

## Orthoptists

The PLG has considered the following information with specific reference to orthoptists:

- (i) Registration Assessors' questionnaires (one comment received; no suggestions made)
- (ii) Professional bodies' questionnaires (response from British and Irish Orthoptic Society; no changes to profession-specific standards suggested, page 26)

### Decision:

The PLG is invited to conclude that, given the information received, no changes are necessary to the profession-specific standards for orthoptists.

### Expectations of a health professional

#### 1a: Professional autonomy and accountability

Registrant orthoptists must:

##### 1a.1

be able to practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession

- understand what is required of them by the Health Professions Council
- understand the need to respect, and so far as possible uphold, the rights, dignity and autonomy of every patient, client and user including their role in the **preventative** diagnostic and therapeutic process

1a.2 be able to practise in a non-discriminatory manner

1a.3 be able to maintain confidentiality and obtain informed consent

1a.4 be able to exercise a professional duty of care

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**1a.5: be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement**

- 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 problem
- be able to initiate resolution of problems and be able to exercise personal initiative
- **know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional**
- **recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions**

1a.6 recognise the need for effective self-management of workload **and resources** and be able to practise accordingly

1a.7 understand the obligation to maintain fitness to practise

- understand the importance of caring for themselves, including maintaining their health

1a.8 understand the need for career-long self-directed learning

**1b: Professional relationships**

Registrant orthoptists must:

1b.1 know the professional and personal scope of their practice and be able to make referrals

*- be able to diagnose a range of ocular defects and instigate referrals where appropriate*

1b.2 be able to work, where appropriate, in partnership with other professionals, support staff, patients, clients and users, and their relatives and carers

- understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team  
- understand the need to engage patients, clients, users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, treatments and interventions to meet their needs and goals

*- recognise the need to participate effectively in the planning, implementation and evaluation of multi-professional approaches to health care delivery by liaising with ophthalmologists, optometrists, and other health care professionals*

1b.3 be able to contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

1b.4 be able to demonstrate effective and appropriate skills in communicating information, advice, instruction and professional opinion to colleagues, patients, clients, users, their relatives and carers

- be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5
- understand how communication skills affect the assessment of patients, clients and users, and how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of factors such as age, physical and learning disability
- be able to select, move between and use appropriate forms of verbal and non-verbal communication with patients, clients, users and others
- be aware of the characteristics and consequences of non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by culture, age, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
- understand the need to provide patients, clients and users (or people acting on their behalf) with the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions
- understand the need to use an appropriate interpreter to assist patients whose first language is not English, wherever possible [not included in the dietitian standards]
- recognise that relationships with patients, clients and users should be based on mutual respect and trust, and be able to maintain high standards of care even in situations of personal incompatibility

1b.5 understand the need for effective communication throughout the care of the patient, client or user

- recognise the need to use interpersonal skills to encourage the active participation of patients, clients and users
- *recognise the need to modify interpersonal skills for the assessment and management of children*

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## The skills required for the application of practice

### 2a: Identification and assessment of health and social care needs

Registrant orthoptists must:

2a.1 be able to gather appropriate information

2a.2 be able to use appropriate assessment techniques

- be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment, using appropriate techniques and equipment

*- be able to use investigative techniques to identify ocular defects within a specific population to form a diagnosis and devise an appropriate course of action*

*- be able to conduct thorough investigation of ocular motility*

*- be able to diagnose conditions and select appropriate management*

*- understand the principles and techniques used to perform an objective and subjective refraction*

*- understand the principles and techniques used to examine anterior and posterior segment of the eye*

*- understand the principles and techniques used to assess visual function*

2a.3 be able to undertake or arrange clinical **or scientific** investigations as appropriate

2a.4 be able to analyse and evaluate the information collected

*- be able to identify pathological changes and related clinical features of conditions commonly encountered by orthoptists*

## **2b: Formulation and delivery of plans and strategies for meeting health and social care needs**

Registrant orthoptists must:

2b.1 be able to use research, **clinical** reasoning and problem solving skills (and, in the case of clinical scientists, conduct fundamental research)

- recognise the value of research to the systematic evaluation of practice
- be able to conduct evidence-based practice, evaluate practice systematically, and participate in audit procedures
- be aware of methods commonly used in health and social care research
- be able to demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- be able to evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice

2b.2 be able to draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgements

- be able to change their practice as needed to take account of new developments
- be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their profession

*- be aware of the orthoptist's role in the promotion of visual health by others, such as the training of health visitors in the practice of 'visual screening'*

2b.3 be able to formulate specific and appropriate management plans including the setting of timescales

- understand the requirement to adapt practice to meet the needs of different client groups distinguished by, for example, physical, psychological, environmental, cultural or socio-economic factors

*- be able to identify and assess physical, psychological and cultural needs, such as considering the educational as well as visual needs of a school-aged child undergoing occlusion therapy*

2b.4 be able to conduct appropriate diagnostic or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely, skilfully and **effectively**

- understand the need to maintain the safety of both patients, clients and users, and those involved in their care

*- ensure patients, clients and users are positioned (and if necessary immobilised) for safe and effective interventions*

*- be able to use diagnostic and therapeutic procedures to address anomalies of*

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*binocular vision, visual function and ocular motility defects*  
- be able to effect a change in visual stimuli resulting in a clinically defined outcome, which can be recorded and monitored in a manner appropriate to safe orthoptic practice

2b.5 be able to maintain records appropriately

- be able to keep accurate, legible records and recognise the need to handle these records and all other [ ] information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- understand the need to use only accepted terminology (which includes abbreviations) in making [ ] records

## **2c: Critical evaluation of the impact of, or response to, the registrant's actions**

Registrant orthoptists must:

2c.1 be able to monitor and review the ongoing effectiveness of planned activity and modify it accordingly

- be able to gather information, including qualitative and quantitative data, that helps to evaluate the responses of patients, clients and users to their care
- be able to evaluate management plans against treatment milestones using recognised health outcome measures and revise the plans as necessary in conjunction with the patient, client or user
- 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 programmes
- be able to make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify, **inform** or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- understand that outcomes may not always conform to expectations but may still meet the needs of patients, clients or users

**2c.2 be able to audit, reflect on and review practice**

- understand the principles of quality control and quality assurance
- be aware of the role of audit and review in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
- be able to maintain an effective audit trail and work towards continual improvement
- participate in quality assurance programmes, where appropriate
- understand the value of reflection on clinical practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection
- recognise the value of case conferences and other methods of review

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*- understand research undertaken in the field of ocular motility, visual function and binocular disorders and how it could affect practice*

## **Knowledge, understanding and skills**

3a:

Registrant orthoptists must:

3a.1 know the key concepts of the biological, physical, social, psychological and clinical sciences which are relevant to their profession-specific practice

*- understand the structure and function of the human body, relevant to their practice, together with a knowledge of health, disease, disorder and dysfunction  
be aware of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process  
- recognise the role of other professions in health and social care  
- understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention*

*- understand ocular alignment and binocular single vision  
- know the principles of uniocular and binocular perception  
- understand the attaining and maintaining of binocular functions  
- understand the development of the sensory functions of ocular alignment, binocular single vision and uniocular and binocular perception  
- know the role of refractive error and its effect on ocular alignment and visual development  
- understand binocular vision and its disruption  
- understand ocular motility systems and their control  
- know the adaptive mechanisms that occur in order to compensate for strabismus or abnormalities of binocular vision  
- understand human anatomy and physiology, emphasising the dynamic relationships of human structure and function and focusing on the central nervous systems, brain and ocular structures  
- understand human growth and development across the lifespan, as it relates to the practice of orthoptics  
- understand other medical conditions and their association with the eye, including paediatric, endocrine, autoimmune, oncological and neurological disease  
- understand ophthalmic disease and neuro-ophthalmology  
- know the factors which influence individual variations in human ability and development  
- know the detailed anatomy and physiology which enables the development of visual sense, visual performance and visual perception  
- understand neuroanatomy and the subsequent effects of disruption of neural pathways  
- understand the development of anatomical substrates and their relevance to the*

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*development of binocular single vision and visual function*

*- know how psychology and sociology can inform an understanding of health, illness and health care in the context of orthoptics and know how to take this into account in orthoptic practice*

*- be aware of human behaviour and recognise the need for sensitivity to the psychosocial aspects of strabismus*

*- know the principles governing binocular vision, its investigation and the significance of its presence or absence, and be able to apply them to clinical practice*

*- know the principles governing ocular motility and its relevance to patient management, and be able to apply them to clinical practice*

*- know the principles governing visual function and the development of vision, and be able to apply them to clinical practice*

*- recognise the functional and perceptual difficulties that may arise as a result of defective visual function*

*- be able to plan, operate and evaluate appropriate vision screening programmes*

3a.2 know how professional principles are expressed and translated into action through a number of different approaches to practice, and how to select or modify approaches to meet the needs of an individual, groups **or communities**

*- know the role and appropriate selection of pharmacological agents and how they may be utilised in orthoptic practice*

*- understand orthoptic and ophthalmological equipment used during the investigative process*

*- know the tests required to aid in differential diagnosis*

*- know the effects of orthoptic and ophthalmological intervention on visual development*

*- know the means by which refraction and optics can influence vision and binocular vision*

*- know the principles and application of measurement techniques used to assess binocular vision and other ocular conditions*

3a.3 understand the need to establish and maintain a safe practice environment

- be aware of applicable health and safety legislation, and any relevant safety policies and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these

- be able to 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

- be able to select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly

- be able to establish safe environments for clinical practice, which minimise risks to patients, clients and users, those treating them, and others, including the use of hazard control and particularly infection control

- understand and be able to apply appropriate moving and handling techniques

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