



The ROYAL COLLEGE of
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS

OST Curriculum

Patient Safety and Quality Improvement syllabus

Implementation date: **August 2024**

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists is a registered charity in England and Wales (299872) and in Scotland (SC045652)

This document outlines the descriptors for this domain and accompanies the Curriculum 2024 document. Version numbers will be changed after each update, and content changes noted in the table below.

Version number	Date issued	Summary of changes
1.0	1 August 2024	
1.1	8 September 2025	Removal of cataract audit requirements from Level 2 as already included in the Cataract Surgery syllabus

Level 1	
Learning Outcome	Descriptors
<i>An ophthalmologist achieving this level will:</i>	
Know the principles, recognise the contribution to improved practice, and take part in clinical governance, audit and quality improvement activities.	▪ Define clinical governance, quality improvement, audit, and service evaluation. ▪ Understand how to respond to situations where clinical governance procedures identify a quality below the expected standard. ▪ Engage with Incident Reporting systems at a local level, including procedures for Serious Untoward Incidents (SUIs) and Never Events. ▪ Assist with running audits, including presenting the findings and planning change. ▪ Recognise when “whistle-blowing” might be necessary, and the appropriate methods of escalating such concerns.
Identify appropriate information from a variety of data sources.	▪ Conduct literature searches and reviews. ▪ Engage with stakeholders, including patients, doctors, and managers. ▪ Review the resources available for patients with common eye conditions and direct patients to reliable sources of information, on- and off-line. ▪ Understand the factors that can influence information, including (but not limited to) funding sources, political alignment, and author intent or interest.

Level 2	
Learning Outcome	Descriptors
<i>An ophthalmologist achieving this level will, in addition:</i>	
Apply clear and appropriate clinical reasoning to make safe decisions.	▪ Use a logical thought process in own clinical reasoning, to ensure safe decisions, and be able to justify own conclusions.
Practise in line with latest evidence.	▪ Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of Good Medical Practice. ▪ Continually review medical and grey literature adopting changes to guidelines and evaluating the need to adopt emerging treatments and techniques with an appropriate evidence base.
Maintain appropriate audits of practice.	▪ Maintain a continuous audit of cataract surgery, using the RCOphth online electronic logbook. ▪ Review and reflect on all cases where complications occur.

	Consider other areas of practice with defined standards, both surgical and non-surgical, and ensure personal audits are conducted.
Apply quality improvement methods.	- Understand the different methods of quality improvement and when they are most effectively employed. - Select an appropriate quality improvement technique for all projects undertaken, and justify the selection.

Level 3

Learning Outcome	Descriptors
<i>An ophthalmologist achieving this level will, in addition:</i>	
Design and implement quality improvement programmes to improve clinical effectiveness, patient safety and patient experience.	- Review services to improve patient experience. - Understand the basic principles of health commissioning, funding and management at a departmental, hospital, community and national level.
Analyse and critique published research.	- Engage in Journal Club activities, presenting a mixture of emerging and historical landmark papers. - Develop critical appraisal techniques, following a logical process, particularly evaluating the effects of funding sources on evidence presented.

Level 4

Learning Outcome	Descriptors
<i>An ophthalmologist achieving this level will, in addition:</i>	
Share improved practice with others and be able to defend changes made.	- Present findings from quality improvement projects at appropriate departmental, regional, national or international level. - Invite discussion around quality improvement techniques and data analysis, accepting improvement or correction where appropriate. - Co-develop/refine local guidelines and protocols, e.g. standard operating procedures (SOPs), patient pathways.
Critically evaluate own skills in quality improvement.	- Use the framework of Good Medical Practice to reflect on own practice and prepare for appraisal. - Consider how own skills may be developed to deliver more effective quality improvement projects.

Promote clinical governance and quality improvement in the wider organisation / NHS.

- Understand the reasons for appraisal and revalidation.
- Appraise other staff and provide constructive feedback.
- Support and develop other individuals, ensuring a team approach.
- Encourage a team approach to patient safety, acting as a patient advocate.
- Engage in incident and good practice reporting across the organisation, understanding the methods for creating change.