



The ROYAL COLLEGE of  
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Newsletter – Issue 2  
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**To Heads of School, Training Programme Directors,  
Regional Education Advisors and Representatives, College  
Tutors, Educational and Clinical Supervisors, all Trainers and  
all Ophthalmologists in Training**

18 Stephenson Way  
London, NW1 2HD  
T. 020 7935 0702  
training@rcophth.ac.uk  
rcophth.ac.uk  
@RCOphth

## **Re: New Ophthalmic Specialist Training (OST) Curriculum**

We wrote to you all in [2019](#) to let you know about changes to the OST Curriculum in the coming years, and the rationale for these changes.

The rewriting of the curriculum is at the request of the GMC for all Royal Colleges and Faculties to include the [Generic Professional Capabilities \(GPC\) Framework](#) and meet the GMC standards of curricular design. The new curriculum represents a move from multiple learning outcomes, used to describe each constituent part of a capability, to overarching learning outcomes that describe the capability itself.

### Timeline

In 2020, the pandemic crisis left the Curriculum Sub-committee with little choice but to ask the GMC for some leeway with our submission date, which was granted. This has resulted in the decision to postpone the full implementation of the new curriculum to August 2023, a year later than initially announced.

We did not take this decision lightly. However, it would have been difficult to conduct a full consultation on the new curriculum during 2020, as well as piloting new assessment tools.

### Preparing for the change

The Curriculum Sub-committee believes that the proposed new OST Curriculum will accelerate progression to consultant posts and ensure national standardisation of high level special interest area training.

Learning outcomes and descriptors in the new Curriculum will describe the ‘Levels’ ophthalmologists in training will need to evidence by the end of defined progression points:

- end of OST2 (Level 1)
- end of OST3 (Level 2)
- mid-way of OST6 (Level 3)
- at completion of training (Level 4)

All ophthalmologists will train up to Level 3 in all the clinical special interest areas (Oculoplastics and Orbit, Cornea and Ocular Surface Disease, Cataract and Refractive Surgery, Glaucoma, Uveitis, Medical Retina, Vitreoretinal Surgery, Ocular Motility, Neuro-ophthalmology, Paediatrics, Urgent Eye Care and Community Ophthalmology) and will then undertake at least two of the twelve clinical special interest areas to Level 4.

A new programme of assessment will be based on summative, entrustable professional activity (EPA) tools for each level. The current WpBAs will continue to be available as formative assessments to inform EPAs. We plan to test the first iteration of the new tools with small groups before extending the trial to larger groups in regions whose Heads of School/TPDs have indicated a willingness to get involved.

Notwithstanding the current challenges that continue as a result of the pandemic, all ophthalmologists in training are strongly encouraged to acquire general competences as early as possible in their training over the next couple of years, and make plans to sit the final examinations by the end of ST5 or middle of ST6 year. This will allow a smoother transition to the new curriculum in 2023, with Level 4 special interest training in the final 18 months.

The Curriculum Sub-committee is currently mapping existing learning outcomes to the proposed competency framework, and further details on this will be communicated in due course.

In 2022, selected groups of ST1s and ST3-4s (Early Adopters) will be asked to pilot the new OST Curriculum, supported by a new e-Portfolio, for up to one in year (partially or in full). Mock ARCPs will be set up to put the system to the test in an offline environment.

All ST1-6 ophthalmologists in training will be mandated to transfer to the new curriculum in August 2023. Trainees who are ST7s in August 2023 will be the only trainees permitted to remain on the current curriculum. ST7s training less-than-full-time (LTFT) or out of programme (OOP) at the start of that academic year will have two years to complete their training on the current curriculum and, if this is not possible, will be able to transfer to the new curriculum.

### Consultation

The proposed OST Curriculum has been developed by the Curriculum Sub-committee with input from specialist societies and an educationalist. Committee representation includes ophthalmologists in training, trainers and patients. Other internal and external stakeholders have also contributed to the redevelopment work.

We are launching a public consultation today which will close on **Friday, 28 May 2021**. Please click on the [link](#) to view the new curriculum and comment on opportunities and/or perceived challenges using an [online feedback form](#).

Trainees and trainers are also invited to join two webinars to learn more about the changes and take part in a Q&A session. Please click on the links below to join the events.

[Wednesday, 5 May 2021](#)

[Tuesday, 18 May 2021](#)

Please email [training@rcophth.ac.uk](mailto:training@rcophth.ac.uk) if you would like to send your questions in advance or require further information.

Please continue to keep an eye on future newsletters to keep abreast of key developments.

Yours sincerely,



**Miss Fiona Spencer FRCS (Glas) FRCOphth**  
*Chair – Training Committee*



**Miss Fiona Bishop FRCOphth**  
*Chair – Curriculum Sub-committee*



**Dr Sunil Mamtora**  
*Chair – Ophthalmologists in Training Group (OTG)*