



THE COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS

Higher Qualifications Certificates policy updated February 2024

The College of Optometrists reviewed its policy regarding provision of certificates for higher qualifications such that from 8 June 2023 only full College members with a UK address will receive a certificate upon completing a higher qualifications course. The certificate will continue to be a free benefit of full UK membership for those who complete a course while a full UK College member.

Student optometrists

The College recognises that an ever-growing number of student registrants are completing higher qualifications. In order to provide a certificate that reflects their full registrant status once attained, the College will defer provision of certificates until student optometrists join the College as full UK registrants, at which point they will be eligible to receive a free certificate.

Course providers should advise students that if they complete a higher qualifications course while still a student registrant they will not receive a certificate until they join the College with full (01-) GOC registration, either as a newly qualified practising optometrist (qualifying in the UK) or as a full UK member. They will have until the next (first) OSCE date following their own OSCE sitting to join the College or they will not receive a certificate. The dates of all upcoming OSCE dates are on the College website.

International students

The College no longer provides certificates to students who are international practitioners. Rather, it would expect that the university would provide successful students with a transcript or other form of evidence of completion. The College Membership definition of international means anyone whose address is not UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man. These individuals are entitled to use the corresponding affixes.

Allied professions

Although only full UK College members will receive certificates, all course completers are entitled to use the corresponding affixes accordingly. As with international students, the university could instead provide successful students with a transcript or other form of evidence of completion.

Summer 2023 student cohorts

In June 2023 the College put in place an accommodation so that non-members with a UK address currently studying and/or for whom the College expected to receive results over the latter half of the year would be able to purchase a certificate. Such students must contact the College and purchase a certificate within two months of the College having received results.

If they do not, they should approach the course provider for a transcript or other form of evidence of completion.

This accommodation will continue to apply to results the College receives up to 1 June 2024. For example, if a provider notified the College of the result for such an individual on 20 February 2024, the individual must contact the College and make payment by 20 April 2024. From 1 June 2024 the College will not issue certificates for successful course completers who are not full UK College members. It will expect universities to provide all successful students who are non-members with a transcript or other form of evidence of completion, regardless of when they began a course.

Sending results to the College of Optometrists

Course providers should continue to send results for all course completers to the College using the template already provided. Even where course completers are not full UK members, the College will continue to create a record to reflect their achievements. Where results data are for student optometrists with SO-numbers, the College will receive the data and once these course completers join the College as full UK GOC registrants, they will be eligible for a free certificate. The College will send their certificates to them in the next applicable print run the College undertakes after they join the College. All data sent to the College will be managed as per GDPR.

Sending results data to the GOC

The College will continue to send results data to the GOC for its staff to update its register.