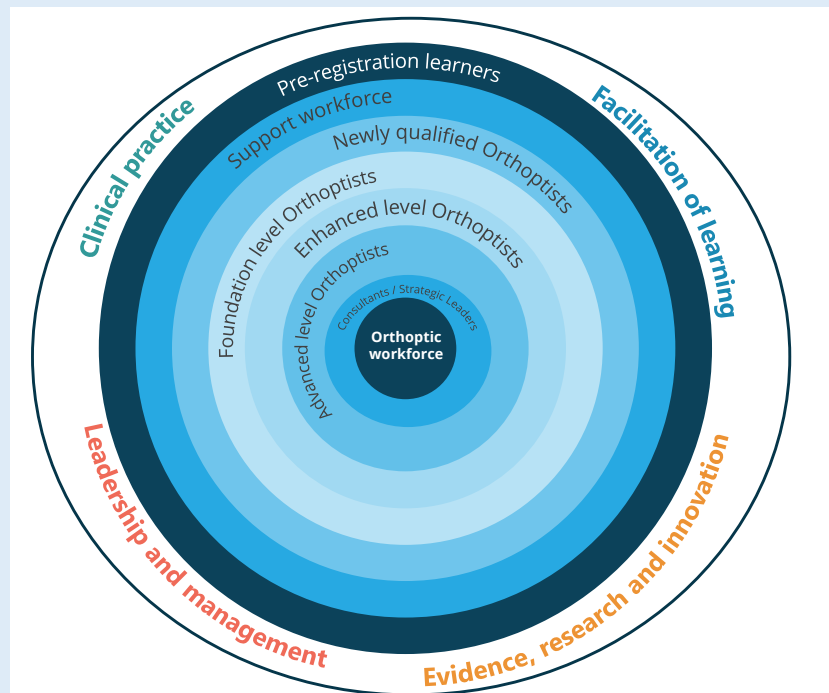




**BIOS**

**BRITISH AND IRISH  
ORTHOPTIC SOCIETY**

## **BIOS Professional Development Framework (draft)**



**Consultation document  
(for open access version)**

**13<sup>th</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025**

# How we'd like your help

We've been working with members since May 2024 to create the BIOS Professional Development Framework. We now have a first full draft of the open access element which we invite you to review.

You told us you wanted the new Framework to:

- Promote the profession
- Provide a structure for the Orthoptist workforce (and those that support the profession) to identify areas for ongoing learning and development
- Outline knowledge and skills:
  - at different Levels of practice
  - across the Four Pillars of Practice (we've renamed them Domains following your feedback)
- Link to profession-specific and multidisciplinary resources where appropriate to avoid duplication
- Embed the HCPC Standards of Proficiency for registered Orthoptists within the relevant sections

**Please share your thoughts via this survey link by Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025:**

**<https://forms.office.com/e/830aPYbsnF>**

The survey asks you to:

- Rate sections of the draft Framework
- Provide further comments if you would like
- Suggest areas of improvement where applicable



# The BIOS Professional Development Framework

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## Section 1: Overview

The BIOS Professional Development Framework (see Figure 1) has been designed by, with and for the Orthoptic workforce and is intended to support everyone within it.

The Framework comprises the following:

Four inter-related Domains of practice	Seven Levels of practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clinical Practice</li><li>• Facilitation of Learning</li><li>• Leadership and Management</li><li>• Evidence, Research and Innovation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre-registration learners</li><li>• Support workforce</li><li>• Newly qualified Orthoptists</li><li>• Foundation level Orthoptists</li><li>• Enhanced level Orthoptists</li><li>• Advanced level Orthoptists</li><li>• Consultants / Strategic Leaders</li></ul>

There are two elements to the Framework:

- 1) Open access element: containing the **Professional Development Topics** to support learning across the Four Domains at different Levels of practice. This is the main document that we've made available to everyone to support workforce development, including for use by strategic leads responsible for Orthoptists outside of the profession.
- 2) Web-based element: members can access this, alongside the open access element, via the BIOS website\*. It contains **resources to support professional learning and development including tools and templates**. The content of the web-based element is reviewed regularly with additional content added, to keep our professional development offer as contemporary as possible.

(\*currently under development as part of this project)

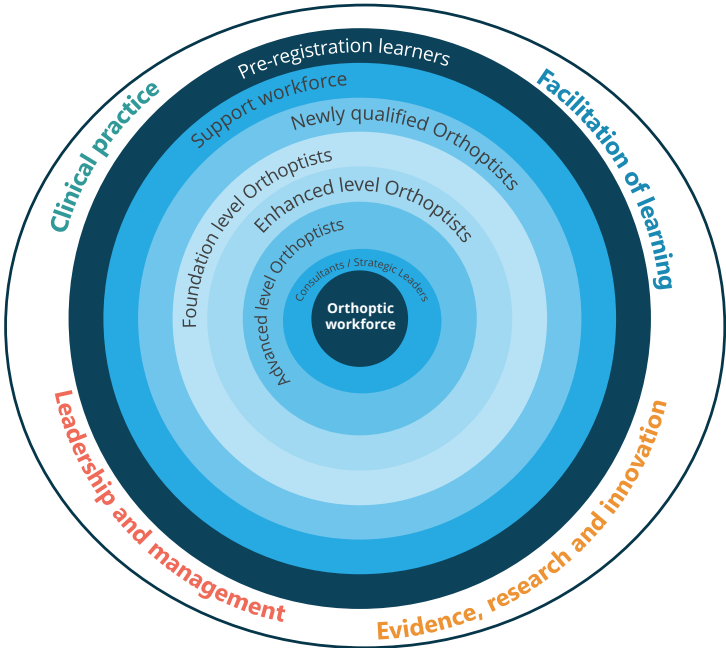
The Framework is deliberately designed as a circle rather than a ladder, to reinforce that many Levels of practice are legitimate career destinations in their own right, with room to grow in them too. There is no assumption that every member of the profession will, or want to, progress to become a consultant or strategic leader. Each career is unique to every individual Orthoptist, based on personal and professional interests and values, and our lives outside of work too.

Figure 1: A visual representation of the BIOS Professional Development Framework

**BIOS Professional Development Framework**

**Four Domains of practice**

- Clinical practice
- Facilitation of learning
- Leadership and management
- Evidence, research and innovation



**Seven Levels of practice**

- Pre-registration learners
- Support workforce
- Newly qualified Orthoptists
- Foundation level Orthoptists
- Enhanced level Orthoptists
- Advanced level Orthoptists
- Consultants / Strategic Leaders

## Section 2: Defining key terms

Drawing on contemporary, multiprofessional resources, this section defines the following terms and their relationship with each other:

- 1) Professional development
- 2) Agenda for change
- 3) Levels of practice
- 4) Spheres of influence

### What is meant by Professional development?

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a way for Orthoptists to keep their **knowledge and skills up-to-date and to practise safely and effectively** (HCPC, 2024). CPD activities are any activities from which you learn and develop (HCPC, 2024). Engaging in CPD activities is each person's responsibility and should be made possible and supported by employers ([Broughton and Harris 2022](#)) e.g. on-the-job learning, volunteering, courses, secondments etc. ([NHS 2024](#)). The regulator requires all registrants, including Orthoptists, to meet the Standards of Continuing Professional Development ([HCPC, 2018](#)).

### What is Agenda for Change (AfC)?

Agenda for Change (AfC) is the **national pay system** for most NHS jobs, including those held by Orthoptists, but not for Doctors and Dentists. It aims to ensure that all jobs within the organisation are fairly and consistently rewarded. The evaluation of job roles and the subsequent banding of them is linked to the requirement of the job rather than the capabilities of the person in post.

The NHS Staff Council is responsible for the AfC pay system which includes terms and conditions relating to a broad range of work-related processes including contractual sick pay, pay reviews and flexible working arrangements ([NHS Employers 2024](#)).

## What is meant by the term Level of practice?

Levels of practice are **stages of professional growth** that all health and care professionals, including Orthoptists, may attain during their careers and, when needed, with additional qualifications. They are associated with increasing breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and behaviours, including increased responsibility and experience ([NES 2024](#)).

Levels of practice help Orthoptists identify areas where they can continue to learn and improve their knowledge and skills. A level of practice describes the level of expertise, it is not a specific job title and can apply to many different roles in different organisations and sectors.

Enhanced, advanced, and consultant levels of practice are all valid endpoint career destinations. Growth-based careers enable vertical progression, but also recognises the value of lateral moves across roles or sectors, and consolidation for added depth to stay in the same role ([NHS England 2023](#)). Table 1 defines each Level of practice within this Framework.

Table 1: Definitions of different levels of practice (drawn from [Leary 2019](#); [HCPC 2023](#) [Health Education England 2021](#); [NES 2023](#); [NHS England 2017](#); [NHS England 2023](#), [SQCF 2025](#), [Skills for Health 2014](#) )

Level of practice	Definition - People at this level:
Pre-registration learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop practical, analytical, theoretical and technical knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Learn about and applying research knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Mainly influence people they learn with directly</li> </ul>
Support workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform tasks, solve straightforward problems, and make some judgments.</li> <li>• Works under guidance and supervision.</li> <li>• Possess skills in specific, focused aspects of service delivery in patient facing roles.</li> </ul>

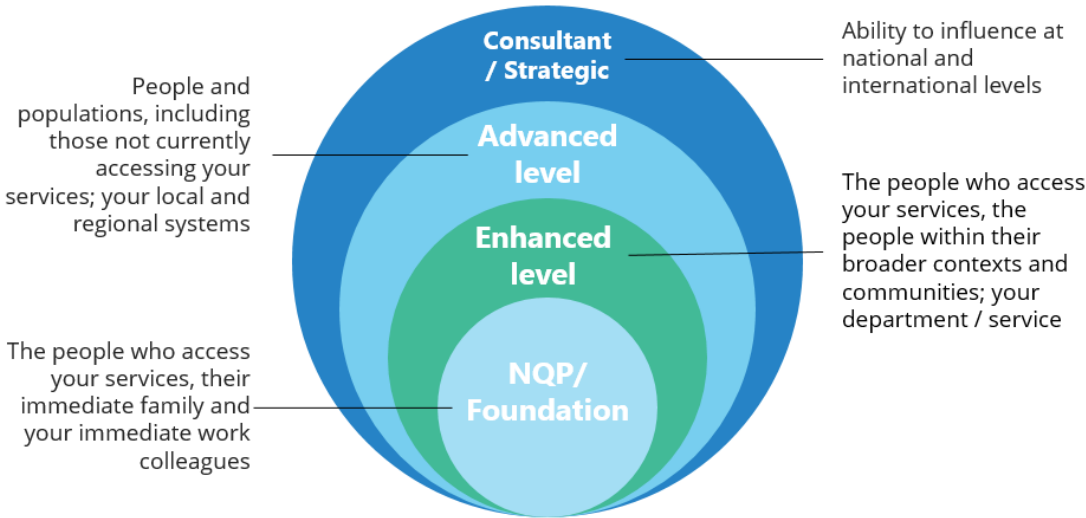
Newly qualified Orthoptists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work as autonomous practitioners seeking appropriate support as needed</li> <li>• Use professional judgement and critically apply knowledge across all Four Domains of practice to work within protocols</li> <li>• Mainly influence people they work with directly</li> </ul>
Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work autonomously within a team to manage a range of situations in different contexts</li> <li>• Use professional judgement, underpinned by critical application of knowledge across all Four Domains of practice, but still defer some decision making</li> <li>• Mainly influence people they work with directly (including service users and departmental colleagues)</li> </ul>
Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Function in unpredictable environments</li> <li>• Manage risk but defer major decision making</li> <li>• Lead a team, usually within a broader service</li> <li>• Use complex professional reasoning skills, underpinned by theoretical knowledge across all Four Domains of practice alongside experience, but defer to others for an overall plan</li> <li>• Influence people within their local context (including service users, department and service-level colleagues)</li> </ul>
Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Function in unpredictable environments, manage risk within a locality and support others to do so</li> <li>• Have a highly developed body of knowledge, underpinned by thorough theoretical knowledge and relevant practical experience across all Four Domains of practice</li> <li>• Set up and lead a team or service</li> <li>• Have high level complex decision making abilities</li> <li>• Influence people within local and regional systems</li> </ul>
Consultant / Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage risk across a system</li> <li>• Build and lead teams and / or services</li> <li>• Have high level complex decision making abilities, using tacit and theoretical knowledge acquired from significant experience, across all Four Domains of practice</li> <li>• Influence at a strategic, national and international level</li> </ul>



## What is meant by the term Spheres of influence?

A professional sphere of influence is **the scope you have at work to influence decisions and processes**. Your Level of practice typically determines how, what and who you can influence, and Figure 2 provides an overview of the Spheres of influence.

Figure 2: Spheres of influence at different career levels



## What is the relationship between AfC and Levels of practice?

It is appreciated there may be tensions between AfC and Levels of practice, but the concepts are different. AfC focuses on jobs in the NHS including terms and conditions of service e.g., pay structures, while Levels of practice focus on professional development across all sectors. Trade Unions, such as [BOSTU](#) (British Orthoptic Society Trade Union) and [Forsa](#), join together to influence, maintain and improve conditions of employment for everyone (BIOS 2024).

## What is the relationship between a Level of practice and Scope of practice?

The **Level of practice** refers to the individual's stage of professional development, shaped by their experience, skills, and qualifications, at a given time, and it evolves with ongoing learning and growth.

On the other hand, the **Scope of practice** defines the specific areas and activities that an Orthoptist is legally permitted to perform. The **HCPC Standards of Proficiency (SoPs, HCPC 2023)** outline the threshold of knowledge, skills, and experience required for Orthoptists to practise safely and effectively. While all Orthoptists must meet these threshold standards, their scope of practice can expand beyond these basic requirements as they gain experience, including from different roles e.g. clinical specialties, management, teaching or research roles.

## Section 3: How to use the BIOS Professional Development Framework

The BIOS Professional Development Framework raises the profile of the profession by emphasizing the range of knowledge and skills across the Four Domains of practice and at different Levels of practice. It can be used to:

- 1) Map yourself into the Framework to plan your continuing professional development
- 2) Prepare for career conversations e.g. in supervision or appraisals
- 3) Structure personal statements in job applications or the HCPC audit
- 4) Promote the contributions you bring to new / multiprofessional roles
- 5) Support you to identify transferable skills when planning a move
- 6) Help teams to identify the skill mix and areas for team development

## Section 4: Professional Development Topics

### Introduction to the Professional development topics

This section outlines the Professional development topics at different levels of practice. Some topics link to more than one Domain of practice (**Clinical practice**; **Facilitation of learning**; **Leadership and management**; **Evidence, research and innovation**) as indicated in the final column.

#### Key:

##### Four Domains of Practice:

 **Clinical Practice**

 **Facilitation of learning**

 **Leadership and management**

 **Evidence, research and innovation**

##### Other key abbreviations:

w/s: with support (direct or indirect)

Shaded boxes = applicable for the group in the column heading

**PrCF**: additional detail in the Pre-registration Curriculum Framework (BIOS 2023)











**HCPC SoP**: additional detail in the Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Proficiency for Orthoptists





The topics are in eight separate groups to help you use this Framework, while appreciating there is overlap between each one as part of developing yourself across all Four Domains of practice






<b>One:</b> Supporting service users, carers and families	<b>Five:</b> Supporting others
<b>Two:</b> Work readiness knowledge and skills / Professional Skills – refinement and growth	<b>Six:</b> Underpinning knowledge and skills












<b>Three:</b> Safe, effective, evidence-based and high-quality practice	<b>Seven:</b> Quality improvement
<b>Four:</b> Supporting self	<b>Eight:</b> Promoting the Orthoptic profession





### The Professional Development Topics (1-8)

Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
<b>TOPIC ONE: Supporting service users, carers and families</b>								
1.1 Build and maintain positive working relationships								 
1.2 Work in partnership to practice in a person-centred, values-based way								 
1.3 Facilitate shared decision-making with service users, carers and families	w/s	w/s						  
1.4 Promote public health and prevent ill-health								 
1.5 Understand the multiple factors that impact on health inc. genetics, inequalities and wider determinants								








Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
1.6 Critically appraise the multiple and inter-related factors that impact on health inc. genetics, inequalities and wider determinants and support others in their understanding				w/s				
1.7 Respect diversity and create equitable environments	w/s	w/s	w/s					
1.8 Respect and maintain privacy and dignity								
1.9 Understand and sensitively manage power dynamics afforded to you in your professional role	w/s	w/s	w/s					






Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
<b>TOPIC TWO: Work readiness knowledge and skills / Professional skills – refinement and growth</b>								
2.1 Communicate effectively with everyone you work with, recognising the need to adapt your own style for different situations e.g. when working with children								  Review the <b>PrCF</b> for detailed topics
2.2 Effectively manage your time								
2.3 Maintain an awareness of your role and its boundaries, including as your scope of influence extends								
2.4 Develop and demonstrate effective interpersonal skills including but not limited to active listening, empathy, openness to feedback, reliability and honesty								







Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
2.5 Ensure yourself and others practice effective interpersonal skills including but not limited to active listening, empathy, openness to feedback, reliability and honesty				w/s				 
2.6 Understand the service and healthcare system in which you work, including the strategies that support the ongoing development of it								 
2.7 Within your existing sphere of influence, seek opportunities to develop the service and healthcare system in which you work				w/s				  
2.8 Understand and adhere to legal and ethical responsibilities including but not limited to consent, equality, health and safety, incidents, infection control, risk management, safeguarding	w/s	w/s						   




Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
2.9 Ensure yourself and others understand and adhere to legal and ethical responsibilities including but not limited to consent, equality, health and safety, incidents, infection control, risk management, safeguarding				w/s				
2.10 Understand the importance of and maintain confidentiality and information governance / GDPR / data protection								
2.11 Ensure self and others understand the importance of and maintain confidentiality and information governance / GDPR / data protection				w/s				
2.12 Work within codes of practice and frameworks relevant to your level	w/s	w/s	w/s	w/s				















Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
2.13 Develop and maintain digital literacy skills and identify ways to use them in practice	w/s	w/s	w/s					
2.14 Maintain contemporary digital literacy knowledge and skills, supporting yourself and others to use them in practice				w/s				 
2.15 Effectively prioritise and manage your workload	w/s	w/s	w/s					
2.16 Maintain accurate and contemporary records (paper and digital) (Review the <b>PrCF</b> for detailed topics linked to record-keeping)	w/s	w/s	w/s					
2.17 Use social media and other digital resources appropriately	w/s	w/s	w/s					 






Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
<b>TOPIC THREE: Safe, effective, evidence-based and high-quality practice</b>								
3.1 Maintain a safe practice environment (Review <b>HCPC SoP 14</b> )	w/s	w/s						
3.2 Plan, adapt and evaluate care, with support as required	w/s	w/s	w/s					 
3.3 Know and demonstrate duty of care, working within scope of practice and relevant codes of conduct	w/s	w/s	w/s					 
3.4 Practice as an autonomous professional, and as part of a multidisciplinary team			w/s					
3.5 Utilise professional / clinical reasoning, critical thinking and reflective practice to make person-centred decisions	w/s		w/s					

Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
3.6 Know your statutory role, professional obligations, standards of proficiency and statutory codes of conduct (Review the <b>PrCF</b> for detailed topics linked to statutory obligations – see topic 6.7)	w/s		w/s					
3.7 Know and demonstrate use of appropriate referral pathways (Review the <b>PrCF</b> for detailed topics linked to Team-working)	w/s		w/s					
3.8 Know when to deviate from pathways in complex situations								
3.9 Maintain professionalism including making judgements within your scope of practice	w/s	w/s	w/s					 
3.10 Deliver, maintain and monitor high-quality practice relevant to your role (Review the <b>PrCF</b> for detailed topics linked to Quality Assurance)	w/s	w/s	w/s					

Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
3.11 Actively engage in appropriate levels of audit, service evaluation quality improvement and research activity	w/s	w/s	w/s					
<b>TOPIC FOUR: Supporting self</b>								
4.1 Understand the scope of Orthoptics across the UK and abroad	w/s	w/s						
4.2 Critically question the scope of Orthoptics across the UK and abroad seeking to influence appropriate expansion								  
4.3 Engage in supervision and work effectively as a supervisee and / or supervisor								 
4.4 Support others to engage in supervision, working effectively as a supervisee and / or supervisor				w/s				




Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
4.5 Engage in continuous professional development (CPD) activities to maintain safe and effective practice, as a HCPC regulatory requirement								
4.6 Reflect on your own learning needs and seek advice to support career growth and progression, to maintain safe and effective practice	w/s	w/s	w/s	w/s				
4.7 Use strategies to effectively manage your health and wellbeing to safely fulfil your role								
4.8 Learn and use strategies to resolve and / or manage dissatisfaction and conflict including seeking help and advice from appropriate sources	w/s	w/s	w/s					 
4.9 Identify and explore options to undertake further study, including individual master's modules as part of								


developing knowledge and skills on a post-graduate master's pathway								
<b>TOPIC FIVE: Supporting others</b>								
5.1 Supervise others including pre-registration learners		w/s						
5.2 Support other health professionals to promote ocular health within their scope of practice								
5.3 Advocate for others in order to create a more inclusive and supportive environment								
5.4 Develop others including through the use of coaching techniques to identify and promote their strengths								
5.5 Show civility and respect for other peoples' beliefs and values	w/s	w/s						
5.6 Evaluate the impact of own leadership behaviours to be a confident, inclusive and supportive leader within your level of practice	w/s	w/s	w/s					








Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
5.7 Apply knowledge of protected characteristics and their lived experiences, alongside social, political, economic, cultural and other factors when supporting people within your sphere of influence	w/s	w/s						
5.8 Use care and intention when giving feedback to others	w/s	w/s						
5.9 Use presentation skills and learning techniques with colleagues and wider audiences e.g. disseminate research projects								
5.10 Critically understand and use learning principles and theories to deliver and evaluate learning opportunities for people within your sphere of influence			w/s	w/s				
5.11 Act as an expert resource to support the								 







learning and well-being of others								
<b>TOPIC SIX: Underpinning knowledge and skills</b>								
6.1 Use evidence to support clinical, leadership, education and research practice with support	w/s	w/s						■
6.2 Systematically search, critically appraise and apply evidence to inform professional decision-making across all four domains of practice								■
6.3 Know the role of Professional Bodies e.g. BIOS, RCOphth, College of Optometrists, RCN	w/s	w/s						■
6.4 Actively engage in Professional Body activities to develop your professional knowledge and skills								■
6.5 Actively engage in activities to influence strategic change in practice at national and international levels, including in collaboration with Professional Bodies								■



Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
6.6 Know the role of the regulator (Health and Care Professions Council) and your obligations to maintain your professional registration	w/s		w/s					
6.7 Critically apply professional knowledge of the following in your practice (for diagnostic / therapeutic procedures and outcomes), as appropriate for your level/role: a) Anatomy and physiology b) Development and lifespan changes c) General pathology and disease processes d) Detailed ocular anatomy and physiology e) Ocular pharmacology and use of drugs f) Normal visual function g) Refractive and clinical optics h) Psychology i) First Aid j) History taking k) Vision	w/s		w/s					  Review the <b>PrCF</b> for detailed topics in Clinical knowledge and the <b>HCPC SoP</b> (12,13)

l) Observations / ocular deviation / fixation m) Binocular vision n) Suppression and correspondence o) Ophthalmological investigations p) Treatment methods q) Amblyopia r) Concomitant strabismus s) Convergence, accommodation, and near work anomalies t) Incomitant strabismus u) Effects of general disease on ocular motility v) Nystagmus w) Vision screening x) Retinopathy of Prematurity y) General ophthalmology and Ophthalmic Symptomatology not covered elsewhere z) Ophthalmic procedures								
<b>TOPIC SEVEN: Quality improvement</b>								
7.1 Engage and collaborate in quality improvement, discovery science, audit and service evaluation activities, including to	w/s	w/s						

support the sustainability of your service								
7.2 Engage in research activities including conducting a literature review, critical appraisal, interpreting and applying findings	w/s	w/s						
7.3 Collaborate across clinical practice and academia to evaluate the impact and sustainability of practice to improve provision								 
7.4 Evaluate the impact of your practice including for service users, colleagues, your service and organisation (health economics and cost effectiveness)	w/s	w/s						 
7.5 Access local networks and research-related resources, organisations and opportunities e.g. hospital R&D, local Council for AHP Research hubs, universities, funding sources								 

Development level	Pre-registration learners	Support Workforce	Newly qualified orthoptists	Foundation	Enhanced	Advanced	Expert / Strategic	Primary Domain(s) of Practice
7.6 Design research studies, including governance, ethics, active involvement from patients and the public and managing data	w/s							  (Review the PrCF for detailed topics in Research)
<b>TOPIC EIGHT: Promoting the Orthoptic profession</b>								
8.1 Upholding the values of the profession								
8.2 Promote the value and the benefits of your role and the profession for the people we serve								
8.3 Promote the value and benefits of the profession to people you work with, other agencies, organisations and systems including the voluntary sector, charities and schools.								
8.4 Seek opportunities to promote the profession to support the development and sustainability of the								

future workforce e.g. career talks	■	■	■					
8.5 Seek opportunities to promote and sustain the profession to strategically influence its development e.g. research leadership and innovation						■	■	■

# BIOS Professional Development Framework consultation

