

abdo | Examinations

Practice Visit Guidance for Students and Supervisors

2023 Syllabus

Final Qualifying Examination



Updates to this guide

The information in this guide is correct at the time of publication. However, this document may be updated periodically to reflect any legislative, policy and/or operational changes.

Ophthalmic Dispensing Syllabus 2023 guidance to FQE Dispensing Practice Visit (Final Qualifying Examination).

VERSION: 1.0 - April 2025

VERSION: 1.1 - February 2026

Amendments to required documentation

Dispensing Practice Visits

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General Guidance

Before you can sit your end-point assessments (EPAs) (as listed in Unit 14 of the 2023 syllabus) you must have successfully completed your practice visit.

This visit must take place in your primary registered practice with your Practice Education Lead (PEL) present, with protected time to meet with the ABDO examiner.

There are two parts of the practice visit. Part A is to ensure that you have the correct level of resource for your training, including appropriate supervision arrangements and guidance from your practice and PEL, to enable you to complete both your studies and Pre-Qualification Period (PQP) portfolio case records. Part B is to assess some of your Outcomes for Registration (OfR) within your own practice environment contributing to your Final Qualifying Examination (FQE) results.

It is recommended that the practice visit occurs during the second year of studies to ensure you have covered relevant areas of the syllabus. You must have submitted stage 1 of your PQP portfolio in order to apply for your practice visit.

You will need to complete the practice visit application form, which is available through the ABDO website. The completed application form should be sent to the Examinations and Registration department at ABDO. Once the application form has been received, confirmation will be sent to you advising that an examiner will contact you to arrange a date and time suitable for both you and your PEL.

The duration of the practice visit is approximately one day. Part A will involve the checks on your supervision, practice equipment, and meetings with you and your PEL with advice on your forthcoming assessments, all completed in the morning. Part B, involving the assessment of your OfR, will be completed in the afternoon.

For Part B of the visit, your examiner will need to observe you working with patients on the practice floor. The visit will therefore need to be booked on a clinic day to ensure the required OfR can be observed/assessed. Normal practice supervision rules will apply; the observing examiner will not be in place of your PEL on the day.

Please make sure that all correct supervision guidelines are followed throughout your training period as well as being evident on the day of the visit – particularly when dealing with paediatric and low vision patients.

The cost of your initial practice visit is £200. *Please note that if the visit is unsuccessful, then any subsequent visits will also be charged at the same rate.*

ABDO Practice Visit Application Form
2023 Syllabus

Trainee Details			
Full name: (*Delete as appropriate)	*Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other:		
ABDO membership number:		GOC Student number:	
Mobile No.:		Email address:	

Practice Education Lead Details	
Full Name: (*Delete as appropriate)	*Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other:
GOC/CORU Registration number:	

Principal Practice Details	
Practice Name:	
Full Address:	
Postcode:	
Telephone number:	

Trainee Declaration:

This form is to confirm when you are ready for your practice visit to take place. It is recommended you apply within your second year of study to ensure you have covered the appropriate areas of the 2023 syllabus.

(please tick each statement and sign/date below)

I understand that my practice visit must be successfully completed prior to my sitting Unit 14 FQE practical. If my practice visit has not been successfully completed, I understand that I will not be permitted to sit this examination until this has been rectified.

I confirm that I am prepared for an ABDO representative to check that my submitted case records can be evidenced against the original patient records held at my practice/s and they contain the corresponding signed data protection forms.

I agree to organise a date with the practice visitor on a clinic day and confirm that time will be allocated for the visitor to talk to me, my practice education lead and to observe myself in patient encounters.

I confirm that I understand and can demonstrate each of the following GOC learning outcomes:

1	Person Centred Care	O1.1, O1.2, O1.3, O1.4, O1.5, O1.6
2	Communication	O2.1, O2.3
3	Clinical Practice	O3.5a (ii)
4	Ethics & Standards	O4.1, O4.2, O4.3, O4.4, O4.7, O4.8, O4.9, O4.11, O4.12, O4.14, O4.15, O4.18
5	Risk	O5.1, O5.5, O5.7
6	Leadership & Management	O6.2
7	Lifelong Learning	O7.3

I understand the initial practice visit cost is £200, should I not be successful, ABDO will arrange a return visit to the practice at a re-sit cost of £200.

Trainee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return completed form to
Mrs Sheila Taylor,
ABDO Examinations and Registration Department, Unit 1, Court Lodge Offices,
Godmersham Park, Godmersham, Canterbury, Kent CT4 7DT

Dispensing Practice Visits



Sample visit format

PRACTICE VISIT - PART A

- 10.00 Introductory meeting with both you and your Practice Education Lead (PEL)
- 10.15 Meeting with candidate
Equipment checklist
Discussion on supervision and support
- 10.45 Meeting with PEL
Discussion on supervision and support
Discussion on candidate's progress
- 11.00 Meeting with both student and PEL
Audit trail verification
EPA discussion and preparation
Conclusion

Lunch break

PRACTICE VISIT - PART B

- 12.30 Explanation of the observation process and set up within the practice
- 12.45 Manual skills task assessment
- 13.15 Observations begin
- 15.15 The examiner will take a 15 minute break to evaluate what has been observed and to decide upon further observation or appropriate questions to cover any competencies not observed
- 16.00 Viva elements if required
- 16.30 Conclusion of observations – provision of feedback form and confirmation that results will be sent within four weeks

ABDO Practice Visit
Feedback Form

We would be very grateful to candidates and/or supervisors who would be willing to share their practice visit experience with us in order that we can reflect and improve our procedures for the future. If you prefer, please email me directly mchandler@abdo.org.uk

Please can you ensure completed questionnaires are returned to the Examinations and Registration Department within a month of your practice visit

Many thanks
Mark Chandler
Head of Examinations

1. You were contacted within 4 weeks of submitting your request
Delete as appropriate: _____ Yes/No
If no, please comment: _____

2. It was easy to arrange a suitable date
Delete as appropriate: _____ Yes/No
If no, please comment: _____

3. Did you contact your practice visitor prior to your visit with any questions?
Delete as appropriate: _____ Yes/No
If yes, please comment: _____

4. Your practice visitor arrived at the arranged time
Delete as appropriate: _____ Yes/No
If no, please comment: _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire. Your comments have no bearing whatsoever on your final results, we value your comments and wish you every success with your examination results

Practice Visit - Part A

During the morning of your practice visit, your visitor will introduce themselves to both you and your PEL and advise on the structure of the day, answering any questions you may have at this point.

The visitor will then need to evidence the compulsory equipment that both you and your PEL signed in the initial declaration form. This was to confirm that all equipment is in place and accessible at your practice for the duration of your training and for use in the manual skills task assessment. *(A copy of the compulsory equipment list can be found on page 4 of this guide.)*

Ensure you have checked the location of all items on this list and can present them to the examiner on the day.

Once the examiner's checklist has been completed, a discussion around your supervision levels and support from your practice will take place in a private meeting, without your PEL present. This is to ensure you are free to discuss the level of support you are receiving and any concerns you may have.

A private meeting will then take place between your visiting examiner and your PEL. This is to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and to answer any queries they may have as well as to provide guidance and support if required.

The visiting examiner will check the authenticity of a selection of case records from your stage 1 submission. You will need to provide an audit trail for all of these cases to your practice records and the visitor will check the practice record against your completed case record. It is therefore important that you ensure all your practice records used for your case records have corresponding signed consent forms.

Finally, your practice visitor will run through what is expected of you during your EPAs, with both you and your PEL present. Use this time to discuss any queries you may have regarding portfolio case records for stage 2 and stage 3, the impending assessments and anything else the visitor may be able to help you with.

You will then be informed of the outcome for this element of the visit:

a) if the practice is to be approved by ABDO, or

b) if conditional approval is to be granted pending conditions to be met.

Please note, if any of the compulsory equipment is missing or the supervisory standards are reported as not satisfactory, then the practice will not be approved for the purpose of training dispensing opticians. Should any discrepancies be found during the visit, the practice and PEL will be awarded 'conditional approval' and a date will be given by which time the deficiencies should be corrected.

If the conditions and deadline are met, then full approval will be given. If the deadline is not met, then any hours or case records cannot be counted after the deadline, until the problem has been rectified and a date of re-commencement issued.

Compulsory Equipment Checklist



Below is a list of **compulsory** equipment and documentation required within the practice. The trainee/PEL is advised to check this list and obtain any missing items prior to the practice visit. Please tick to confirm evidence of each item listed.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> Copy of the Practice Health and Safety Act	<input type="checkbox"/> Practice public liability certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor's current professional indemnity insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Access demonstrated to or copy of the Data Protection Act (<i>available at www.legislation.gov.uk</i>)

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT	
<input type="checkbox"/> Files suitable for increasing angle of let back	<input type="checkbox"/> Access to manual focimeter (automated focimeters are not accepted)
<input type="checkbox"/> Frame heater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Progressive power templates	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate rules to measure frames and faces
<input type="checkbox"/> Lens measure	<input type="checkbox"/> A means of measuring vertex distance (<i>vertex distance calipers or ruler</i>)
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities for supra cord replacement	<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities for compression plug replacement
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities to demonstrate (<i>including electronic demonstration</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progressive power lenses and degressive lenses • tinted lenses • high index lenses for thickness comparison • aspheric Lenses • coated lenses – MAR and hard coatings 	<input type="checkbox"/> Range of pliers for adjustments to include all the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • round snipe nose pliers • flat nose pliers • rimless mount bracing pliers • rim-forming pliers • parallel jaw pliers • side cutters

REASONABLE ACCESS EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST	
Trainees should have reasonable access during their training to the following equipment:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Corneal reflex pupilometer	<input type="checkbox"/> Strain tester
<input type="checkbox"/> Photochromic demonstrator	<input type="checkbox"/> Lens thickness calipers
<input type="checkbox"/> Head calipers	<input type="checkbox"/> Trial case lenses

Practice Visit - Part B

Outcomes for Registration Assessment

The second half of your practice visit should be conducted in the afternoon, after a recommended break for both yourself and your visiting examiner. This element of the visit is to assess some of your Outcomes for Registration and will contribute to your final qualification.

Your examiner will observe you performing three manual skills tasks, within a 30 minute time limit; they will then spend approximately two hours observing you interacting with patients. This is to enable them to obtain the required evidence of your competence in the areas indicated in the following chart.

It is advisable to make sure you have sufficient patients booked to allow observation of all areas, including paediatric patients. Should it not be possible to observe all elements on the day, the examiner will carry out a viva on any missed competencies at the end of your session.

You will need to ensure you inform all patients that you are being observed and gain their consent. Should they wish not to be involved, your examiner will step away until you have finished.

Please note that the examiner is not there to supervise you, but in an examination role only. You must ensure that all restricted duties carried out are under the correct supervision requirements by a GOC registrant.

As this practice-based assessment forms part of your final examinations, results will not be given on the day but will be communicated to you within four weeks of your visit.

Outcomes for Registration Assessment

<input type="checkbox"/> 01.1 Actively listens to patients and their carers to ensure patients are involved in and are at the heart of decisions made about patients' care.	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.7 Demonstrates the fulfilment of professional and legal responsibilities in supervising unregistered colleagues undertaking delegated activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> 01.2 Manages desired health outcomes of patients, taking into consideration any relevant medical, family and social history of the patient, which may include personal beliefs or cultural factors.	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.8 Complies with health and safety legislation.
<input type="checkbox"/> 01.3 Protects patients' rights; respects the choices they make and their right to dignity and privacy.	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.9 Complies with equality and human rights' legislation, demonstrates inclusion and respects diversity.
<input type="checkbox"/> 01.4 Ensures high-quality care is delivered. Puts into place adaptive measures as needed for different environments (such as domiciliary, prisons and special schools)	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.11 Adheres to the ethical principles for prescribing and legislation relating to medicines management.
<input type="checkbox"/> 01.5 Ensures that care is not compromised because of own personal conscious and unconscious values and beliefs.	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.12 Complies with legal, professional and ethical requirements for the management of information in all forms, including the accuracy and appropriateness of patient records and respecting patient confidentiality.
<input type="checkbox"/> 01.6 Obtains and verifies continuation of valid consent from adults, children, young and vulnerable people and their carers and records as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.14 Applies health policies and guidance and utilises resources efficiently to improve patient outcomes.
<input type="checkbox"/> 02.1 Conducts communications in a sensitive and supportive manner, adapting their communication approach and style to meet the needs of patients, carers and healthcare colleagues and the public.	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.15 Maintains professional boundaries with patients and others, taking into consideration the additional needs of vulnerable people and specific requests/requirements.
<input type="checkbox"/> 02.3 Communicates effectively within a multi-disciplinary healthcare team and works collaboratively for the benefit of the patient.	<input type="checkbox"/> 04.18 Provides clarity on services available and any associated payments.
<input type="checkbox"/> 03.5 (ii) Completes an informed clinical assessment of individual patients' needs and uses this to dispense, fit and advise on the safe and effective use of spectacles, low-vision aids and other ophthalmic appliances.	<input type="checkbox"/> 05.1 Recognises when their own performance or the performance of others is putting people at risk and takes prompt and appropriate action.
<input type="checkbox"/> 04.1 Upholds the values and demonstrates the behaviours expected of a GOC registrant, as described in the GOC Standards of Practice, for optometrists and dispensing opticians.	<input type="checkbox"/> 05.5 Applies infection prevention and control measures commensurate with the risks identified.
<input type="checkbox"/> 04.2 Acts openly and honestly and in accordance with the GOC duty of candor guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> 05.7 Able to risk assess i) patient's clinical condition and ii) a situation in clinical practice and make appropriate clinical decisions.
<input type="checkbox"/> 04.3 Understands and implements relevant safeguarding procedures, local and national guidance in relation to children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable people.	<input type="checkbox"/> 06.2 Works collaboratively within healthcare teams, exercising skills and behaviours of clinical leadership and effective teamworking and management in line with their role and scope of practice.
<input type="checkbox"/> 04.4 Applies the relevant national law and takes appropriate actions i) to gain consent and ii) if consent cannot be obtained or is withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/> 07.3 Gathers, evaluates and applies effective patient and service delivery feedback to improve their practice.

Practice Visit - Part B

Manual Skills Tasks



Objective:

30 minutes

Task one will be either:

- Replace faulty components on a compression plug rimless mount
- Remove a broken nylon cord, replace and re-fit the lens

Tasks two and three will be any of the following:

- Spring in lenses and set up frame
- Shorten a metal side by cutting and re-bending
- Increase the angle of let back on a spectacle frame by filing
- Adjust a metal eye rim to accommodate high plus lenses or lenses made with a high plus front curvature

Equipment required:

see picture above

- A fine-pointed lens marker pen
- Screw drivers
- Frame adjusting pliers
- Frame ruler
- Files
- Pin
- Knife/ blade
- Rimless pliers
- Frame heater
- Side cutters

Equipment provided:

- Supra Nylon
- Ribbon
- Rimless plugs

Method:

Replace a rimless compression plug

1. You will only be required to replace one rimless plug in one spectacle mount.
2. Remove the broken plug elements from the drilled holes in the lens using the appropriate rimless tube stripper.
3. Remove any rimless plug tubing from the compression posts on the frame side.
4. Select appropriate replacement plug to insert into the drilled holes from the back of the lens to the front.
5. Ensure the plug adjoinment bar is lying flat against the back surface of the lens and the excess tubing extends from the front surface of the lens.
6. Using the head cutting pliers, trim the excess tubing back to the lens surface: be careful not to scratch the lens with the pliers at this point.
7. Then insert the compression posts of the side, into the remaining tubing from the front of the lens to the back.

8. You may not be able to push the posts all the way to the back of the lens; you will need to use the rimless compression pliers to complete this.
9. Be careful with the pliers, not to roll the back of the rimless compression plug, as the repair will not last.
10. You may have to remove the new plug and repeat the process if the lens is not secure.
11. Once you are happy the side has been replaced securely, straighten the frame and clean the lenses.
12. Replace the finished spectacles in the envelope provided.

Remove a broken nylon cord:

1. Remove the broken cord from both sides of the lens rim; if required push the cord through the hole using a pin or fine-pointed tool.
2. Measure the amount of cord you will require to replace the lens, allowing 20 mm extra either side for manoeuvre.
3. Thread the cord through the top hole from the inside of the frame to the outside at the nasal edge of the frame and return the cord through the second hole to the inside edge of the frame.
4. Ensure it is seated tightly by squeezing gently the nylon into the frames supra groove with pliers.
5. Thread the cord through the bottom hole on the temporal side of the frame to the outside of the frame, and then return the cord to the inside edge of the frame through the top hole on the temporal side.
6. Keep the cord loose at this point.
7. Hold the lens in place in the top rim and stretch the cord to the bottom edge of the lens.
8. Remove the lens and press the cord into the supra groove on the frame where the rim finishes.
9. Shorten the ends of the cord both nasal and temporal and tuck the remainder into the frames supra groove.
10. Push the top edge of the lens into the top rim of the frame; slide the ribbon between the lens and the cord.
11. Using the ribbon, stretch the cord around the edge of the lens and into the glazed supra groove.
12. Ensure the cord is in place along the full bottom edge of the lens and slide the ribbon out.
13. Rotate the lens to ensure there is limited movement; if the lens rotates easily in the frame, you will need to replace the cord again.
14. Clean both the lenses and ensure the frame is straight and correctly set.
15. Replace the finished spectacles in the envelope provided.

Spring in lenses and set up frame:

1. Clearly enter your candidate number and box set number on the envelope.
2. Clearly mark your lenses R and L to avoid confusion due to exam nerves.
3. If possible keep both eyes open when using the focimeter.
4. Set up the eyepiece of the focimeter.
5. Rotate the eyepiece to its maximum; ensure the target is out of focus by setting the scale to a high positive or negative value. Now rotate the eyepiece inwards until the graticule is just in focus.

6. Then set the power scale to zero. The resulting target and graticule should both be in focus.
7. Starting with the right lens, place into the focimeter and centre accordingly.
8. Record sphere and cylinder powers of the right lens and its axis.
9. You can record either the plus or minus cyl form, but be consistent in your cyl form and remain with this format throughout your revision and this section.
10. Record the right lens axis accurately, and using the focimeters marking device, dot the optical centre of the right lens.
11. Repeat for the left lens.
12. Call the examiner over and they will observe you remove the lenses from the frame and they will then distort it for you.
13. Heat the plastic frame to ensure pliability when you re-insert the lenses.
14. Insert the right lens back into the frame from the front plane of the spectacle frame.
15. Repeat for the left lens.
16. Check the axis position of the lenses on the focimeter to ensure that they have both been accurately inserted into place.
17. Once you are happy with the lens positioning, ensure the frame is straight and clean the lenses.
18. Replace your finished spectacles back in the envelope provided.

Shorten a metal side:

1. Ensure you are making the adjustment on the left or right side as specified on your envelope.
2. Measure the length to bend from the centre of the dowel point to the ear point.
3. Measure the length of drop from the ear point to the extreme end of the side.
4. Heat the end tip in the frame heater.
5. Straighten the end tip and remove the acetate end cover.
6. Measure the specified amount and mark if required the point you wish to cut on the metal side.
7. If you measure back 1 mm less than required then you can cut off your mark This avoids leaving ink marks on the part of the side you are going to use.
8. Cut at the desired measurement with the metal side cutters.
9. File the metal side tip to ensure it does not scratch the inside of the acetate tip on re-application.
10. Replace the acetate tip.
11. Heat the tip in the frame heater and re-bend the side to the desired length.
12. Ensure the length of drop is the same as before and the length to bend has been reduced as specified.
13. Once you are happy you have reached the desired measurement, straighten the frame and clean the lenses.
14. Replace the finished spectacles in the envelope provided.

Increase the angle of let back

1. Identify the correct side to be adjusted.
2. Measure the angle of let back by placing the frame on the end of the ruler and reading the horizontal angle

between the inner surface of the fully opened side, adjacent to the joint, and normal to the back plane of the front.

3. Close the side of the frame that needs to be adjusted, holding the frame securely in your palm.
4. Place the file flat against the side end that meets with the frame front, keeping the un-ridged edge of the file facing towards the back surface of the frame front.
5. Pull the file backwards firmly in one direction.
6. Continue to check the side for accuracy and neatness by opening the side and checking for gaps between the side and front.
7. Then re-measure the angle of let back.
8. Once you have reached the desired measurement, straighten the frame and clean the lenses.
9. Replace the finished spectacles in the envelope provided.

Adjust a metal frame eye rim

1. Release the screw retaining the lens.
2. Place the required lens into the eye wire and hold the closing block to assess how much adjustment is required.
3. Remove the lens and use the rim-forming pliers to adjust the bow of the eye wire, both top and bottom to accommodate the curvature of the lens.
4. Be careful not to roll the rim of the frame in or out, as it will not be able to retain the bevel of the lens and the lens will fall out.
5. Replace the lens and the lens screw.
6. Repeat if necessary.
7. Once you are happy that the lens is secure, straighten the frame and clean the lenses.
8. Replace your finished spectacles in the envelope provided.

Tolerances:

Sphere and cyl measurements: +/-0.12 dioptre steps

Axis: measure to the nearest degree; do not round up

Vertical centres and optical centre distance: 1 mm

Tips:

- Always check each frame before making any adjustments, and note any potential points of weakness or damage that are already present to the examiner.
- If the frame is not adjustable due to previous damage, your task will be replaced with another.
- If you adjust a previously damaged frame without notifying the examiner, they will assume you have caused it (as a patient would).
- For any adjustments or repairs that you would not normally do in practice (that might for instance normally be sent to your laboratory), practice on some old stock to ensure you are capable of all six adjustments/repairs on the day.
- When practising this section, aim to complete the easiest tasks first, allowing the remaining time to be allocated to the most difficult adjustment/repair.
- Ensure the frame is set up correctly and the lenses have been cleaned, as you would for your patients.
- Ensure the frame is undamaged.



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