The ROYAL COLLEGE of OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

Course Accreditation Guidance

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1. Introduction

We have developed this document to help course organisers apply for accreditation for high grade educational short courses (5 days or less) from the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth). It applies to online and face-to-face courses.

We hope the information in this guide will explain clearly the process and encourage you to apply for course accreditation.

If you have any questions, please direct these by email to accreditation@rcophth.ac.uk

Please make sure that you apply at least 6 months before you plan to run the course to allow time for your application to be processed and for visitors to be allocated.

2. Course accreditation

The RCOphth is a leading provider of surgical education, running many courses. A robust quality assurance mechanism underpins the development, monitoring and review of these courses to ensure that they are of the highest educational quality in design and delivery.

In order to assist its fellows, members and those wishing to deliver a RCOphth-accredited course the RCOphth has developed its course accreditation processes. Ongoing monitoring and review of these courses will ensure that they remain at the standard expected by the RCOphth.

Course accreditation is the process by which the RCOphth reviews ophthalmology and ophthalmological surgery-related courses to ensure that they meet the RCOphth standards for course design, delivery and quality assurance.

The process will ensure that:

- The rationale, course structure, educational content, teaching methods, learning aims, learning outcomes and quality assurance meet the RCOphth standards
- The course is delivered to the appropriate standard
- Any commercial or non-commercial sponsorship of the course or any potential conflicts of interest on the part of the course provider or faculty meet the RCOphth's ethical standards
- The course is delivered in compliance with all relevant legal requirements including health and safety and equality.

Accreditation is the highest form of recognition that the RCOphth can grant for an educational course. It is applicable both to well established courses that can provide evidence of positive feedback from several previous course sittings, and to new courses.

In order to apply for accreditation of a course, a course provider must complete an application form, demonstrating that the course complies with RCOphth standards. The application will be reviewed by the RCOphth team. If the course is deemed suitable and is a face-to-face course, a panel visit from the RCOphth will be arranged to review the course in delivery.

Course organisers will be able to use the term "RCOphth Accreditation pending" once the application has been assessed and a visit is pending.

Accredited courses will be expected to comply with RCOphth monitoring requirements and the Conditions of Course Accreditation below.

3. Criteria

Documents and information submitted to the RCOphth as part of the course accreditation process should demonstrate that the course meets the following criteria:

- It does not last longer than five days
- It has a scientific and/or educational purpose only
- Any commercial sponsorship is clearly stated and has no inappropriate influence on the educational programme content and structure
- Its content is underpinned by evidence-based research and practice, and aims to promote the development of competent ophthalmologists and/or eyecare professionals
- Its target audience falls within the remit of the RCOphth, and is in line with the course title and content
- Its learning aims are clearly defined, appropriate for the target audience, and are properly referenced in the course content
- Learning outcomes are achievable and properly reflected in the course content, structure and assessment (if applicable)
- The course structure and teaching and learning methods used are relevant and appropriate to deliver the defined learning outcomes
- Assessment methods (if applicable) are relevant and appropriate, and in accordance with the course learning outcomes
- Appropriate resources and learning materials are available to support the learning by the attendees
- The course provider has proven relevant expertise in conducting such courses
- There is an appropriate ratio of faculty to attendees. A consultant ophthalmologist is included on the course faculty for all skills courses
- The presenters/teachers/facilitators have proven relevant expertise, skills and knowledge to deliver the education programme within the specific subject(s) identified
- Any award granted is commensurate with the activity undertaken and granted following appropriate assessment
- A defined quality-assurance process underpins the activity and includes an effective assessment process that evaluates the intended learning (such as an evaluation or feedback form)
- If an existing course, it has received positive feedback from several previous sittings from which detailed feedback is available
- It is in line with the strategic portfolio of the RCOphth
- There is no inappropriate conflict of interest on the part of the provider or of any course faculty members

4. Standards

The criteria for accreditation is the set of standards that have to be met by the course provider. The accreditation standards represent qualitative

characteristics that define the evidence required from course providers sufficient to meet the accreditation criteria.

4.1 Organisation

The provider must supply full details of the organisation running the course. This should include the job titles and contact details of the course tutor and lead contact for the course (if different).

4.2 Course details

The provider must supply the following:

1 A **course specification** including:

- The title of the course
- Course length
- The proposed venue(s)
- The number of attendee places available on the course
- The target audience for the course
- The expected frequency that the course will be run each year.

2 A **course rationale** including an explanation for why the course was originally developed and how it will contribute to the development of competent ophthalmologists.

3 Details of any **eligibility criteria** for course attendance, such as prerequisite knowledge, skills, qualifications or level of entry.

4 A **history of the course**, to include the year that the course was created or first ran, the number of previous sittings of the course and any previous or planned revisions to the course structure, content or delivery.

5 Details of any **award or qualification** provided as a result of having attended or completed the course.

6 Details of any **fees charged** for attendance on the course.

4.3 Faculty

The provider must supply full details of the staffing structure for the course. Roles of individual staff involved in the delivery of the course should be identified against the areas for which they will be responsible. Evidence must be provided that staff in both academic and practice settings are appropriately qualified and experienced.

The provider must supply full details of any current or prior association on the part of its faculty with any RCOphth course(s).

4.4 Learning aims

The course learning aims should be described in full.

Learning aims describe the intent, intellectual challenge and skills development to build upon or complement previous knowledge and give attendees a short description of the teaching intentions for the course. It may be appropriate to use terms such as provide, develop, enable, assist, and to refer to the learning opportunities that are offered to attendees. At least two learning aims should be listed.

4.5 Learning outcomes

The course learning outcomes should be described in full.

A learning outcome is a statement of what an attendee is expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of a period of learning and of how the learning is to be demonstrated. It is therefore concerned with the achievements of the learner and is a way of communicating clearly what the provider expects the attendees to be able to achieve by the end of the course.
Learning outcomes can fall under the following headings: knowledge and understanding; practical (clinical and technical) skills; personal and professional skills.
Knowledge and understanding will detail what knowledge was gained as a result of attending the course, and how it would be applied.
Practical skills are those that require a clinical or technical element such as surgical skills, dexterity, or an ability to use equipment.
Personal and professional skills are skills that are readily transferable to employment in other contexts, such as written and oral communication, working within a team, problem solving, numeracy and IT skills.
At least two learning outcomes should be listed.
There must be clear linkages between the course learning aims and learning outcomes.

4.6 Course structure and content

There should be a detailed programme outlining the content, structure and timetabling of the course. Each individual session should be listed separately with a brief outline of what will take place during that session.

4.7 Learning methods

The provider must detail the range of teaching and learning methods employed on the course and the reasons behind the choice of methods.
The provider must detail the range of assessment methods employed on the course (if any), and the reasons behind the choice of assessment. There should be clear linkages between the course learning outcomes and any assessment undertaken.

The provider must detail all equipment and resources that are used during the course. This will include learning materials, audio-visual resources, clinical equipment, cadavers and simulators. Any pre or post-course learning materials should be provided to the RCOphth as part of the documentation submission.

4.8 Quality assurance and enhancement

The provider must detail what process will be used to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning provided on the course. This should include the frequency of any review and details of who will be involved.
The provider must detail any planned future changes or improvements to the course.

4.9 Previous attendee feedback

In the case of existing courses, the provider must demonstrate that the course has been received positively by previous course attendees. The provider must supply either individual or cumulated attendee evaluations from at least the two previous course sittings. The feedback should detail whether the learning outcomes for the course had been achieved.

Where previous course feedback highlights areas of dissatisfaction, details of any remedial action should be included within the application.

4.10 Additional information

Full details of any commercial sponsorship for the course should be provided. This should include the names of all sponsors, details of the support offered (for example financial/ equipment/venue/catering) and any influence that they have had on the course agenda, design or content.

The provider must confirm that the course is financially viable and that any changes to the course will be communicated to the RCOphth.

Once course accreditation has been granted, the provider will be subject to the Conditions of Course Accreditation below.

4.11 Faculty declaration of interest

Providers are required to ask faculty to declare any interest they may have relating to the course, and to make each faculty's declaration available at the course.

5. Benefits

Having a course accredited will demonstrate that it meets the standards as defined by the RCOphth for short courses, and that it offers a high-quality learning experience. Recognition of these factors may assist in attracting course attendees.

Accredited courses will receive the following benefits:

- Review from a panel of leading ophthalmologists
- Use of the College Accreditation logo on publicity materials, course materials and certificates
- Use of the strap line 'Accredited by The Royal College of Ophthalmologists' for a three-year accreditation term (subject to satisfactory monitoring and review)'
- Listing on the RCOphth website
- Applicable courses will be awarded continuing professional development (CPD) points as part of course accreditation (with no extra charge). One CPD point is allowed per hour of educational time, excluding introduction and breaks

Course attendees can expect the following benefits:

- Confirmation from RCOphth that the course provides a high-quality learning experience, is delivered by a qualified faculty, is relevant for its target audience, is free from inappropriate bias, and has evidenced successful delivery (except in the case of a new course)
- Confirmation that feedback will be collected, analysed and acted upon
- A certificate of attendance from the course provider bearing the College Accreditation logo
- Confirmation from the course provider that the course carries CPD points (for applicable courses).

6. Monitoring

It is a requirement that the providers of all accredited courses comply with the RCOphth monitoring processes. The processes are two-fold:

6.1 Course attendee feedback

It is a requirement that course attendees evaluate their educational experiences shortly after the conclusion of the course.

6.2 Course faculty feedback

The course faculty will be required to provide feedback following each course that runs during the accreditation term. The course tutor will provide a summary of the course attendees' and faculty feedback within [4] weeks of the course conclusion and will also be required to provide a report to the RCOphth at the end of each year of the accreditation term. The report should detail how the course has run over the previous 12 months and should critique the learning outcomes; learning materials; teaching and learning methods; facilities and resources; and assessment methods. The report should also detail any planned changes to the course such as changes to the programme, content, learning outcomes, faculty, frequency, location, or duration of the course, as well as any new conflicts of interest or changes in sponsorship. The feedback received will be reviewed by the RCOphth Training Committee. It will also feed into any re-accreditation application at the conclusion of the accreditation term.

The College will charge a monitoring fee at the end of each year of the accreditation to cover the costs of the monitoring activity. Details of the fee can be found in Appendix 2 and on the website.

7. Conditions of course accreditation

Once Course Accreditation has been granted, the provider will be subject to the conditions outlined below.

7.1 Non-transferability of accreditation

Course accreditation from the RCOphth is for the one course applied for and is not transferrable. Where a course is accredited by the College and the course is then franchised, or the provider decides to run the course at an additional venue, the franchisee or additional centre cannot state that the course has been accredited by the RCOphth. They must individually apply for course accreditation.

7.2 Statements regarding accreditation

Once providers have received confirmation that their course has been accredited and full payment has been received, the following statement can be made: 'Accredited by The Royal College of Ophthalmologists'. Details of all accredited courses will be listed on the RCOphth website.

7.3 Use of College Accreditation logo

Consent is given for the duration of accreditation to use the College Accreditation logo on publicity material relating to the course, course materials and certificates for attendees.

The College Accreditation logo may not be used on publicity material other than in association with the statement of accreditation.

Copies of all uses of the College Accreditation logo must be promptly submitted to the College. No other use of the College Accreditation logo is permitted.

On the grant of accreditation, the course provider will be sent the College Accreditation logo artwork and regulations for its use.

The words 'The Royal College of Ophthalmologists' and the RCOphth logo are registered trademarks and may not be used without written consent from the RCOphth.

7.4 Certificates

Accredited courses will be able to provide certificates to course attendees following the conclusion of the course, which bear the College Accreditation logo. These certificates should be 'certificates of attendance' unless stated otherwise by the RCOphth.

7.5 Eligibility

Course accreditation is only applicable to short courses that run for five days or less, unless otherwise stipulated by the RCOphth.

Only courses that meet RCOphth standards will be accredited.

7.6 Validity

Course accreditation will be valid for a specific course for three years unless stated otherwise by the RCOphth.

The RCOphth may amend the duration of accreditation if annual monitoring and review are considered unsatisfactory.

Once the course accreditation term has expired, the provider will be required to apply for re-accreditation. If course accreditation is not renewed, the course provider must cease to advertise or publicise any association with the RCOphth.

7.7 Quality assurance

Providers of accredited courses will be required to comply with the RCOphth's monitoring processes. All course attendees and faculty will be required to complete a course feedback form, and the course tutor will be required to submit a summary of the feedback to the RCOphth after each course. The course provider will also be required to provide an annual progress report. Details and timescales of any further paperwork required will be communicated to the course provider once the accreditation process has been completed.

The RCOphth reserves the right to arrange a panel visit to review any accredited course in delivery.

7.8 Copyright

Any materials distributed to attendees must comply with legal requirements and state that copyright has been obtained, where necessary. It is illegal to use the published work of others by photocopying from books, journals, periodicals and the internet without permission. Further information can be obtained from: The Copyright Licensing Agency, 35 Ballards Lane, London N3 1XW Tel: 020 7400 3171 Email: cs@cla.co.uk www.cla.co.uk.

A useful overview of copyright, including frequently asked questions and any changes in the law, can be obtained from: www.ipo.gov.uk/copy/.

It is the responsibility of providers to check that copyright is obtained, and any breach of this requirement may result in the RCOphth at its discretion withdrawing accreditation.

7.9 Equality legislation

All courses must comply with the relevant equality legislation.

7.10 Health and safety

All venues must comply with the relevant health and safety legislation.

7.11 Loss of accreditation

The College must be informed if any significant changes are made to the course programme, educational content, frequency or duration of the course, number or location of centres, or to those delivering the course.

The RCOphth reserves the right to withdraw accreditation at any time, for any reason, including the following:

i. any of the Conditions of Course Accreditation are breached
ii. significant changes are made to the course structure, educational content, teaching outcomes, delivery or faculty
iii. conflicts of interest on the part of the provider or faculty have arisen or have not been reported by the course provider
iv. misuse of any branding, wording, College Accreditation logo or logo of the RCOphth

In the event of withdrawal of accreditation, no refund of fees will be provided. If accreditation is withdrawn, the provider must not thereafter advertise or publicise any association with the RCOphth.

7.12 Changes to the Conditions of Course Accreditation

The RCOphth reserves the right to change the Conditions of Course Accreditation from time to time as it sees fit. An application made before a change will remain governed by the Cconditions applicable at the time it was made. All fees are subject to change without notice.

8. Course Fees

a. Online courses

£1,000 + VAT Application Fee payable on submission of the application form
£1,000 + VAT Monitoring Fee payable annually

b. Face to face courses

£2,000 + VAT Application Fee payable on submission of the application/prior to panel review
Expenses of a panel visit to review the course in delivery is separate to the Application fee and must be met by the course organiser directly
£1,000 + VAT Monitoring Fee payable annually

Payment of the fee is required prior to panel review. In the event that an application is not accepted, an administration fee will be retained and the remaining balance refunded.

Annual Monitoring Fee will be payable, plus the expenses of a panel visit, if deemed necessary at any time. For Monitoring Fees and panel visit expenses, invoices will be issued, payable within 30 days.

Fees are subject to change without notice.

The schedule of Fees from time to time is an integral part of the Conditions of Course Accreditation.

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9. Appendix

Appendix 1 Process: step by step

Step 1
Course organiser completes the application form and sends to the RCOphth at accreditation@rcophth.ac.uk The fee must be paid in advance of the panel review. If an application is not accepted, an administration fee will be deducted and the remaining balance refunded.

Step 2
Each application will first be reviewed by the RCOphth Education, Training and Events Department and then by a panel from the Skills and Simulation Sub-committee

4 – 8 weeks to allow for any follow information required

Step 3
If the course is deemed eligible, a panel visit will be arranged to review the course in delivery. Payment of any panel visitation will be on top of the fixed accreditation fee. The College will not be liable for the cost of the visit.

8 weeks

Step 4
The panel would usually consist of one consultant ophthalmologist and one staff member.

Step 5
A report of the visit will then be discussed by the Skills and Simulation Sub-committee/Training Committee and if supported, the Course will be recommended for Accreditation.

Within 4 weeks following visit