



## Endorsement Policy

### 1. Purpose and scope

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (the College) is approached by external organisations seeking endorsement of documents, guidance, education programmes and campaigns. This policy explains what the College will and will not endorse, the standards applied, the review process, and the terms under which endorsement may be granted, used, reviewed and withdrawn. It applies to all endorsement requests, whether from charities, professional bodies, academic groups, industry or public sector organisations.

This policy complements the College's policies on conflicts of interest, branding guidelines, complaints, sponsorship and institutional neutrality. Where there is any inconsistency, the College's governing documents take precedence.

### 2. Definitions

- **Endorsement:** a formal statement that the College agrees with and supports a resource, and permits the use of a specific endorsement statement and the College crest or logo.
- **Support:** a lighter-touch statement recognising the value of a resource without granting logo or crest use.
- **Consultation only:** comments provided during development without conferring support or endorsement.
- **Accreditation/CPD approval:** separate quality assurance processes that do not confer endorsement or crest or logo use by default.
- **Partnering/collaboration:** jointly developed work under a written agreement with shared governance and branding rules.

### 3. Principles

- **Alignment with charitable objects:** endorsement will be granted only where work aligns with the College's mission and public benefit.
- **Direct College involvement:** endorsement is normally limited to activities in which there has been direct College involvement agreed at the outset; retrospective permission is very rarely granted.
- **Independence and integrity:** decisions are based on evidence, patient safety and professional standards, free from improper influence.
- **Transparency and proportionality:** interests are declared and managed. Decisions and conditions are recorded and communicated clearly.
- **Quality and inclusivity:** endorsed work must meet relevant clinical, educational, ethical and equality standards, meet accessibility best practice and consider diverse patient needs.

- **Separation from commercial promotion:** endorsement will not be used to market products or confer a commercial advantage. Advertising external resources is managed under a separate College process.

#### 4. What the College may endorse

- Clinical guidance or standards produced through a recognised methodology.
- Policy statements or position papers of clear public benefit.
- Education programmes and resources that meet professional learning standards.
- Public information resources that are accurate, balanced and accessible.

#### 5. What the College will not endorse

- Branded products, devices, pharmaceuticals or specific commercial services.
- Research funding applications.
- Material that is inaccurate, biased, promotional or not evidence-based.
- Resources lacking appropriate patient and public involvement for their purpose.
- Content that conflicts with the College's values, guidance, institutional neutrality or legal duties.
- Events or materials that seek to use endorsement as a substitute for CPD approval or to imply College partnership where none exists.

#### 6. Eligibility and criteria

Requests will be assessed against:

1. **Purpose and audience:** clarity of aims, defined audience and public benefit.
2. **Evidence and quality:** methodology, peer review, currency of evidence, editorial independence.
3. **Equality, diversity and inclusion:** inclusive design, accessibility and representation.
4. **Conflicts of interest:** declaration and management of interests by authors, funders and sponsors.
5. **Governance and version control:** authorship, update plan, ownership and rights.
6. **Risk and compliance:** safeguarding, data protection, brand usage and legal considerations.

#### 7. Process

##### 7.1 Pre-application

Applicants are encouraged to discuss suitability with the College before submitting a full application.

##### 7.2 Application submission

Applicants submit:

- a completed application form with
  - conflicts of interest statements for authors and funders
  - final or near-final materials for review
  - a description of development process and stakeholder involvement
  - a summary of the expected outcomes of the project or resource being proposed for endorsement, including how impact will be monitored and evaluated over time, and how feedback on outcomes will be provided to the College
  - proposed endorsement wording (see Annex A) and timelines for publication

- any funding or sponsorship arrangements.

### 7.3 Review and timelines

- The minimum lead time is **20 working days** before the proposed publication or launch date, counted from receipt of a complete application. Complex requests may require more time. The College may decline or pause incomplete applications.
- Reviews involve subject matter experts, lay representation where appropriate, and governance checks for conflicts, quality and risk.

### 7.4 Decision

Possible outcomes are: endorse, endorse with conditions, request revision, or decline. Decisions are recorded with reasons and communicated to the applicant. The College's decision is final.

### 8. Terms of endorsement

- **Duration:** normally up to three years or until the resource is superseded. A re-review may be required sooner if evidence changes.
- **Crest, logo and wording:** only the approved endorsement lock-up and wording may be used. The College crest must not be altered. Co-branding rules apply where multiple organisations are involved.
- **Use limitations:** endorsement must not be used in paid advertising for products, in comparative marketing, or to imply College partnership, accreditation or CPD approval unless separately agreed.
- **Attribution:** endorsed resources must display the endorsement statement and date, and include a link to the College website.
- **Monitoring and revocation:** endorsement may be withdrawn if conditions are breached, material changes occur without notification, or new evidence undermines safety or quality.

### 9. Branding and crest or logo use

Approved applicants will receive our brand guidelines to support the use of the core College crest or logo. Further information can be found in Annex B. CPD approval or accreditation alone does not entitle any party to use the College crest or logo.

### 10. Fees and cost recovery

The College may charge a fee to cover the costs of review and brand administration. Fees may be reduced or waived for registered charities and public sector bodies at the College's discretion.

### 11. Conflicts of interest

All reviewers and decision-makers will declare relevant interests. Applicants must supply complete conflicts information for authors, funders and sponsors. Mitigations will be recorded, and in material cases the College may require independent review or decline the request.

### 12. Complaints and concerns

Concerns about an endorsed resource should be raised via the College's complaints process. Where concerns are upheld, the College may require remedial action or withdraw endorsement.

### 13. Governance and review of this policy

Responsibility for endorsement decisions sits with the Senior Leadership Team in conjunction with the relevant College committee. This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if required by changes in law or best practice.

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#### Annex A: Standard endorsement wording

- **Full endorsement:** “The Royal College of Ophthalmologists endorses this resource. Endorsement confirms that the content aligns with College standards and charitable objects at the date shown.”
- **Support statement:** “The Royal College of Ophthalmologists supports the aims of this resource but has not conducted a full endorsement review.”

#### Annex B: Crest or logo and brand rules for endorsement

- Use only the approved endorsement supplied by the College.
- Do not alter proportions, colours or fonts.
- Positioning, clear space and minimum sizes must follow the College’s brand guidelines.
- The endorsement must not appear on paid advertisements for specific products or services.
- The endorsement must be removed when the endorsement period expires.

#### Annex C: Endorsement application form

Please complete and submit this [digital endorsement application form](https://forms.office.com/e/MTf2Ncerk9) – available at <https://forms.office.com/e/MTf2Ncerk9> – no later than **20 working days** before your proposed publication or launch date.

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**Approved by:** Senior Leadership Team

**Approval date:** May 2026

**Next review due:** May 2027