

DISPENSING OPTICIAN

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dispensing Opticians make up Optometrists' and Ophthalmologists' prescriptions. They fit and supply spectacles, contact lenses and other optical appliances. They advise people on types of lens through calculating distances and angles in relation to different types of lens, such as single vision or bifocal. They can also advise on colour vision, lighting and other optical aids. Their role also demands strong commercial awareness as selling optical appliances is part of their work.

The majority of Dispensing Opticians will work in the private sector, usually in a high street environment. However a few Dispensing Opticians will be employed in the public sector in hospitals. A number will also work in the high street but also run one or more clinics per week in the local hospital.

If you require more information on Optometrists or Ophthalmologists please see the Optometrists or Ophthalmologists occupation sheet.

INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

There are a few different routes to becoming a Dispensing Optician in the UK:

- A degree course in Ophthalmic Dispensing and management, Optical Management or Dispensing Optician.
- A Foundation Degree course in Ophthalmic Dispensing
- Two-year full time diploma course, followed by one year supervised practice.
- A three-year day release course, for those in suitable employment.
- A three-year distance learning course (including an annual four week residential block) for those in suitable employment.

All the above courses must have been recognised by the General Optical Council (GOC). For further information please see [Annex 1](#).

REGISTRATION WITH A PROFESSIONAL BODY

Dispensing Opticians must be registered with the GOC to practise in the UK. The register can be found on-line at:

http://www.optical.org/index_files/non_members/reg_search.asp .

This registration must be renewed annually for as long as they practise in the UK. Dispensing Opticians trained outside the EEA will be required to undertake a pre-registration year working for a British registered optician at the end of their pre registration year they will have to take an examination for Non EU-EEA qualified Dispensing Opticians. For further information on the GOC please see [Annex 1](#).

CASEWORKER TREATMENT

B&C

If the overseas national is GOC registered then they will meet the skills criteria. Employers should provide the overseas national's GOC registration number and caseworkers should check this against the GOC register.

If the applicant is not GOC registered then the caseworkers may approve applications for a period of 18 months, in which time the OSN is required to pursue state registration with the GOC and complete the examination set by the ABDO. After a period of 18 months Work Permits (UK) should be provided with the certificate of qualification gained and certificate of registration in order to issue a work permit for any further period required.

Dispensing assistants do not meet the occupational skills criteria.

TWES

Training

This occupation is suitable for training under the TWES criteria if the OSN was trained outside the EEA and has registered with the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) and is undertaking a pre registration year to gain GOC registration. Caseworker should check the post is additional to normal staffing requirements and that the OSN does intend to return home after their training.

Work Experience

Applications may be received under this category; however the Dispensing Optician must be registered with the GOC.

SALARY

The Association of British Dispensing Opticians has stated that a qualified Dispensing Optician should earn between £18,000- £20,000. With experience this should rise to around £25,000-28,000. Dispensing Opticians who are also practice managers and Dispensing Opticians with a specialist qualification in contact lens fitting would be expected to earn in excess of £30,000. These salary rates are based on a 35- 40 hour week.

ADVERTISING

The following journals are the main sources of advertising:

Optician

Reed Business Publishing Group

Dispensing Opticians
Version 1.0 final

Quadrant House
The Quadrant
Sutton
Surrey
SM2 5AS
Tel: 020 8652 3196
Fax: 020 8652 8993

Optometry Today
Association of Optometrists
11 Somerset Place
Glasgow
Lanarkshire
G3 7JT
Tel: 01252 816266

Optician Jobs
<http://www.opticianjobs.net>

Association of British Dispensing Opticians' Website:
www.abdo.org.uk

CONTACTS

Association of British Dispensing Opticians
199 Gloucester Terrace
London
W2 6LD
Tel: 020 7298 5100
Fax: 020 7298 5111
www.abdo.org.uk

General Optical Council
41 Harley Street
London
W1G 8DJ
Tel: 020 7580 3898
Fax: 020 7436 3525
www.optical.org

Annex 1

General Optical Council (GOC) Registration

To be eligible for GOC registration an individual who has been trained in the UK must have attended a course that has been approved by the GOC. The list of approved courses can be found on-line at:
http://www.optical.org/index_files/education/edu_3.asp.

If the Dispensing Optician was trained outside the EEA they will need to do a pre-registration year working for a British registered optician and during the course of that year they must apply to the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) to take the professional Qualifying Examinations. The GOC will not offer adaptation to any non EEA applicant.

EEA nationals are covered by the General System Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC (this includes Romanian and Bulgarian). The directive means the GOC has to take the applicant's qualifications from their home country into account. A panel will decide if any additional training is required. This can include supervised practice.