



Optical Registration Board Optometrist

Standards of Proficiency for the
assessment of professional qualifications
obtained outside of ROI

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Supporting CORU documentation

The following documents must be read in conjunction with each other by applicants for recognition of professional qualifications:

- The application form for recognition of international qualifications
- Guidance notes for recognition of international qualifications
- Standards of proficiency

Background

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended) (HSCP Act, 2005) provides for the establishment of an Optical Registration Board, whose functions include establishing and maintaining a Register. Registration will allow a person to use the protected title.

The object of the Optical Registration Board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among Optometrist registrants (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)).

Statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of optometrist services and will ensure that members of the public are guided, protected and informed, so that they can be confident that Optometrists providing services are properly regulated and qualified for the job.

This system of statutory regulation is designed to ensure professional conduct and the maintenance of high standards of professional education and training among Optometrists, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector or are self-employed.

All applicants who hold professional qualifications gained outside the Republic of Ireland (ROI) must first have their qualification recognised by the Optical Registration Board before an application for registration can be made.

Standards of proficiency and Irish approved qualifications

One of the functions of a Registration Board is to set the standards of proficiency for the approval of education and training programmes for entry to its register. The standards of proficiency are the standards required of graduates from an approved programme for entry to the register. The standards are the knowledge, skills, competencies and professional attributes for the safe practise of the profession.

A Registration Board set standards for the delivery of education and training in Ireland for the profession it regulates. It approves and monitor programmes against these standards. Graduates from an approved programme meet the standards of proficiency for the register and are eligible to apply for registration.

Recognition of professional qualifications obtained outside Republic of Ireland

If you were awarded your qualification outside the (ROI) and are interested in working here you must firstly apply to the Optical Registration Board to have your qualification recognised. **You cannot apply for registration until your qualification is recognised.**

The Optical Registration Board is designated as the Competent Authority under European Union (EU) legislation - Directive 2005/36/EC for the purposes of recognition of professional qualifications for applicants from the European Economic Area (EEA).

A Competent Authority under EU legislation is any authority or body e.g. regulatory body or professional body empowered by the State to validate professional qualifications. The Registration Board may also recognise professional qualifications from outside the EEA.

For further detailed information about Directive 2005/36/EC log on to the European Commission website: www.ec.europa.eu. Please also read the CORU Guidance notes regarding application for recognition of international qualifications.

Standards of proficiency

This section sets out the standards of proficiency required of graduates from an Irish approved programme.

The standards of proficiency are also used to assess professional qualifications obtained outside ROI.

All applications for recognition of professional qualification (s) obtained outside of the ROI will be assessed against these standards of proficiency. Applicants must demonstrate to the Registration Board that their professional qualification(s) including any additional education and training and / or work experience gained in the profession meets the minimum standards of proficiency required. Evidence must be provided as part of the recognition application process.

The standards of proficiency explain the key obligations for a graduate in the profession and are accompanied by specific indicators, which provide more detail. The standards are highlighted in bold i.e. 2.1 with the specific indicators listed below them i.e. a, b, c...

These standards of proficiency are the intended learning outcomes which a professional qualification must meet. A diverse range of potential programmes and programme learning outcomes will be compatible with these standards.

The standards of proficiency are grouped under six domains:

- Domain 1 Professional autonomy and accountability
- Domain 2 Interpersonal and professional relationships
- Domain 3 Effective communication
- Domain 4 Personal and professional development
- Domain 5 Provision of quality services
- Domain 6 Knowledge, understanding and skills

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

- 1. Practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession to the highest standard**
 - a) Act in the best interest of patients at all times and within the boundaries of their profession.
 - b) Respect and, so far as possible, uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every patient as they participate in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process
 - c) Provide and articulate professional and ethical practice.
 - d) Practise in accordance with current legislation applicable to their profession. Maintain appropriate professional indemnity insurance
 - e) Contribute to the development of effective, ethical and equitable policy and practice, regarding issues addressed by their profession.
 - f) Understand the implications of duty of care for patients and professionals.
 - g) Understand the principles of professional regulation and the provisions of the *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics* for the profession issued by the Optical Registration Board.
 - h) Manage themselves, their practice and that of others in accordance with the Optical Registration Board's *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*.
 - i) Be fully cognisant of the agreements with the relevant local and national government bodies for the provision of eye exams and dispensing services.

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

2. Practise in a non-discriminatory way

- a) Acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups.
- b) Promote equality and respect, without prejudice, and practise in a culturally competent, non-discriminatory and inclusive manner.
- c) Assist in the promotion and implementation of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of patients, staff and volunteers with particular reference to the grounds outlined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004.

3. Understand the importance of and be able to maintain confidentiality

- a) Respect the confidentiality of patients and use information only for the purpose for which it was given.
- b) Understand the legal and ethical responsibility of maintaining patient confidentiality.
- c) Understand confidentiality within a team setting.
- d) Understand the limits of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse.
- e) Understand data protection, freedom of information, child protection and other relevant legislation as it applies to the profession of optometry.
- f) Understand the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing.

4. Understand the importance of and be able to obtain informed consent

- a) Demonstrate competence in gaining informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions.
- b) Understand legal and ethical issues associated with informed consent in individuals with lack of capacity and/or poor communication and all patients.
- c) Maintain accurate records relating to consent.
- d) Respect the rights of patients and their relatives/carers.

Domain 1: Professional autonomy and accountability

Graduates will:

- 5. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care/service**
 - a) Recognise personal responsibility for one's actions and be able to justify reasons for professional decisions made.
 - b) Understand the need to maintain the highest standards of personal/professional conduct.

- 6. Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**
 - a) Know the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice or refer to another professional.
 - b) Recognise the need for consultation and/or supervision.
 - c) Be able to assess a situation, determine the nature and severity of the problem and call upon the required knowledge and experience to deal with the situation.
 - d) Be able to initiate appropriate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative keeping the interests and care of the patient as their first concern at all times.
 - e) Recognise that they are personally responsible for their actions and must be able to justify their decisions.

- 7. Recognise the need for effective self-management of workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly**
 - a) Understand the demands that are placed on the professional practitioner in a given field and the skills required to practise effectively with the workload and available resources.

- 8. Understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise**
 - a) Understand the need to practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice.
 - b) Understand the importance of maintaining their physical and mental health.
 - c) Understand the importance of keeping skills and knowledge (including product knowledge and changes in technology) up to date over a lifetime of practice in relation to current and possible future developments in the profession.

Domain 2: Interpersonal and professional relationships

Graduates will:

- 1. Work, in partnership, with patients and their relatives/carers, and other professionals**
 - a) Demonstrate capacity to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team.
 - b) Demonstrate capacity to engage patients and carers in assessment and treatment and/or management to meet their needs and goals.
 - c) Recognise and understand the concepts of power and authority in relationships with patients.
 - d) Be able to make appropriate referrals.
 - e) Work with colleagues in a way that best serves the interests/needs of the patient.

- 2. Contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of teams (multi-disciplinary, inter-professional, multi-service or inter-agency)**
 - a) Demonstrate professional collaboration, consultation and decision making in multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-service and inter-agency teams.
 - b) Demonstrate an understanding that relationships with professional colleagues can impact on service delivery and therefore should be based on mutual respect and trust.
 - c) Demonstrate ability to maintain standards of care service in situations of personal incompatibility.

Domain 3: Effective communication

Graduates will:

- 1. Demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, listening, giving advice, instruction and professional opinion**
 - a) Be aware of the different forms and characteristics of communication. Be aware of how cultural differences affect communication styles.
 - b) Understand how communication and cultural differences affect interaction with patients and their relatives/carers. Understand how styles and strategies of communications should be modified to address and take account of factors such as the nine grounds outlined in the relevant Employment Equality legislation.
 - c) Demonstrate the ability to produce clear, concise and objective written communication and reports.
 - d) Be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication, including active listening skills with patients and others.
 - e) Understand the need to provide patients (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary in an appropriate format to enable them to make informed decisions.
 - f) Understand the need to use an appropriately qualified interpreter to assist patients/carers/clients/service users where necessary.
 - g) Understand the importance of and demonstrate effective communication with other colleagues (intra- and inter-disciplinary communication).
 - h) Demonstrate an awareness of the benefits, limitations and risks (e.g. with regard patient confidentiality) of electronic communication.

- 2. Understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the patient**
 - a) Recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to facilitate the active participation of patients.
 - b) Show effectiveness when communicating with patients and an ability to manage conflict and resistance.
 - c) Demonstrate competence in presenting professional judgements and information in a variety of contexts. Provide information to the patient in a way that they can understand and always make them aware of the options available to them.

Domain 4: Personal and professional development

Graduates will:

1. Understand the role of reflective practice in relation to personal and professional development

- a) Understand the importance of self-awareness and self-reflection.
- b) Be able to reflect critically on personal practice and demonstrate changes in practice accordingly.
- c) Be aware of the need to ensure that personal life experiences and personal value systems do not impact inappropriately on one's decision making or actions.
- d) Understand the role, purpose and function of supervision
- e) Actively avail of opportunities for feedback, mentoring and support from colleagues in order to continuously improve personal practice.
- f) Take responsibility for personal and professional development.
- g) Develop and critically review a personal development plan which takes account of personal and professional needs.
- h) Identify and avail of opportunities to promote professional development of self, colleagues and teams and the broader development of disciplines.
- i) Understand the role of performance management as part of on-going professional development and effective service delivery.
- j) Understand the role of continuing professional development (CPD) and demonstrate commitment to life-long learning.
- k) Understand the necessity to maintain an accurate record and portfolio of all CPD activity.
- l) Recognise the need to contribute to policy and development of the profession.
- m) Recognise the contribution and value of research in developing evidence-informed practice.

Domain 5: Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

1. Be able to assess patients' needs

- a) Understand the importance of correct patient identification.
- b) Be able to gather appropriate information.
- c) Undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment.
- d) Identify the clinical scenarios where further investigation is required, and undertake such investigation(s) and/or make referrals to other professionals as appropriate.
- e) Analyse and critically evaluate the assessment data and other information collected.
- f) Provide information on assessment purpose and procedures, and on assessment findings to patients and relevant others using appropriate, non-technical language.

2. Formulate and deliver plans and strategies to meet identified needs of patients

- a) Develop and implement appropriate treatment/management plans, according to best available evidence, agreed national and/or local guidelines, protocols and pathways, where available.
- b) Identify needs and resources required to implement effective treatment/management plans.
- c) Act as a patient advocate when necessary to ensure best patient care.

3. Use research, reasoning and problem solving skills to determine and guide appropriate action

- a) Recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice.
- b) Engage in evidence based/informed practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit/review procedures.
- c) Be aware of a range of research and evaluative methodologies, including evidence based/informed research, and apply this knowledge as appropriate.
- d) Demonstrate sound clinical/professional decision-making, which can be justified even when made on the basis of limited information.
- e) Demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving.

Domain 5: Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

- 4. Draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements**
 - a) Understand the need to adjust/adapt their practice as needed to take account of new developments in the practice of the profession of optometry.
 - b) Demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to the profession of optometry.

- 5. Formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales**
 - a) Understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors.

- 6. Conduct appropriate assessment/diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and skilfully**
 - a) Understand the need to maintain the safety of patients and those involved in their care.
 - b) Empower patients to manage their well-being and recognise the need to provide instruction and advice to the patient/client/user on self-treatment, where appropriate.

- 7. Implement best practice in record management**
 - a) Use and maintain efficient and effective information management systems.
 - b) Keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other information, whether it be written or electronic, in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines.
 - c) Understand the need to use accepted terminology and abbreviations in making records.

- 8. Monitor and review the on-going effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly**

- a) Gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that help to evaluate the responses of patients to their interventions.
- b) Evaluate intervention plans on an on-going basis using tools and recognised performance/outcome measures. Revise the plans as necessary, and where appropriate, in conjunction with the patients.
- c) Recognise the need to monitor and evaluate the quality of practice and the value of contributing to the generation of data for quality assurance and improvement of programmes.
- d) Recognise important factors and risk management measures, learn from adverse events and be able to disseminate learning.
- e) Make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions/techniques/courses of action and record decisions and reasoning.

Domain 5: Provision of quality services

Graduates will:

9. Be able to evaluate, audit, and review practice

- a) Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement.
- b) Be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including the use of appropriate outcome measures.
- c) Monitor and evaluate performance by conducting regular audits and reviews in accordance with national guidelines/best practice and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews.
- d) Participate in quality assurance/enhancement programmes and initiatives where appropriate.
- e) Understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection.
- f) Recognise the value to patient care of case review discussions with optometry colleagues and with professionals from other disciplines.

Domain 6: Knowledge, understanding and skills

Graduates will:

- 1. Know and understand the key concepts of the bodies of knowledge which are relevant to the profession**
 - a) Have knowledge of the legal and ethical framework within which optometry operates.
 - b) Demonstrate an appropriate understanding of relevant physical and biological sciences, human development, social sciences and other related sciences, together with knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction, appropriate to the profession of optometry.
 - c) Graduates will have sufficient practical experience of examining, treating and/or managing patients with a variety of visual conditions and needs, to the appropriate level. The range and depth of practical experience should reflect the profile of patients likely to be encountered in optometric practice.
 - d) Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-based/-informed practice.
 - e) Have knowledge of the underlying concepts of health delivery systems, an understanding of public health issues and of the role that optometrists play in safeguarding public health.
 - f) Have knowledge of the roles of other professions in health and social care.
 - g) Demonstrate professional collaboration, consultation and decision making in multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-service and inter-agency teams.
 - h) Demonstrate an understanding of the theory, concepts and methods pertaining to practice within the profession of optometry.
 - i) Understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment/diagnosis and intervention.
 - j) Have a broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and applied principles of the anatomical, physiological and perceptual aspects of the visual system.
 - k) Have a detailed knowledge and understanding of structural and functional anomalies of the visual system together with knowledge of their investigation and of their correction and/or management.
 - l) Demonstrate an understanding of the normal development of the human visual system and of the disruptive effects on development of congenital and infantile abnormalities.
 - m) Be competent in the diagnosis and management of visual conditions such as ametropia, heterophoria, heterotropia and other anomalies of binocular vision.

- n) Demonstrate an understanding of ocular and systemic disease to a level which is appropriate to enable him/her to function as effective primary and secondary care optometric practitioners.
- o) Demonstrate an ability to distinguish morbid ocular and visual conditions from normal variations, and make appropriate management decisions based upon this clinical distinction.
- p) Have an understanding of common systemic diseases which may have ocular manifestations, be familiar with common systemic medications, and be capable of recognising and reporting ocular adverse reactions that may be induced by medical management of common systemic diseases.
- q) Have an understanding of the optical principles of optical appliances (including, but not limited to, spectacle lenses, low vision aids, contact lenses) and of widely used ophthalmic instruments.
- r) Have detailed knowledge and understanding of the safe and appropriate use of a wide range of optical appliances and the ability to safely and appropriately dispense these to patients.
- s) Have an understanding of legislation relating to the use and supply of ophthalmic drugs, and detailed knowledge and understanding of the pharmacological principles underlying the use of drugs that facilitate ocular examination and the diagnosis and treatment of ocular disease.
- t) Have detailed knowledge and understanding of anterior segment physiology and pathology, and an ability to recognise and appropriately manage changes associated with contact lens wear.
- u) Have knowledge and understanding of occupational visual standards so as to be able to provide appropriate advice to patients.
- v) Demonstrate an ability to provide appropriate advice to patients on occupational, sporting and protective ophthalmic appliances, and to dispense the appropriate appliance to the required standards.
- w) Have an understanding of surgical and other methods for the correction of refractive error which involve altering the dimensions of the eye.

2. Have knowledge and understanding of the skills and elements required to maintain patient, self and staff safety

- a) Understand systems and impact of complexity on patient care.
- b) Understand and be able to manage risk.
- c) Be able to identify, prevent and manage adverse incidents and near misses and learn from errors.
- d) Understand the importance of communication with patients and staff so as to ensure patient safety.

- e) Be aware of applicable legislation e.g. health and safety legislation, employment legislation, professional indemnity insurance and relevant national and, if applicable, local guidelines.
- f) Establish safe environments for practice, which minimises risks to patients, those treating them and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control.
- g) Work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner in accordance with health and safety legislation.
- h) Undertake appropriate health and safety training.

Glossary of Terms

Act	The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005(as amended).
Appeal	An application for reconsideration of a decision regarding approval of a programme.
Approval	The status granted to a programme that meets the criteria set by the registration board for approval of education and training programmes.
Approval process	The process that leads to a decision as to whether a programme meets the criteria set for approval of education and training programmes.
Assessment Team	The assessment team, selected from the Panel of Assessors, to carry out the approval process for an education and training programme.
Award	An award which is conferred or granted by an awarding body and which records that a learner has acquired a standard of knowledge, skill or competence.
Biennial monitoring	A biennial process where a provider confirms that the approved programme continues to meet the criteria for approval.
Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics	This is a statement of the standards which registrants sign up to and agree to abide by in order to remain on the register.
Council	The Health and Social Care Professionals Council, established under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (as amended).
Criterion	A principle or standard that an education and training programme is judged by.

Curriculum	A structured plan to provide specific learning to support students' knowledge, skills, behaviours and associated learning experiences. The learning plan is generally organised as a sequence of modules. The curriculum includes the syllabus, teaching guides, an assessment plan and necessary learning resources.
Designated profession	A health or social care profession that is designated under Section 4(1) or Section 4(2) of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.
Education Provider (Provider)	The institution that provides, organises and delivers an education and training programme.
Framework	The broad structure within which Registration Boards will operate in relation to the approval and monitoring of education and training programmes.
Indicators	The means by which a provider shows how a programme satisfies the criteria for approval.
Mapping document	Template document to be completed by education provider.
Major change	A change to a programme of study that significantly alters the way the programme meets the criteria for approval of education and training programmes and therefore how the students will attain the standards of proficiency. Not all changes to a programme are major changes.
Monitoring	The process of ensuring the continuing suitability of approved education and training programmes.
National Framework of Qualifications	The single, nationally and internationally accepted entity, through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way and which defines the relationship between all education and training awards.

Panel of Assessors	A panel appointed by a Registration Board comprising academics, practitioners, employers and public interest representatives.
Patient(s)	Anyone availing of the professional services of a registered optometrist.
Practice education team	Persons who are responsible for a student's education during the period of clinical or practical placement. This includes the practice educator on site in the placement providers.
Practice placement	A period of clinical or practical experience that forms part of an approved programme.
Practice placement teacher/educator	A person who is responsible for a student's education during the period of clinical or practical placement.
Practice placement provider	The organisation that provides a period of clinical or practical experience for a student.
Profession specific proficiencies	Proficiencies added by a Registration Board related to a named profession.
Programme	The academic teaching, practice placements, assessment, qualification and other services provided by the education provider, which together forms the programme for approval purposes.
Quality assurance procedures	Formal procedures that are in place in an institution for the purpose of further improving and maintaining the quality of education and training provided by the institution.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Refers to recognition of learning that has taken place prior to entering a programme. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal or informal routes.

Register

A register established and maintained under Section 36 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.

Registrant

In relation to a designated profession this means an individual whose name is currently on the Register of members for that profession.

Registration Board

A board established under Section 26 of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005.

Self-study

The process whereby a provider of a programme examines and documents to a Registration Board how that programme meets the criteria for approval of programmes.

Standards of Proficiency

These are the standards required of graduate for the safe and effective practice of the professions regulated by the Council. They are the minimum standards necessary to protect the public.

Supervision

Supervision of a student requires a supervisor to be on the same premises as the student they are supervising, and in a position to intervene at any time (*Definition from General Optical Council*)