



Consultation: Level 6 Ophthalmic Dispensing Apprenticeship Standard

This survey invites you to comment on ST0774 Level 6 Dispensing Optician Standard that has been developed by the relevant Trailblazer group.

1. Do you think that the occupational profile is clearly written and can be understood by someone not familiar with the occupation? * Required

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Partially

2. What could be done to improve the description of the occupation in the occupational profile?

The description has all the main elements but might benefit from some re-ordering. For example, it states toward the top that dispensing opticians are a regulated profession, and lower down it also states that DOs must comply with healthcare regulation etc. Similarly, at the top it talks about where DOs can be found (in practices, domiciliary and lens manufacturers), but lower down talks about them operating in practices, external facilities, or patients' homes. It might be easier to follow if these elements are brought together into specific sections.

The sentence 'many dispensing opticians fit and supply contact lenses' should be qualified with 'with an additional qualification for this purpose' unless the plan is for the apprenticeship to build CLO into the core training in which case it may be useful to state this in the submission.

3. Do you agree that the duties set out the typical activities of the occupation? *

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ Partially

4. What could be done to improve the duties to better reflect the typical activities of this occupation?

While the duties do reflect the typical activities, some of the duties described are very wide and might benefit from tailoring to the specific professional (especially where there may be overlap with other professionals within the practice;) it might suffice to state 'within the scope of practice' (eg Duty 17 ophthalmic drugs for diagnosis/treatment, Duty 19 analysing and interpreting diagnostic test results).

5. Do you think the knowledge, skills and behaviours set out in the Standard fully cover what is needed to undertake the occupation competently at the end of the apprenticeship? *

- ☒ Yes

- ☐ No
☐ Partially

6. What could be done to improve the knowledge, skills and behaviours to ensure that they fully cover what is needed to undertake the occupation competently at the end of the apprenticeship?

7. Do you think the proposed duration of the standard is appropriate to the level of knowledge, skills and behaviours that need to be acquired? *

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

8. If an external qualification is mandated, do you think it adds breadth to the occupation? ("This apprenticeship has a mandated qualification of Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing due to regulatory requirements.") *

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ N/A

9. If yes or no, please explain

The mandated external qualification will add value to and confidence in the qualification, thereby adding breadth to and enriching the profession.

10. Do you think completion of apprenticeship standard will enable professional registration at a particular level? *

- ☒ Yes
☐ No
☐ N/A

11. If yes – please provide details.

Yes, that must be the purpose of the qualification. The apprentice must be able to qualify and register as a dispensing optician (which is a protected title). There are other qualifications they could pursue otherwise.

12. Please provide any other comments, if you would like to do so.

IfATE (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) make a good point under the resubmission section about the overlap in some of the basics between optometry and dispensing optics. It might therefore be beneficial to make it clearer in this submission which areas are common to both and where the professions difference lies (eg DOs focus on interpreting prescriptions written by optometrists and doctors who have tested sight, dispensing spectacles and prescribing visual aids and first-line anterior eye issues) - which links to our answer to question 4. Similar distinctions can be drawn for the planned Level 7 Optometrist Apprenticeship standard submission. As this will take much longer to develop, it should not delay progress with this qualification for DOs which is much needed.

There has been some confusion about the 'level of occupation' for this apprenticeship – the document states it is Level 6, but the comment under the resubmission sections suggests it might be a level 5. Also, consultation question 8 states that this will result in a Level 6 Diploma, while the ABDO (Association of British Dispensing Opticians) guidance refers to a degree apprenticeship. Therefore, to avoid confusion, it may be useful to ensure all documentation on this apprenticeship proposal refers to a Level 6 Diploma Apprenticeship.