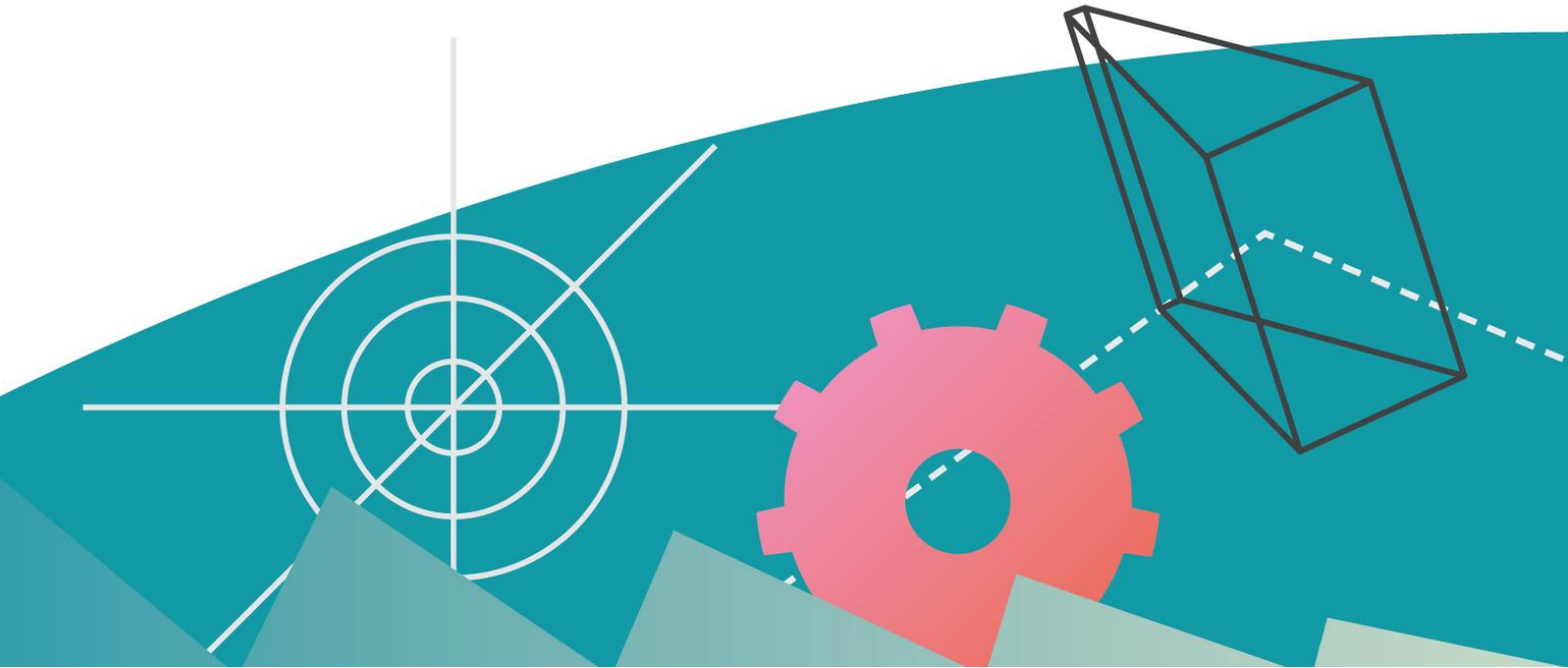
BIOS

British and Irish Orthoptic Society

No compensation or condonement for pre-registration Orthoptics programmes

BIOS Policy, October 2026



The British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS), as the professional body for Orthoptists in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland, sets clear expectations for the education, training, and assessment of future practitioners.

BIOS asserts that all Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approved pre-registration Orthoptic programmes including undergraduate, postgraduate, and degree apprenticeship routes must adhere to policies of no condonement and no compensation across modules and assessments.

To ensure public protection, patient safety, and alignment with the HCPC's standards of proficiency for orthoptists, students must demonstrate competence by successfully passing all summative assessment components to qualify and gain eligibility for professional registration.

Rationale and Key Principles

1. Professional Regulation and Public Protection

Orthoptic pre-registration degrees are professionally regulated programmes leading directly to statutory registration with the HCPC. Every graduate enters autonomous clinical practice diagnosing and managing complex ocular, visual, and neurological conditions. Permitting progression in the event of a fail mark in one assessment component, compensated by higher marks in another assessment with different learning outcomes, is prohibited, where the failed component evaluates essential learning outcomes not sufficiently assessed elsewhere. Academic compensation as described would introduce unacceptable risks to patient safety and compromise professional standards.

2. Alignment with the Orthoptist Apprenticeship Standard

The Orthoptist Apprenticeship Standard requires apprentices to demonstrate full competence across all Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSBs). Condonement or compensation is incompatible with apprenticeship delivery, as every specified assessment element must be passed to demonstrate full occupational competence and achieve degree completion.

3. Comprehensive Core Competence

Orthoptic curricula are tightly designed around core statutory thresholds and professional standards of proficiency. A failure in an individual assessment component which assessing learning outcomes not sufficiently addressed by other assessment, indicates a gap in required professional knowledge or practical skill that should not be mitigated by strong performance in unrelated subjects.

4. Consistency across all educational routes

To preserve the integrity and reputation of the Orthoptic profession, equity of assessment standards must be maintained across all qualification pathways. Traditional undergraduate pre-registration postgraduate and degree apprenticeship routes must hold identical, non-negotiable expectations regarding assessment pass requirements.