

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

- 1.1 identify the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional or service
- 1.2 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
- 1.3 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

- 2.1 maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct
- 2.2 promote and protect the service user's interests at all times
- 2.3 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
- 2.4 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
- 2.5 respect and uphold the rights, dignity, values, and autonomy of service users, including their role in the assessment, diagnostic, treatment and / or therapeutic process
- 2.6 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
- 2.7 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
- 2.8 understand the importance of capacity in the context of delivering care and treatment
- 2.9 understand the scope of a professional duty of care, and exercise that duty
- 2.10 understand and apply legislation, policies and guidance relevant to their profession and scope of practice
- 2.11 recognise the power imbalance which comes with being a health care professional, and ensure they do not abuse this for personal gain

3 look after their health and wellbeing, seeking appropriate support where necessary

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

- 3.2 understand the importance of their own mental and physical health and wellbeing strategies in maintaining fitness to practise
- 3.3 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
- 3.4 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

4 practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement

- 4.1 recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions and actions
- 4.2 use their skills, knowledge and experience, and the information available to them, to make informed decisions and / or take action where necessary
- 4.3 make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- 4.4 make and receive appropriate referrals, where necessary
- 4.5 exercise personal initiative
- 4.6 demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- 4.7 use research, reasoning and problem solving skills when determining appropriate actions
- 4.8 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
- 4.9 coordinate a complete service user pathway, where appropriate, and in line with local guidelines

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

- 5.1 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 characteristics¹, intersectional experiences and cultural differences
- 5.2 understand equality legislation and apply it to their practice
- 5.3 recognise the potential impact of their own values, beliefs and personal biases (which may be unconscious) on practice and take personal action to

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.

- ensure all service users and carers are treated appropriately with respect and dignity
- 5.4 understand the duty to make reasonable adjustments in practice and be able to make and support reasonable adjustments in theirs and others' practice
- 5.5 recognise the characteristics and consequences of barriers to inclusion, including on socially isolated groups
- 5.6 actively challenge these barriers, supporting the implementation of change wherever possible
- 5.7 recognise that regard to equality, diversity and inclusion needs to be embedded in the application of all HCPC standards, across all areas of practice

6 understand the importance of and maintain confidentiality

- 6.1 adhere to the professional duty of confidentiality and understand when disclosure may be required
- 6.2 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
- 6.3 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
- 6.4 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)
- 6.5 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

7 communicate effectively

- 7.1 use effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate with service users, carers, colleagues and others
- 7.2 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 6.5²)
- 7.3 understand the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and recognise how these can be affected by difference of

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 applying through the Swiss Mutual Recognition Route (SMR) must provide evidence that they have reached the necessary standard. More information available here: [Statement on English language proficiency requirements for internationally trained health and care professionals | \(hcpc-uk.org\)](https://www.hcpc-uk.org/Statement-on-English-language-proficiency-requirements-for-internationally-trained-health-and-care-professionals)

- any kind including, but not limited to, protected characteristics³, intersectional experiences and cultural differences
- 7.4 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
- 7.5 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
- 7.6 understand the need to support the communication needs of service users and carers, such as through the use of an appropriate interpreter
- 7.7 use information, communication and digital technologies appropriate to their practice
- 7.8 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
- 7.9 recognise the need to modify interpersonal skills for the assessment and management of children

8 work appropriately with others

- 8.1 work in partnership with service users, carers, colleagues and others
- 8.2 recognise the principles and practices of other health and care professionals and systems and how they interact with their profession
- 8.3 understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an autonomous practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
- 8.4 contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team
- 8.5 identify anxiety and stress in service users, carers and colleagues, adapting their practice and providing support where appropriate
- 8.6 understand the qualities, behaviours and benefits of leadership
- 8.7 recognise that leadership is a skill all professionals can demonstrate
- 8.8 identify their own leadership qualities, behaviours and approaches, taking into account the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion
- 8.9 demonstrate leadership behaviours appropriate to their practice
- 8.10 act as a role model for others
- 8.11 promote and engage in the learning of others

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- 8.12 understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating diagnostics, and therapeutic interventions to meet their needs and goals
- 8.13 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
- 8.14 recognise the orthoptist's role in the promotion of ocular health by other health professionals

9 maintain records appropriately

- 9.1 keep full, clear and accurate records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- 9.2 manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
- 9.3 use digital record keeping tools, where required

10 reflect on and review practice

- 10.1 understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection to support continuous improvement
- 10.2 recognise the value of multi-disciplinary reviews, case conferences and other methods of review

11 assure the quality of their practice

- 11.1 engage in evidence-based practice
- 11.2 gather and use feedback and information, including qualitative and quantitative data, to evaluate the response of service users to their care
- 11.3 monitor and systematically evaluate the quality of practice, and maintain an effective quality management and quality assurance process working towards continual improvement
- 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
- 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 themselves 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 health 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