



## Framework for the physician associates (PA) pilot

### Background

The RCOphth is overseeing the pilot of PAs in ophthalmology, which is taking place between November 2023 and November 2024. This document outlines the structure and expectations of the 12-month pilot.

### Overview

The pilot will commence in the first week of November 2023 with five host organisations with up to eight PAs in post. The scope of practice for PAs in this pilot is outlined in a separate document.

The individual PA will be recruited and employed by their host organisation. They will have a dedicated clinical supervisor within their host organisation and will have a separate line manager. Separately, each PA will have a named supervisor at the College who will be able to provide additional support and advice as necessary.

The RCOphth will administer formal clinical training throughout the year for the PAs in the form of four two-day training courses whose content will be outlined later in this document. As PAs have minimal ophthalmology specific training during their degree programme, the necessary training for them will cover the fundamentals of ophthalmology as well as practical skills required for patient assessment.

### Sample timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM	Eye casualty	Intravitreal injections	Scribe clinic	Scribe clinic	Eye casualty
PM	Pre-assessment	Ward/admission/discharge	Study/Research	Telephone clinic	Teaching

The above timetable is an example timetable. If individual trusts wish to deviate significantly from the timetable (activities not mentioned in the Scope of Practice) it should be discussed with the named contact at the RCOphth.

### Training outline

Training type	Dates and outline
Introductory webinar	Introduction of faculty and outline of plan for preceptorship
In-person training 1 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of ophthalmology as a specialty (main 5 diagnoses plus naming all SIA)</li> <li>• History taking in ophthalmology</li> <li>• Scribing in ophthalmology – nomenclature, acronyms and details</li> <li>• Clinical examination techniques – visual acuity, pupil assessment, colour vision, direct ophthalmoscopy and slit-lamp examination</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment</li> </ul>
In-person training 2 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigations and imaging in ophthalmology – to cover fundus photography, OCT of macula and optic discs, visual field testing</li> <li>• Formative assessment</li> </ul>
In-person training 3 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of red eye – clinical differentials, history taking, case presentations</li> <li>• Summary of guidance of sight-impairment and how visual aids can support patients</li> <li>• History taking with cases</li> <li>• Formative assessment</li> </ul>
In person training 4 (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving theatre efficiency before and after the operation</li> <li>• Working alongside a high-volume cataract surgeon and how a PA can improve the flow of theatre</li> <li>• Overview of cataract pathway</li> <li>• Pre-op and post-op assessment of cataract</li> </ul>

In between the above, there will be additional webinars providing opportunities to monitor progress and to participate in case-based discussions.

Progress throughout the year will be assessed at each of the in-person training days formatively. The PAs on this pilot will be expected to complete other assessments during their placement at their host organisation as outlined in appendix 1 in the scope of practice document.

Documentation

Each PA will have

- Documentation of courses attended
- Documentation of assessments (formative and summative ) completed
- Documentation of all CS and ES meetings
- PDP – reviewed 3 times during the year
- WBA – PA can use any of the WBA forms available to AHP on the college website. These can be used as evidence of, for example, direct observation of skill, case discussions, reflective practice
- Reflective practice – PA will need to complete three pieces of reflective practice in the year.