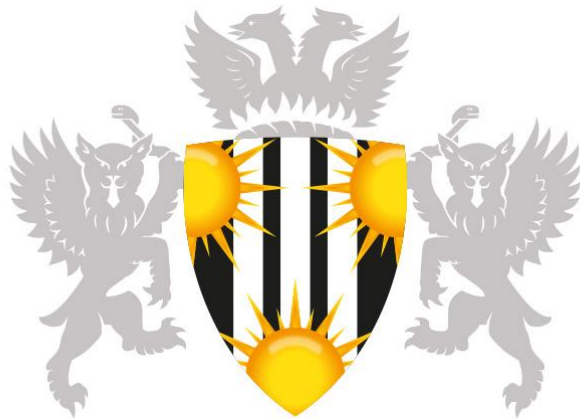


**THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF OPHTHALMOLOGISTS**

**DUKE ELDER PRIZE EXAMINATION 2026**



*The* ROYAL COLLEGE *of*  
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

## **Please read the following information carefully**

This examination is intended for medical students who have completed their ophthalmology undergraduate teaching, but it is open to all medical undergraduates.

**Following careful consideration and after receiving responses from medical schools, it was agreed that candidates in their final year would be permitted to sit the examination provided they were undergraduates at the time of application and took the examination in September of the same year.**

Students may sit the examination on more than one occasion provided they have not yet graduated (or are undergraduates at the time of application if in final year) and have not previously won the prize. The candidate gaining the highest mark will be offered to chance to visit St John's Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. The winning candidate can alternatively choose a cash prize of £400. There is no second prize.

**This examination is not a pass or fail examination; the winner is the candidate who achieves the highest score, but no candidate technically passes or fails.**

All candidates will receive their percentage score and ranking – in groups of 10%. The top 10% of candidates will receive special commendation – this is in the form of an email addressed from the President of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, sent to each of the top 10% candidates.

The 2 hour examination will be held on **Wednesday 9 September 2026** at 2.30pm and will be via online proctored exam delivery (see further details below).

Candidates should liaise with the medical school organiser if they wish to sit this examination. We cannot accept individual applications.

Candidates must ensure that they have given their name to their medical school organiser prior to the closing date of **Monday 4 May 2026**. **No candidates will be accepted after this date.** Medical school organisers will submit the names of their medical students wishing to sit the examination to the Royal College of Ophthalmologists.

Candidates will then be sent instructions on how to pay the examination fee. The deadline for fee payment is **5pm on Wednesday 25 June 2026**. Candidates who have not paid their fee by this date will not have a place at the exam. Examination fees should not be submitted to your medical school.

If you have any further queries please contact [Preeti.attalia@rcophth.ac.uk](mailto:Preeti.attalia@rcophth.ac.uk)

## Important Dates

<b>Application Deadline</b> All candidates should apply to their medical schools by this date	Monday 4 May 2026
<b>Payment Deadline</b> All candidates should pay the £65.00 exam fee by <b>5pm</b> on this date. Instructions on how to pay will be sent directly to candidates after the application deadline*. <u>Candidates should not submit payment directly to medical schools.</u>	Wednesday 25 June 2026
<b>Supporting documents for additional requirements submitted</b> If a candidate has additional requirements, such as extra time, they must notify RCOphth and supply supporting documentation prior to this date. For more information about what documentation to supply, please contact us directly.	Wednesday 10 June 2026
<b>Exam Date</b>	Wednesday 9 September 2026
<b>Results Date</b> Results letters will be sent to you directly via email. Those in the top 10% will receive special commendation - this is in the form of an email addressed from the President of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, sent to each of the top 10% candidates.	Friday 2 October 2026  If possible, the College may release results prior to this – medical schools and candidates will be notified if there are any changes to the published date.

\*Please check your junk email folder

## **THE DUKE-ELDER UNDERGRADUATE PRIZE IN OPHTHALMOLOGY**

An undergraduate prize examination will run this year on a national basis by The Royal College of Ophthalmologists. This examination is intended for medical students who have completed their ophthalmology undergraduate teaching, but it is open to all medical undergraduates.

The 2 hour examination consists of:

90 single best answer one in four Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Marking is on the basis of +1 for a correct answer and 0 marks for an incorrect answer (i.e. there is no negative marking).

The standard is high, and candidates should anticipate a stiffer examination than they may encounter in their own university's undergraduate examinations in ophthalmology. Questions are mostly based on clinical ophthalmology, but other areas covered include ocular physiology, anatomy, pharmacology, basic science, statistics, optics including ray diagrams and pathology as well as embryology, genetics of eye conditions and socio-economic medicine relevant to ophthalmology e.g. blind registration or world blindness. In the clinical questions all the sub-speciality areas within ophthalmology are covered including:

- Cornea and external eye disease
- Cataract
- Glaucoma
- Medical retina and vitreo-retinal surgery
- Strabismus and paediatric ophthalmology
- Neuro-ophthalmology
- Ocular adnexal and orbital disease
- Refractive errors and optics

### **Examination Online Proctored Delivery**

The Duke Elder examination is taken as an Online Proctored Examination, where the candidate sits the exam at their home or their workplace, without the need to travel to a testing centre or examination venue. The examination is taken online by being delivered over the internet to the candidate's computer at a pre-agreed examination date and time.

**IMPORTANT – Please read fully and carefully all of the following including the web-links:**

Please see the following document and video links which detail the examination process along with the infrastructure and hardware requirements.

### **Online Invigilation Candidate Quick Guide**

#### **Duke Elder Online FAQs**

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Duke-Elder-Online-Proctored-Exam-FAQs.pdf>

#### **How to prepare for your Exam - Video link**

<https://youtu.be/xsi0an49ISM>

#### **Online Proctored Exam RCOphth Privacy Policy**

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/RCOphth-Online-Proctored-Written-Exams-FAQs-UPDATED-JUNE-2022.pdf>

We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the process and system requirements as soon as possible to ensure that all processes work reliably.

### **System Testing**

- One week prior to the examination, you will receive an e-mail from BTL with a link to complete a computer system check, as well as to re-iterate the information from this confirmation e-mail. The system check link will ensure a candidate's audio and video work properly, as well as making sure that their computer is suitable to run the software. If you do not appear to have received the e-mail please check your "junk folder".
- 72 – 24 hours before the examination, candidates will be sent another email with the links for launching the exam. These links will not activate until the start of the actual examination. The keycodes to start the exam when then be displayed to the candidate when they are just about to start the exam. The keycodes will NOT be sent to the candidate at any time before the examination.
- The examination will be available to the candidate, for the whole examination duration specified.

## Rules and Regulations

1. Candidates will be required to log in at their computer at the agreed examination start time to run through ID checks and web camera/microphone set-up. The exam will then start once ID checks and set-up is complete. If you log on before the start time, you will be presented with a timer counting down to the start time.

**This means that for example although 230pm is the exam start time, at 230pm you will do the pre-exam set up and THEN start the exam paper. Please note that this means that, depending on how long you take to complete the set-up, the exam paper might run past the stated exam times.**

**Example: You are told to log on at 230pm  
You log on at 230pm  
You complete set-up that takes 20 mins  
At 250pm you start the exam paper  
Exam finishes at 450pm (you have the full two hours)**

2. Photographic identification (a passport or photographic driver's licence ONLY) will be checked by the proctoring system through the candidate's web camera before candidates can start the examination. The candidate must also show the whole room via their web camera or their smartphone which must also be connected as a second camera for the examination.
3. Candidates will be monitored at all times through the web camera during the examination.
4. All examinations are timed by the computer and will end automatically once the examination time has expired. Once the timing for the examination has begun, it cannot be paused. Candidates will be able to skip questions and come back to them at the end.
5. A candidate cannot be late for their examination. If they are late, their examination will be cancelled and their examination fee forfeited.
6. If a candidate wishes to raise a query during the examination, they can communicate with tech support via a chat facility.

7. The candidate's computer screen will be locked into the examination during the duration of the examination and access to any other websites or applications will not be possible.
8. Candidates are **not permitted** to use calculators in any section of the examinations.
9. Candidates are **not permitted** to use notebooks, books or any other form of written material during the examination.
10. Candidates are **not permitted** to wear any form of earplugs or headphones.
11. Candidates are **permitted** one sheet of white paper and a pencil for rough use/calculations, which must be destroyed at the end of the examination in front of the webcam by tearing into small pieces and then screwed up.
12. Candidates **must not**, at any point during the examination, look at their hands, wrists or arms, or at any mobile phone or tablet.
13. Candidates are **not permitted** to leave the room during the examination except for the designated one-hour break between examination papers.
14. Candidates are **not permitted** to wear any form of sunglasses or smart glasses.
15. Candidates are **not permitted** to wear any kind of watch or smart watch.
16. Candidates are **not permitted** to smoke or vape during the examination.
17. Candidates are **not permitted** to consult any other materials during the examination. This includes notes and textbooks.
18. Candidates are **not permitted** to eat any food during the examination. For drinks, the candidate may have one transparent tumbler of clear liquid drink that must be present at the start of the examination and not replenished at any time except for during the designated one-hour break between examination papers.
19. No other person will be permitted to be present in the room in which the candidate sits the examination.

20. Candidates are **not permitted** to communicate in any way with or seek assistance from anyone else except from the live proctor during the examination.
21. Candidates are advised to read in advance the RCOphth Online Proctored Examinations Privacy Policy and the RCOphth Policy on Allegations of Cheating and Misconduct in Examinations.
22. Candidates will **not be permitted** to visit the toilet during the examination. Toilet visits will only be permitted during the one-hour break between the examination papers. The only exceptions are for candidates who have medical conditions or pregnancy. These candidates must request the need for toilet breaks upon applying for the exam and must provide a medical letter explaining the reasons why.
23. Other than a second camera linked to the proctoring system (as in point 3 above), candidates are **not permitted** to use mobile phones.
24. Candidates are **not permitted** to have or use any other electronic equipment or device during the examination.
25. Candidates are **not permitted** to interfere with, e.g. turn on / off, their internet connection without the permission of the online proctor.

The RCOphth will treat any breach of the above rules as cheating and does not expect to have to deal with any impropriety or issues of probity. However, we are obliged to ensure that such safeguards are in place in order that such issues cannot occur unnoticed. As such BTL provide three live and recorded streams of feedback whilst the examination is in progress online.

These three sources are:

1. the candidate's computer screen
2. the candidate's computer web camera view
3. a separate side view video-stream via a phone camera

### **The role of the proctor**

There will be one proctor per 6-8 candidates.

It is the proctor's role to check candidates into the examination and monitor the candidates throughout for "unusual behaviours" (see rules and regulations and below). Such behaviours will be recorded on a timeline, which will then be brought to

the attention of a senior RCOphth examiner after the examination to decide whether any action is required. Please note, unless there is incontrovertible serious evidence of impropriety, your examination will proceed uninterrupted to be reviewed after the event.

### **Internet connectivity issues**

The testing processes that the candidate will have undertaken will ensure that the likelihood of a problem with the internet connection is minimised. If a candidate's internet connection does drop during the examination, no examination time will be lost as the timer will automatically pause. As the system updates every 3 seconds data loss is also likely to be minimal.

In the event of an interruption to the internet connection, we recommend that the candidate tries to reconnect to the internet as soon as possible, if possible, without leaving their chair or the room.

Once the internet connection is re-established the examination can proceed from where the candidate left off. The candidate will not lose any time to the interruption however, as answers are uploaded to the server every 3 seconds, it would be advisable to quickly check the answer to the question last answered.

If the internet connection is lost entirely for the duration of the whole exam, the candidate will have to reschedule for the next examination.

If there happens to be an unforeseen event that prevents the candidate completing the examination, only with written evidence from an appropriate authority (e.g. ISP, electricity power provider) we will consider an examination fee refund and a removal of the examination attempt from the candidate's record.

The online proctor has been instructed to report unusual behaviour in relation to the candidate's internet connection. Repeatedly dropping off-line unexpectedly in the presence of a previously tested and good connection will be regarded as a suspicious behaviour, as will excessive reconnection times. Each case of lost connection will be dealt with using the data that the proctor provides to us.

## **Recommended Reading List**

The Eye: Basic Sciences and Practice. Forrester JV, Dick AD, McMenemy P, Roberts F. WB Saunders, Elsevier. 2007 ISBN-10: 070202841X ISBN-13: 978-0702028410

MCQ companion to the Eye. Basic Sciences in Practice. Galloway PH, Forrester JV, Dick AD, Lee WR. WB Saunders 2001. ISBN-10: 0702025666 | ISBN-13: 978-0702025662 -  
Clinical Optics. Elkington AR, Frank HJ and Greaney MJ. John Wiley & Sons, Blackwell Science, 1999. . ISBN: 0632049898/9780632049899 –

Clinical Anatomy of the Eye. Snell RS, Lemp MA. Blackwell Scientific Publications 1998. ISBN: 063204344X – old but can't have changed much

Clinical Ophthalmology: A Systematic Approach. JJ Kanski, B Bowling. Butterworth-Heinemann, Elsevier, 2011. ISBN-10: 0702040932 ISBN-13: 978-0702040931.

Clinical Ophthalmology: A Self-Assessment Companion. JJ Kanski, Agnes Kubicka Trzaska. Elsevier, 2007. ISBN-10: 0750675381, ISBN-13: 978-0750675383

EMQs And MCQs For The FRCOphth Part 2 [Paperback]  
Patrick Chiam. Lulu Marketplace, 2011. ISBN 9781447806615

NICE and RCOphth guideline and Clinical Optics Third Edition <https://amzn.eu/d/5Rhucw7>

## Multi Choice Questions (MCQs)

The Multiple Choice Questions used in this examination are single best answer from four.

### **Example Questions**

1. What would be the MOST likely diagnosis in a patient with uveitis that shows bilateral and symmetric hilar adenopathy on chest X ray and has raised serum angiotensin converting enzyme level?

- A. Behcet's Disease
- B. Sarcoidosis
- C. Syphilis
- D. Toxoplasmosis

Correct Answer B

2. What is thought to be the MAIN mechanism of action of prostaglandin analogues in their use for glaucoma treatment?

- A. Decrease aqueous production in the ciliary body
- B. Increase trabecular outflow
- C. Increase uveo-scleral outflow
- D. Neuroprotection of the optic nerve head

Correct Answer C

3. Centrocaecal scotomas are MOST commonly found in patients suffering from which of the following?

- A. Amblyopia due to squint
- B. Cerebrovascular Accident (Stroke)
- C. Nutritional Optic Neuropathy (Tobacco/alcohol amblyopia)
- D. Primary Open Angle Glaucoma

Correct Answer C

**Please refer to Reasonable Adjustments and Access Arrangements Policy for Examinations.**