**Part 1 FRCOphth Examination Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

PART 1 FRCOPHTH

1. I am a doctor practising overseas, can I sit the College’s examinations or do I need to have completed a period of training in the UK?

Eligibility to sit the College’s examinations is not restricted to UK trainees. There is no minimum ophthalmic training requirement to sit the College exams. However, candidates are unlikely to pass the Refraction Certificate without extensive practise and experience of refracting patients.

2. Would you be able to advise me on the format of the Part 1 FRCOphth exam?

The Part 1 FRCOphth examination assesses understanding of patient investigations and knowledge of basic and clinical sciences relevant to ophthalmology. This is examined by a 3 hour Multiple Choice Question paper (MCQ) (1 best correct answer from 4) of 120 questions, and a 2 hour Constructed Response Question (CRQ) paper of 12 questions.

3. I am a new trainee and just about to start year 1 of specialty training (ST1). Do I need to pass my Part 1 examination by a certain point in training?

No previous experience in ophthalmology will be necessary for candidates to sit the Part 1 FRCOphth but trainees will be required to pass this examination before they enter into the third year of ophthalmic specialist training.

4. What happens if I do not pass an exam within the specified time of my training programme – eg Part 1 FRCOphth by the end of year 2?

If a trainee does not pass an examination within the required time frame, it will be a matter for the local Deanery and ARCP panel to determine whether it is appropriate to offer the trainee additional training time, and a further re-sit, before progression through specialty training can proceed. In some cases, this may unfortunately mean the trainee being counselled out of the specialty.

6. Is there a limit of the number of times I can sit the Part 1 exam?

From 1 August 2013, candidates are permitted a maximum of **six**attempts to pass the Part 1 FRCOphth examination

7. If I pass College examinations outside a training post, can these then be counted towards the requirements for my CCT? Regarding the GMC statement on taking exams whilst in a “training post”, does this include being on an OOPE?

An examination can be taken before the candidate enters the relevant GMC approved training programme or when they are on a break in the programme. The pass will be considered current as long as the candidate enters or re-enters the programme within seven years of passing the examination and satisfies any other currency requirements. A pass in an examination taken after completing a run-through or higher training programme will not be acceptable for a certificate of completion of training. In that situation, doctors may be able to demonstrate equivalence via the CESR or CEGPR process.

With regard to being on an OOPE, a training post is considered to be a post that has been approved by the GMC for training. In order for this post to be valid for YOUR training then you must have approval from the College and Deanery to undertake this as part of your training. Some OOPEs may not fulfil these criteria eg post CCT Fellowships, research OOPEs, educational OOPEs – and it is important that you ensure that you have confirmed that when you apply for a post that you confirm that it is a valid training post recognised for YOUR training. This also applies to those who are in a LAT post. Applications for training approval must be prospective.

8. Does success in the exams exempt me from any work-based assessments?

No, the assessment system for those in OST is mapped to the curriculum and this consists of both WpBAs and examinations which complement each other.

9. When should I take Part 1 FRCOphth? Will completion of the Part 1 FRCOphth be required in order to enter Specialty Training in Ophthalmology? I do not know whether to consider sitting the examination near the end of my F2 year or to wait until after completion of the Foundation Programme.

The Part 1 FRCOphth can be taken at any time following graduation of medical school but sitting this examination at such an early stage is inadvisable. You will have a large number of generic competencies to get through in your Foundation Years and you are advised to concentrate on these skills and wait until you are in OST until you attempt any College exams.

10. If the Part 1 FRCOphth examines optics and refraction, why is there a requirement to obtain the Refraction Certificate?

The Part 1 FRCOphth contains theoretical optics questions; there is no assessment of clinical skills. You will have to pass the Refraction Certificate, in addition to Part 1 FRCOphth, in order to progress to Part 2 FRCOphth.

11. When did the Royal College of Ophthalmologists cease running the old style MRCOphth examinations and start the new style FRCOphth examinations?

The last Part 1 MRCOphth was sat in October 2006, the last Part 2 MRCOphth was held in November 2008 and the last Part 3 MRCOphth was held in September 2008.  
The new Part 1 FRCOphth commenced in October 2006. The Refraction Certificate commenced in July 2007 and the first Part 2 FRCOphth was held in October 2008.

12. I have MRCOphth but I am not currently employed as I am still trying to get a number after being a LAT. Am I required to complete another examination?

MRCOphth is no longer an acceptable qualification for entry to OST3 (as of 2016).  If you wish to apply for specialty training at ST3 level you will need to pass the Part 1 FRCOphth.

13. I have passed the International Council of Ophthalmology examinations. Am I exempt from any part of the FRCOphth examinations?

The College does not offer exemptions to candidates who hold ICO examinations.

14. What should I bring to the exams?

For the online proctored delivery of the written exams you will be required to show your valid photographic ID via your webcam to the live proctor.

15. Can I use my own pencil / pen during the written exams?

All written examinations are taken on a computer via online proctored delivery. Pens/pencils and scrap paper booklets will not be allowed.