

OPTOMETRIST (FORMALLY OPHTHALMIC OPTICIAN)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Optometrists (sometimes called Ophthalmic Opticians) examine eyes, administer sight tests, give advice on visual problems, prescribe and fit glasses or contact lenses. They also recommend other treatments or visual aids where appropriate and detect eye disease, referring such cases to medical practitioners as necessary.

Most Optometrists work in high street outlets, either for independent practices or for chains, but some work in community settings and hospitals.

INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

To work as an Optometrist in the UK a degree in Optometry or Ophthalmic Optics is required. Optometrists must obtain at least a 3rd in their degree or pass Part 1 of the Professional Qualifying Examination. They must then enroll with the College of Optometrists and undertake a pre-registration period (normally one year). This is assessed in the workplace, followed by a Final Assessment. Trainees must complete the pre-registration period successfully and pass the Final Assessment to register with the General Optical Council (GOC).

REGISTRATION WITH A PROFESSIONAL BODY

Optometrists must be registered with the GOC to practice in the UK. The register can be found on-line at:

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

Optometrists trained outside the EEA will need to prove that their qualifications and experience are equivalent to UK standards. Non-EEA qualified Optometrists must also pass an examination.

CASEWORKER TREATMENT

B&C

If the applicant is GOC registered then they will meet the skills criteria. All applicants should provide their GOC registration number and caseworkers should check this against the GOC register.

Where Optometrists have to enter the UK to pass the non-EEA qualified Optometrists test to gain registration with the GOC, caseworkers should conditionally approve the permit by adapting paragraph P70H, pending the submission of the Optometrists registration number once they have obtained their GOC registration.

Applications for the 12 months supervised work experience should be limited to 12 months. If an OSN fails any of their professional Qualifying Exams then an extension application should be submitted.

Overseas national's who have qualified in the UK and need to carry out 12 months work experience under supervision, should have a named registered supervisor for the 12 months. For further information on the GOC please see [Annex 1](#).

TWES

Training

This occupation is suitable for TWES training if the applicant is undertaking their pre-registration period with the College of Optometrists 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, Optometrists must be registered with the GOC and must fulfill the TWES criteria.

SALARY

The NHS is introducing a new pay structure called Agenda for Change. This is the principal pay structure for the NHS. Some NHS Trusts are yet to adopt the new salary scales and where this is the case the old Whitley salary scale should be applied. All NHS salaries are based on a 37 ½ hour week.

These salary levels are based on the Agenda for Change:

Band Level	Salary
Band 6 (trainee)	£23,458-£31,779
Band 7	£28,313-£37,326

Starting salary in the private sector may be slightly lower than the NHS. Experienced Optometrists may earn considerably more than the NHS pay scales. Caseworkers should refer any cases where a private sector salary appears low to the Work Permit (UK) policy team.

ADVERTISING

The following journals are the main sources of advertising.

Optician

Reed Business Publishing Group
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>

CONTACTS

General Optical Council
41 Harley Street
London
W1N 2DJ
Tel: 020 7580 3898
Fax: 020 7436 3525
www.optical.org

British Medical Association
BMA House
Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9JP
Tel: 020 7387 4499
Fax: 020 7383 6565
www.bma.org.uk

Royal College of Ophthalmologists
17 Cornwall Terrace
London
NW1 4QW
Tel: 0207 935 0702
www.rcophth.ac.uk

College of Optometrists
42 Craven Street
London
WC2N 5NG
Tel: 0207 839 6000

www.college-optometrists.org

Association of Optometrists

61 Southwark Street

LONDON

SE1 0HL

Tel: 0207 261 9661

www.assoc-optometrists.org

Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians

199 Gloucester Terrace

LONDON

W2 6LD

Tel: 0207 298 5151

www.fodo.com

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.