**Refraction Certificate Examination Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

REFRACTION CERTIFICATE

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 Refraction Certificate exam?

The Refraction Certificate consists of a 10 station Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE).

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

No previous experience in ophthalmology will be necessary for candidates to sit the Refraction Certificate but candidates are unlikely to pass this assessment if they have not undertaken a large number of clinical refractions in the clinical settings of either the hospital workplace or in optometric establishments. Trainees in OST will be required to pass this examination before they enter into the **fourth**year of ophthalmic specialist training.

4. What happens if I do not pass an exam within the specified time of my training programme?

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.

5. Is there a limit of the number of times I can sit the Refraction Certificate exam?

From 1 August 2013, candidates are permitted a maximum of **six**attempts to pass the Refraction Certificate examination.  Examination attempts prior to August 2013 are discounted.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. I am in a LAT post at the moment, what routes to Fellowship (FRCOphth) are open to me?

Doctors who do not hold a substantive training post, but have successfully passed the Part 1 FRCOphth and Refraction Certificate remain eligible to sit the Part 2 FRCOphth as a route to obtaining Fellowship of the College.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. I have passed the Part 2 MRCOphth, which examinations can I now take?

As of 31 August 2017, Part 2 MRCOphth no longer grants eligibility for the Part 2 FRCOphth Written examination.

12. Is the MRCOphth equivalent to FRCOphth? And if not, where does the MRCOphth stand?

The Part 2 FRCOphth is an exit level qualification for Ophthalmic Specialist Training and as such assesses knowledge and competencies at a high level. It is recommended that candidates have completed a minimum of 4 years training in ophthalmology before sitting this examination (whereas candidates for the Part 3 MRCOphth needed to have completed 18 months).  
These are therefore not equivalent examinations of ophthalmic knowledge. However, the assessment of clinical skills in the both OSCEs assesses the ability of candidates to reliably elicit clinical signs at a competent level.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. I possess examinations or qualifications from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, am I eligible to sit College examinations?

Candidates possessing any qualification from the RCSEd are no longer eligible for the Part 2 FRCOphth.   Any candidates holding RCSEd qualifications will need to pass the Part 1 FRCOphth and Refraction Certificate in order to progress to the Part 2 FRCOphth.

16. What should I bring to the exams?

You must bring Government-issued photographic identification for verification to all College examinations.

Candidates may bring their own clinical equipment to an examination, if desired, however all items must be contained within a clear plastic pencil case or plastic bag.