Orthoptists
Valid from: 1 September 2023
Standards of proficiency

At the point of registration, orthoptists must be able to:

1. **practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice**
   - identify the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional or service
   - recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources safely and effectively, including managing the emotional burden that comes with working in a pressured environment
   - keep their skills and knowledge up to date and understand the importance of continuing professional development throughout their career

2. **practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**
   - maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct
   - promote and protect the service user’s interests at all times
   - understand the importance of safeguarding by actively looking for signs of abuse, demonstrating understanding of relevant safeguarding processes, and engaging in these processes where necessary
   - understand what is required of them by the Health and Care Professions Council, including but not limited to the Standards of conduct, performance and ethics
   - respect and uphold the rights, dignity, values, and autonomy of service users, including their role in the assessment, diagnostic, treatment and / or therapeutic process
   - recognise that relationships with service users, carers and others should be based on mutual respect and trust, maintaining high standards of care in all circumstances
   - understand the importance of and be able to obtain valid consent, which is voluntary and informed, has due regard to capacity, is proportionate to the circumstances and is appropriately documented
   - understand the importance of capacity in the context of delivering care and treatment
   - understand the scope of a professional duty of care, and exercise that duty
   - understand and apply legislation, policies and guidance relevant to their profession and scope of practice
   - recognise the power imbalance which comes with being a health care professional, and ensure they do not abuse this for personal gain
look after their health and wellbeing, seeking appropriate support where necessary

identify anxiety and stress in themselves and recognise the potential impact on their practice

understand the importance of their own mental and physical health and wellbeing strategies in maintaining fitness to practise

understand how to take appropriate action if their health may affect their ability to practise safely and effectively, including seeking help and support when necessary

develop and adopt clear strategies for physical and mental self-care and self-awareness, to maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness and a safe working environment

practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement

recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions and actions

use their skills, knowledge and experience, and the information available to them, to make informed decisions and / or take action where necessary

make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately

make and receive appropriate referrals, where necessary

exercise personal initiative

demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving

understand the need for active participation in training, supervision and mentoring in supporting high standards of practice, and personal and professional conduct, and the importance of demonstrating this in practice

coordinate a complete service user pathway, where appropriate, and in line with local guidelines

recognise the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice and practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner

respond appropriately to the needs of all different groups and individuals in practice, recognising this can be affected by difference
of any kind including, but not limited to, protected characteristics\(^1\), intersectional experiences and cultural differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2</th>
<th>understand equality legislation and apply it to their practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>recognise the potential impact of their own values, beliefs and personal biases (which may be unconscious) on practice and take personal action to ensure all service users and carers are treated appropriately with respect and dignity</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td>understand the duty to make reasonable adjustments in practice and be able to make and support reasonable adjustments in theirs and others’ practice</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>recognise the characteristics and consequences of barriers to inclusion, including on socially isolated groups</td>
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<td>5.6</td>
<td>actively challenge these barriers, supporting the implementation of change wherever possible</td>
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<td>5.7</td>
<td>recognise that regard to equality, diversity and inclusion needs to be embedded in the application of all HCPC standards, across all areas of practice</td>
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<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th><strong>understand the importance of and maintain confidentiality</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>adhere to the professional duty of confidentiality and understand when disclosure may be required</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>understand the principles of information and data governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health, social care and other relevant information</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>recognise and respond in a timely manner to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users, carers and / or the wider public</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
<td>understand the need to ensure confidentiality is maintained in all situations in which service users rely on additional communication support (such as interpreters or translators)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>recognise that the concepts of confidentiality and informed consent extend to all mediums, including illustrative clinical records such as photography, video and audio recordings and digital platforms</td>
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<th>7</th>
<th><strong>communicate effectively</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>use effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate with service users, carers, colleagues and others</td>
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\(^1\) The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristics as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. Equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland protects age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
communicate in English to the required standard for their profession (equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5)^

understand the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and recognise how these can be affected by difference of any kind including, but not limited to, protected characteristics, intersectional experiences and cultural differences

work with service users and / or their carers to facilitate the service user’s preferred role in decision-making, and provide service users and carers with the information they may need where appropriate

modify their own means of communication to address the individual communication needs and preferences of service users and carers, and remove any barriers to communication where possible

understand the need to support the communication needs of service users and carers, such as through the use of an appropriate interpreter

use information, communication and digital technologies appropriate to their practice

understand the need to provide service users or people acting on their behalf with the information necessary in accessible formats to enable them to make informed decisions

recognise the need to modify interpersonal skills for the assessment and management of children

work appropriately with others

work in partnership with service users, carers, colleagues and others

recognise the principles and practices of other health and care professionals and systems and how they interact with their profession

understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an autonomous practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team

contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

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2 The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests competence in the English language. Applicants who have qualified outside of the UK, whose first language is not English and who are not nationals of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, must provide evidence that they have reached the necessary standard. Please visit our website for more information.

3 The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristics as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. Equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland protects age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
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<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Identify anxiety and stress in service users, carers and colleagues, adapting their practice and providing support where appropriate</td>
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<td>8.6</td>
<td>Understand the qualities, behaviours and benefits of leadership</td>
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<td>8.7</td>
<td>Recognise that leadership is a skill all professionals can demonstrate</td>
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<td>8.8</td>
<td>Identify their own leadership qualities, behaviours and approaches, taking into account the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion</td>
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<td>8.9</td>
<td>Demonstrate leadership behaviours appropriate to their practice</td>
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<td>8.10</td>
<td>Act as a role model for others</td>
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<td>8.11</td>
<td>Promote and engage in the learning of others</td>
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<td>8.12</td>
<td>Understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, and therapeutic interventions to meet their needs and goals</td>
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<td>Recognise the need to participate effectively in the planning, implementation and evaluation of multi-professional approaches to healthcare delivery by liaising with other health or social care professionals</td>
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<td>8.13</td>
<td>Recognise the orthoptist’s role in the promotion of ocular health by other health professionals</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Maintain records appropriately</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
<td>Keep full, clear and accurate records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines</td>
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<td>9.2</td>
<td>Manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines</td>
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<td>9.3</td>
<td>Use digital record keeping tools, where required</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Reflect on and review practice</td>
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<td>10.1</td>
<td>Understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection to support continuous improvement</td>
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<td>10.2</td>
<td>Recognise the value of multi-disciplinary reviews, case conferences and other methods of review</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Assure the quality of their practice</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
<td>Engage in evidence-based practice</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
<td>Gather and use feedback and information, including qualitative and quantitative data, to evaluate the responses of service users to their care</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>Monitor and systematically evaluate the quality of practice, and maintain an effective quality management and quality assurance process working towards continual improvement</td>
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11.4 participate in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance, clinical governance and the use of appropriate outcome measures

11.5 evaluate care plans or intervention plans using recognised and appropriate outcome measures, in conjunction with the service user where possible, and revise the plans as necessary

11.6 recognise the value of gathering and using data for quality assurance and improvement programmes

12 understand and apply the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession

12.1 understand the structure and function of the human body, together with knowledge of physical and mental health, disease, disorder and dysfunction relevant to their profession

12.2 demonstrate awareness of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process

12.3 recognise the role(s) of other professions in health and social care and understand how they may relate to the role of orthoptist

12.4 understand the structure and function of health and social care systems and services in the UK

12.5 understand human growth, physical and mental, and human development across the lifespan, as it relates to the practice of orthoptics

12.6 understand the development of anatomical substrates and their relevance to the development of binocular single vision, visual function and visual perception

12.7 know the detailed anatomical and physiological development of the visual system, and understand which components of the visual pathway and cortex relate to specific aspects of visual function and visual perception

12.8 understand neuroanatomy and the effects of disruption of neural pathways on the visual system, cranial nerves and supranuclear control of eye movements

12.9 know the factors which influence individual variations in human ability and development

12.10 demonstrate awareness of human behaviour and recognise the need for sensitivity to the psychosocial aspects of ocular conditions, including strabismus

12.11 know how psychology and sociology can inform an understanding of health, illness and health care in the context of orthoptics and know how to apply this in practice

VALID FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2023
12.12 understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment and intervention

12.13 understand ocular alignment and binocular single vision, and the sensory and motor elements required to attain and maintain these

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

12.15 understand the factors which can cause the disruption of binocular vision

12.16 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

12.17 understand the principles of uniocular and binocular perception, and the anatomical substrate of these functions

12.18 understand refractive error and its effect on ocular alignment, visual perception and visual development

12.19 know how convergence, accommodation and pupillary response affect investigation, diagnosis and service user management, and be able to apply them to clinical practice

12.20 understand ocular motility systems, their neural control and how typical and atypical anatomical structures influence them

12.21 know the principles governing ocular motility and their relevance to diagnosis and management, and be able to apply them to clinical practice

12.22 know the sensory and motor adaptive mechanisms that occur in order to compensate for strabismus and abnormalities of binocular vision

12.23 recognise the functional and perceptual difficulties that may arise as a result of defective visual, binocular or ocular motor functions

12.24 understand the effect of other acquired disorders of the body on the eye, the visual and ocular motor systems including paediatric, endocrine, autoimmune, oncological, trauma, psychological and neurological disease

12.25 know about the range of ophthalmic conditions which can disrupt vision, binocular vision and produce eye movement disorders

12.26 understand the principles and application of orthoptic and ophthalmological equipment used during the investigative process

12.27 plan, operate and evaluate appropriate vision screening programmes

12.28 Demonstrate safe use of medicines and including being able to undertake drug calculations accurately.

12.29 understand pharmacological principles which include pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of medicines relevant to their practice and how these may be altered by certain characteristics

12.30 Understand the legal context relevant to the use of exemptions in
legislation for the sale, supply and administration of medicines, as well as current local and national policy and guidance concerning medicines use

12.31 Understand the differences between the sale, supply and administration of medicines using exemptions, other supply or administration mechanisms and prescribing mechanisms

12.32 Understand when to sell or supply medicines using exemptions, based on a relevant examination, assessment and history taking

12.33 understand the different non-pharmacological and pharmacological approaches to modifying disease management relevant to their practice and the risks and benefits of each option

12.34 understand the potential for medicines to have adverse effects and how to minimise them including effects caused by medicines given in error

12.35 monitor response to medicines and modify or cease treatment as appropriate within their professional scope of practice, including referral to another professional

12.36 apply the principles of evidence-based practice, including clinical and cost-effectiveness, to the supply and administration of exemption listed medicines relevant to their practice

12.37 Understand antimicrobial resistance and the roles of infection prevention and control

12.38 Understand the importance of shared decision-making with service users to encourage self-care and adherence with medicines advice

13 draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice

13.1 change their practice as needed to take account of new developments, technologies and changing contexts

13.2 gather appropriate information

13.3 analyse and critically evaluate the information collected

13.4 select and use appropriate assessment techniques and equipment

13.5 undertake thorough, sensitive, and detailed patient medical history, including an appropriate medication history

13.6 undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate

13.7 conduct appropriate assessment or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy or other actions safely and effectively

13.8 recognise a range of research methodologies relevant to their role

13.9 recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice

13.10 critically evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice
13.11 engage service users in research as appropriate.

13.12 use diagnostic and therapeutic procedures to address anomalies of binocular vision, visual function and ocular motility defects resulting in a clinically defined outcome, which can be recorded and monitored in a manner appropriate to safe orthoptic practice.

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

13.14 conduct a thorough investigation of ocular motility.

13.15 take a comprehensive case history.

13.16 know the tests required to aid in differential diagnosis.

13.17 identify where there is a clinical need for medical, neurological, social or psychological investigations or interventions.

13.18 use investigative techniques to identify ocular defects within a specific population to form a diagnosis and devise an appropriate course of action.

13.19 diagnose conditions and select appropriate management.

13.20 diagnose a range of vision, binocular vision and ocular motility defects and all categories of strabismus.

13.21 identify pathological changes and related clinical features of conditions commonly encountered by orthoptists.

13.22 understand the principles and techniques of, and be able to perform, an objective and subjective refraction.

13.23 understand the principles and techniques used, and be able to perform an examination of the anterior and posterior segments of the eye.

13.24 understand the principles and techniques used, and be able to perform visual fields assessments.

13.25 understand the principles and techniques used in electrophysiological assessment of visual function and the visual pathway.

13.26 formulate specific and appropriate management plans, and set timescales.

13.27 know how to apply orthoptic and ophthalmological intervention appropriately at different stages of visual development and ageing.

13.28 know how to use optical methods to influence vision and binocular vision.

13.29 recognise and document any adverse reaction to treatment and take appropriate action in response to this.

13.30 know the role, pharmacological action, clinical indications and contra-indications of ophthalmic drugs and how they may be selected and used in orthoptic practice.
13.31 understand research in the fields of ocular motility, strabismus, amblyopia and binocular disorders and how it could affect practice

14 establish and maintain a safe practice environment
   14.1 understand the need to maintain the safety of themself and others, including service users, carers and colleagues
   14.2 demonstrate awareness of relevant health and safety legislation and comply with all local operational procedures and policies
   14.3 work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction or elimination techniques in a safe manner and in accordance with health and safety legislation
   14.4 select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly
   14.5 establish safe environments for practice, which appropriately manages risk
   14.6 know how to position or immobilise service users correctly for safe and effective interventions

15 promote and prevent ill health
   15.1 understand the role of their profession in health promotion, health education and preventing ill health
   15.2 understand how social, economic and environmental factors (wider determinants of health) can influence a person’s health and well-being
   15.3 empower and enable individuals (including service users and colleagues) to play a part in managing their own health
   15.4 engage in occupational health, including being aware of immunisation requirements