

Stage 1 Training Plan

Your guide to help you through the first stage of your pre-registration year

The first stage of pre-registration period can be a daunting one. But with a little help, you can develop your clinical skills and the knowledge you learned at university and start making the transition into a successful fully-qualified optometrist. Here are some tips to help you through.

Get used to your practice

Every practice comes with its own filing system, products and resources. Try to familiarise self with the products that your workplace uses, including frames, lenses, contact lenses, solutions. Practise verifying spectacles and get used to the tolerance ranges.

Be prepared

Make sure you are prepared with informational pamphlets to provide patients in case of those with communication barriers, also information sheets on any medicinal drops you will be administering such as mydriatics, cycloplegics, topical anaesthetics. Get a copy of the British National Formulary – a pharmaceutical reference book>. Also try explaining common ocular pathologies to a friend or colleague.

Keep a reference chart

Draw up a quick reference chart for yourself outlining common ocular pathology, including any extra tests that must be carried out, signs and symptoms to look for, what management is required. This will be helpful when you see your first patient with each of the pathologies, so you're not caught off guard.

Learn about referral pathways in your practice

Find out if what the referral procedure is in your practice and all the contacts that you'll need to be able to refer a patient. Are any local shared care schemes in place for specific conditions such as cataract or wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

Swot up on legislation and industry news

Read up on legislation for optometrists, like the opticians act and NHS regulations. Subscribe to our newsletters and stay up to date with sector news with Optometry Today.

Stay on track of patient numbers

Keep a close eye on patient encounter numbers and calculate how many patients you need to see each week to ensure you're meeting your targets.

See a variety of patient types

If your practice doesn't see particular patient types, arrange to see them elsewhere, or ask friends and family to help you find these patients. It's also helpful to find out which competencies require patient records and make sure you do not miss an opportunity to see a patient with one of your

needed criteria (young children, specific pathology, RGP wearers, someone with a colour deficiency or incommittancy).

Request training

Ask your practice's dispensing optician for one-on-one training, also ask to shadow dispensing opticians to see how they explain products to patients.

Attend workshops

There are lots of workshops and events that can help you. Book on to our pre-reg workshops at 100% optical for helpful tips and a chance to catch up with other pre-reg students.