supervised hours signed by your PEL
- Evidence of Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Final declaration
- 15 completed case records
- Reflective statement based around your experiences

The PQP submission should be submitted between

- 1 – 30 September (if you intend to sit your practical examinations in the Winter sitting)
- 1 – 31 March (if you intend to sit your practical examinations in the Summer sitting)

Your portfolio will be submitted and assessed by an ABDO examiner, who will contact you in the months following submission (Oct/Nov for Winter and Apr/May for Summer) to arrange a mutually convenient time to conduct your online Professional Discussion based around your case records.

Reflective Learning Statement: During your submission, alongside your case records you are required to submit a reflective learning statement, which should be based on:

- The outcome of the encounter,
- What you learnt
- What you would change in the future
- A list of GOC Outcomes for Registration you believe were covered within the submitted encounters.

Your reflection should be a minimum of 800 words and based on your own work, providing examples of learning from experience, taking into account improvements in your knowledge and skills and changes to the way you have developed as a practitioner.

15 case records: A record may only be submitted if it is entirely your own work – trainees are not permitted to share patients or submit plagiarised work. A case record can only be used in one category. Submission of more than 15 records is not permitted. Further guidance on case records can be found from page 8.

Final Declaration: At the stage of portfolio submission, your registered PEL is required to complete a declaration form confirming they have reviewed the content and confirm the authenticity of all of the case records within that submission, and that you are suitably experienced to sit your final practical examinations. This must be signed by your registered PEL to confirm that you are fully prepared for the requirements of the FQE and that all elements of the PQP have been completed.

As an awarding body we are duty bound to report any cases of suspected plagiarism or dishonesty to the GOC Fitness to Practice (FTP). Please note this will involve both you and your supervisor(s) being reported.

Tracking sheet for supervised time

On receipt of your date of commencement you can begin entering dates on your tracking sheets and writing case records. If you change PEL or practice you will receive a new date of commencement letter once your new details have been verified.

We advise that PEL and PTS sign your tracking sheet entries on a daily basis, where possible. PEL and trainee circumstances may change unexpectedly and they may not be available to sign your records retrospectively.

Entries

- A daily entry and signature is required, not grouped by week
- Remember to include your ABDO membership number on each sheet
- Only work completed within practices you have registered with ABDO will be accepted
- Registered PEL and PTS may only sign for work that they have directly supervised

We recommend that you continue logging your hours of supervised time in practice beyond the minimum requirements of 225 hours. This will give a more accurate record of your whole Pre-Qualification Period and may cover any shortfalls if for any reason we find we cannot accept any entries upon verification, or if errors have been made in hours calculated.

Correction fluid or use of pencils is not permitted on the tracking sheets. If you make an error please cross through the entire line and write this entry clearly on the next line available.

Date
Please list the date in full (including the year). Accurate and detailed information is required for validation of the entry.

Hours worked
List the number of hours worked each day; these will be hours during which you are performing necessary tasks for your training. Therefore please do not include, for example, time when you are on your lunch break.

Accumulated hours
Please enter the number of hours accumulated so far. This will give you a running total of your completed amount of supervised time.

Supervisor signature
Your PEL or PTS should sign each individual entry to verify your time.

ABDO Contact Lens Pre-Qualification Period Portfolio 2024 Syllabus				
ABDO Membership Number:	12345			(please state on each sheet)
Tracking sheet of supervised time				

DATE:	NO. HOURS WORKED:	RUNNING TOTAL:	SUPERVISOR NAME:	SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:
20 /02 /2024	8	65	MILLY JONES	MJ
21 /02 /2024	8	73	MILLY JONES	MJ
22 / 02 / 2024	8	81	MILLY JONES	MJ
23 / 02 / 2024	5.5	86.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
04 /03 /2024	8	94.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
05 /03 /2024	8	102.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
06 /03 /2024	8	110.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
07 /03 /2024	8	118.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
12 /03 /2024	8	126.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
14 / 03/ 2024	8	134.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
15 /03 /2024	8	142.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
22 / 03/ 2024	5.5	148	MILLY JONES	MJ
15 /03 /2024	8	156	MILLY JONES	MJ
01 /04 /2024	8	164	MILLY JONES	MJ
03 / 04/ 2024	8	172	MILLY JONES	MJ
04 / 04 / 2024	8	180	MILLY JONES	MJ
08 /04 / 2024	8	188	MILLY JONES	MJ
10 /04 /2024	8	196	MILLY JONES	MJ
12 /04 / 2024	8	204	MILLY JONES	MJ
19 /04 /2024	5.5	209.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
22/ 04/ 2024	8	217.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
23/ 04/ 2024	8	225.5	MILLY JONES	MJ
24 / 04/ 2024	3.5	229	MILLY JONES	MJ
25/ 04/ 2024	8	237	MILLY JONES	MJ
26 / 04/ 2024	8	245	MILLY JONES	MJ

Guidance for the completion of case records

We strongly advise that you start your case records as early as possible. As with your tracking sheets of supervised time/dispensing tasks, please ensure they are written up, checked and signed by your relevant PEL or PTS promptly. You can always replace a record if you feel you have a better one at a later stage, but if supervisor changes occur unexpectedly before records are signed off, you may lose the opportunity to use that record as part of your PQP portfolio submission.

The purpose of each case records is:

- To demonstrate detailed, accurate record keeping when working in practice
- To demonstrate the taking and recording of relevant information
- To provide evidence of decisions when determining products dispensed and services provided

Portfolio case records:
As this is an on-line submission, case records should be typed and presented on your own template. Your training institute can provide guidance on creating record templates.

Reflection:
Your reflective statement should focus on what a particular experience has taught you when you have fitted contact lenses to a patient. This can consist of analysing the events that took place, the outcomes of the event and how they have helped you to develop your knowledge skills and behaviours as a good practitioner and in line with the GOC Outcomes for Registration.

The portfolio itself should consist of the following case records:

Numbered from	Subject headings	Number of case records
1 - 2	Presbyopic Patients demonstrating management of both distance and reading requirements	2
3 - 4	Astigmatic patients corrected with toric lenses	2
5 - 6	Patients fitted with rigid contact lenses	2
7 - 8	Paediatric patients fitted with contact lenses	2
9 - 10	Patients with prescriptions of 5.00D or greater fitted with contact lenses	2

Managed Patients

11 - 12	Clinical signs resolved through change of management	2
13 - 14	Patients presenting at aftercare with issues which required management change	2
15	Referral to external body	1

Case record guidance

Your case records should be selected from those patients fitted during the personal clinical practical experience and should demonstrate a depth and breadth of experience.

Please note that all appointments must have been done by the trainee in order for the case record to be considered valid.

For the 10 case records where a lens has been fitted, the record becomes valid once the fitting is deemed to have been completed (i.e. when a specification has been issued) **and** at least ONE routine follow-up appointment has been conducted.

The notes should report appropriate follow-up appointments so the number of appointments conducted will depend on the type of lens, the type of lens wear and the patient's ocular status. Whilst some patients will be neophytes requiring more support, other patients who are established wearers may require less frequent follow ups. Candidates should be aware that they are demonstrating appropriate aftercare for the situations they are reporting.

Case record discussion

As part of your practical examination (although taking place online shortly before the practical examination day) you will undertake a 30-45 minute VIVA based around your case records. The examiner will select a number of individual case records for discussion, where you will be asked a range of questions to test knowledge, provide clarification and justify your clinical decisions.

You will be required to submit your case records approximately 3 months before the case record viva and therefore records must be uploaded to ABDO by the following dates

- 31st March if sitting the SUMMER practical examinations

- 30th September if sitting the WINTER practical examinations

Case study content

Case studies are submitted online and care should be taken to make sure that all records are legible for the examiners.

Case number: Each case record should be numbered consecutively and correctly within the corresponding category as listed on page 7.

Confidential information: Trainees must only ever list their ABDO number within the portfolio, no student or optometrist details including GOC numbers should be present. Date of birth/age and occupation/hobbies are the main patient details required. Identifiers such as name, address etc should remain anonymous.

No patient identification must be evident but a separate list must be kept by the trainee as the practice visitor will require this information for the audit process.

Format: Please ensure that all case records meet the following formatting criteria wherever possible

- First (initial) appointment should be no more than two sides of A4 or equivalent.
- All follow up appointments should be no more than one side of A4 or equivalent

Please note that we do NOT provide a template record card to complete your case record. We encourage students to design their own record card which reflects the clinical work that they are doing in Contact Lens Practice. Existing practice record card templates can be used, provided that they meet the above criteria.

Signature/date: While we do not require signatures on each patient visit, we do require that the PEL signs a declaration confirming that the records submitted are a true reflection of the work undertaken by the student.

When completing case records, you should always work on the assumption that the examiner who is assessing your case records is a clinician who will be doing all future follow up appointments with the patient. Therefore it is vital that all clinical information that was completed at each appointment is recorded fully.

Additional Information Requirements

FITTED PATIENTS

1. Presbyopic Patients demonstrating management of both distance and reading requirements x 2

- *At least 1 presbyopic case record must be fitted with a bifocal or multifocal contact lens(es)*
- *You should include a discussion of visual requirements along with a justification for contact lens recommendation*

2. Astigmatic patients corrected with toric lenses x 2

- *While rigid spherical lenses may potentially correct low/medium levels of astigmatism, they would not be suitable for this category, although both rigid toric and soft toric lenses are both suitable*
- *You should include a discussion of visual requirements along with a justification for contact lens recommendation in terms of both vision and fit*

3. Patients fitted with rigid contact lenses x2

- *Consider both the design AND the material*
- *Reasons/justification for why rigid lenses may be more appropriate*
- *Please note that we are unable to accept Ortho-K patients for this category, although corneal, mini-scleral and scleral lenses can be included*

4. Paediatric patients fitted with contact lenses x 2

- *Patients who are aged under 16 at the time of fitting*
- *At least 1 paediatric case record must include a discussion where the paediatric patient is myopic and myopia management has been considered, reasons for the selection of the myopia management option and recommendations*
- *Any additional advice given to patient/guardian*
- *Reasons/justification for contact lens recommendation*

5. Patients with prescriptions of 5.00D or greater fitted with contact lenses x 2

- *Any additional considerations for fitting a patient with high prescriptions should be discussed as part of the record*
- *At least one of the contact lenses prescribed must be at least 5.00D or over on final fitting*

MANAGED PATIENTS

6. Clinical signs resolved through change of management x2

- *These records should so clinical signs that require practitioner intervention*
- *We would expect a major change in management of the patient, which may involve refitting with an alternative lens type*
- *The patient does not have to have been fitted by you originally*
- *You should follow the patient until resolution of the issue and include 1 routine follow up appointment*

7. Patients presenting at aftercare with issues which required management change x 2

- *While there is no requirement for clinical signs to be present in this category, we expect the patient to complain of symptoms that require intervention*
- *These symptoms can include visual, comfort or lens intolerance*
- *The would expect a major change in management of the patient, which may involve refitting with an alternative lens*
- *The patient does not have to have been fitted by you originally*
- *You should follow the patient until resolution of the issue and include 1 routine follow up appointment*

8. Referral to external body x 1

A registered dispensing optician with a contact lens specialty has a duty to refer, so this case study is to show an understanding of the process.

If possible, alert practice staff to involve you in any case that is likely to be referred outside the practice, where symptoms could be identified through questioning and investigation/examination by a contact lens optician. After gaining consent from the patient, ask the referring registrant if you can complete the GOS18 or equivalent triage/referral form (this is a suggestion not a requirement as the referring registrant may wish to write the referral themselves) to get a feel for the information needed. Include the discussions you had with the referring professional about the content of the letter.

- *Attach a copy of the referral letter with all patient and practice information redacted*
- *Include on the record card the management options and recommendations and any additional advice given*
- *While not a requirement to see the patient for any follow up appointments, details of any follow up information or outcomes of the referral, if known, would be valuable*
- *Clear understanding of the patient's condition should be evident; including signs symptoms impact of condition on the patient and consequences if referral advice not followed*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THE CASE RECORDS

Format and layout of the records
The Association does not have any specific requirements with regard to the format and layout of the record as clinicians will have their own preferences – other than that the information is clearly recorded and in a logical order.

However, the Association states that –

- The records must be no larger than A4 size
- The initial appointment notes may coverone or two sides of A4 but should not exceed two sides of A4
- The layout of the routine follow-up appointments should not exceed 1 side of A4.
- The case records may be produced fully on the computer or may involve a computer produced record to which the individual patient's notes are added by hand or may be fully hand-written. As long as it is clear and legible, the structure of the pages is the candidate's choice.

The Data within the Case Records
The Association's 'Advice and Guidelines' recommends the following minimum data should be recorded -

A) For initial appointment of a new patient:

1) General Information
   - Date fitting commenced
   - Name (for the examinations, use only a reference number or initials)
   - Address/contact details (omit for the examinations)
   - Age
   - Referring optometrist/ophthalmologist
   - Spectacle prescription and VAs
   - Any initial contraindications to CL fitting
   - Patient's reason for wanting contact lenses
   - Occupation and working environment
   - Sports, hobbies and pastimes
   - Allergies/Hay Fever (Seasonal allergic conjunctivitis)
   - Personal and family ocular history
   - Personal and family general health and specific pathologies
   - Medications
   - Smoker
   - Driver
   - General practitioner (omit for the examinations)
   - Contact lens history

2) Detailed examination of the anterior eye should include space for assessments of:
   - Each layer of the cornea
   - Limbus
   - Conjunctiva
   - Lids, lid margins, and lid position (upper and lower), lid tensions
   - Tear assessments – quality and quantity
   - Other relevant data (e.g. horizontal visible iris diameter, pupil diameter in varied illuminations, vertical palpebral aperture)

   A grading scale and diagrammatic recording may be used.

3) Keratometric information
   - Type of instrument, mire quality; radii and axes/meridians, dioptric values. Topographical information if available, would be an alternative.

4) Lens options discussed with the patient should be recorded.

5) Contraindications found in the examination

6) Trial contact lenses used with full details of:
   - fit assessment over refraction
   - visual acuities
   - confirmation tests (duochrome, +1.00 blur, pin hole) where appropriate

7) Details of lenses to be ordered

8) Next scheduled appointment

B) For collection appointment

1) Assessment of lens fit and visual acuities, confirmation tests, where appropriate

2) Instruction given to the patient Lens handling and ability to
   - insert, remove, recentre
   - Personal hygiene; use of care system

3) Recommended wearing schedule.

4) Recommended care system

5) Recommended next aftercare appointment

6) Patient acknowledgement form, if used, may be completed and retained with the record (although not required for the examination).

C) For subsequent appointments:

1) General information
   - History and symptoms since last visit
   - Patient's impressions of vision and comfort
   - Wearing pattern
   - Care system, compliance and handling

2) Over refraction
   - Visual acuities with lenses
   - Subjective assessment, visual acuities, confirmation tests (duochrome, + 1.00 blur, pinhole), where appropriate

CONTINUED OVER

3) Examination of lenses on the eyes
   • Assessment of fit
   • Lens condition

4) Other examinations the practitioner considers appropriate
   • e.g. Pre-lens tear break-up time, keratometry, VA with current Rx.

5) Detailed examination of the anterior eye should include space for assessments of:
   • Each layer of the cornea
   • Limbus
   • Conjunctiva
   • Lids and lid margins
   • Tears

A grading scale and diagrammatic recording may be used.

6) Conclusions/Advice/Actions
   • Space should be available for practitioners to record any recommended changes in wearing pattern, fittings, care system: the need, where appropriate, to discontinue lens wear (temporary or permanent), any adjustments to power or fit, etc. This should include the rational for any changes to meet any requests of the patient. Also included under this heading would be advice on time of next contact lens aftercare check and/or full eye examination.

7) Contact Lens Specification
   • Specifications are expected to be issued to the patient once the fitting and appropriate amount of aftercare have been completed to confirm that the lenses are suitable for the patient and their intended use: the specification expiry date should be noted and it is advisable that a copy be made and kept in the patient's records.

Reflective Statement
Alongside your case records you are also required to submit a reflective learning statement.

The reflective statement should be based on:
- The development of your clinical skills
- Details of any patient encounter that you feel demonstrate this development
- What you have learnt through this pre-qualification period
- What you would change in the future
- A list of GOC Outcomes for Registration you believe were covered within the case records

Your reflection should be a minimum of 800 words and based on your own work, providing examples of learning from experience. It should reflect on your experience overall, taking into account improvements in your knowledge and skills and changes to the way you have developed as a practitioner.

Evidence of Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
Learners are required to undertake a form of Contact Lens Related CPD during their training. This can be in the form of attending an online webinar, conducting a peer review session with colleagues, or completing online CPD course. ABDO CPD department will provide you with a certificate of completion for online CPD accessed through the ABDO website.

Portfolio Submission
Once you have applied to sit your final Practical examinations (unit 4) and submit your portfolio (Unit 6), you will be given a link to upload your documents.

The documents required are as follows
- 15 numbered case records (each full record should be uploaded as a single PDF and numbered as given on page 7)
- Evidence of CPD
- Tracking sheets of hours (should be uploaded as a single PDF)
- Final Declaration signed by your PEL

Please note that all documents will only be accepted in PDF form.

Your portfolio is your record of evidence as you progress through your training programme and practical experience. This must be submitted and passed as part of your qualification. Your portfolio should be something to be proud of, It is a significant amount of work to complete. Start making a note of the patient episodes in practice that could be used as case records as you progress within each category as soon as you receive your date of commencement. The more records you have to choose from, the better the portfolio content is likely to be. We recommend you start typing up your case records as early as possible prior to submission, to allow yourself time to work through and discuss each record with your PEL or PTS, ensuring that they are a complete account.

If you have any queries, please get in touch with ABDO Examinations, we are here to help.

For legislation and registration queries please contact

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October 2025