

# UK dispensing and contact lens optician career path 2018



# Introduction

Dear Partner

I am delighted to introduce Specsavers' DO/CLO career path nexus for 2018. We have constructed a framework to enable our dispensing and contact lens opticians to support the key objectives of retention of customers and expanding scope of practice as we continue to launch new products and continue the agenda of Transforming Eye Health.

Professional development and advancement is our priority and this booklet will help you map out what it takes to achieve the full potential, building higher upon the foundations of our unique Cert 3, Cert 4, TDO and NEW TCLO programmes.

Coupled with a tailored performance review this booklet should enable DOs and CLOs to develop their role in store in different ways, meeting a broader range of patient needs as eyecare pathways expand.

The information here gives you guidance on the elements of the career path nexus, how to access tools to help increase motivation, identify development needs and engage with training support to improve performance. Specsavers' Strategic Development Plan requires our professional staff to advance their expertise and working practices in line with changes in the business and standards set by the regulator and the NHS. This career path helps you and your team to achieve this.

Support for TDOs and TCLOs during their training is expanding – and supervision training is available at every miniPAC in 2018.

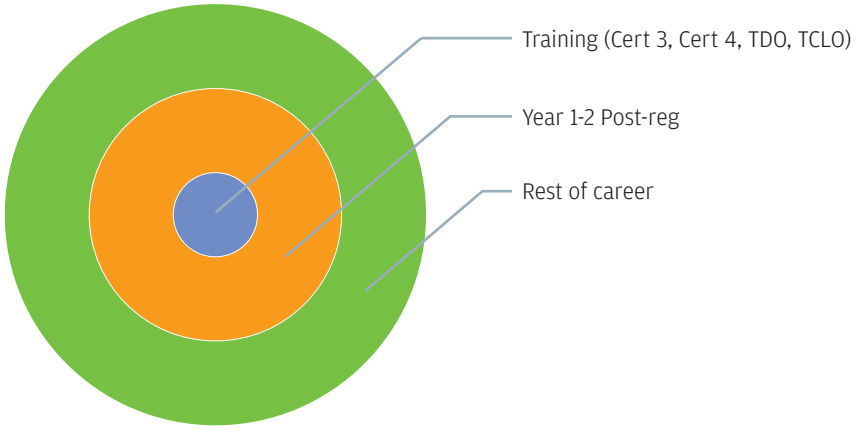
We deliver a programme of core development for post-registration development through the PAC, MiniPAC, ProFile e-zine and a suite of bundles of online CET with specific focus – such as EOS for dispensing opticians and varifocals, alongside PAI modules (in-store peer discussion). Professional staff must engage with at least two of these delivery modalities on a regular basis in order to keep pace with rapid development taking place in the profession.

Those who wish to take a role in supervision, training facilitation or assessment for accredited programmes for dispensing and clinical support staff have access to both generic skill development and preparation for the specific course(s) they are supporting. For those who wish to become a manager and ultimately a Specsavers Partner, our programme leads through a clear, scheduled progression, to ILM and on to Pathway. As Partners, you may want some tools to help you motivate your people through this journey. How to create and manage personal action plans for development are now part of the professional landscape and we provide learning materials which complement advancement in the IT performance reporting available to you. This is an exciting time for the optical professions and our commitment is to offer the development to keep Specsavers practitioners at the forefront of optics in the years to come.

**Paul Morris**

**Director of Professional Advancement**

# Specsavers dispensing and CLO career path NEXUS 2018



The possibilities increase as time goes on and the routes that any practitioner can take are numerous



# Performance management training and tools for managers and partners

## Development for you and your management team to enable you to manage professional staff performance

### Managing Your Professional Team's Development

It's the classic cliché, but true, people are your number one asset. Being able to develop and manage their performance can motivate and retain your best people and help your business to grow. Nowadays, in a world where good people are in demand and competition is high, retention is important. Our customers' experience is key to success, and developing the team including your professionals is paramount.

There is a wealth of resource at your fingertips through iLearn to equip you to develop your professionals. There are two different styles of development available to you - from online resources to programmes using a variety of media:

#### Learning Catalogue

This is accessed via the 'Available Training' tab. There are a number of resources to be found in the library, all for you to access as you need them and as relevant to your particular need. They are usually a 'blended programme' which entails a mixture of self-study from any device at any time, and attendance on 'virtual classroom' events and face to face action-based workshops. Time away from your normal place of work is minimal.

The most popular programmes are probably the Certificates in Leadership and Management; accredited by, and commonly known as the 'ILM' (Institute of Leadership and Management). These are detailed below.

Another valuable programme is 'Effective 121s' which is useful for reviews, developing robust relationships with peers, and in leading effective performance conversations with your team confidently and productively.

If you find connecting with others is a barrier to your effectiveness then the Personal Effectiveness programme can support you, and is bookable via iLearn. It covers a range of topics including influencing, emotional intelligence, assertiveness and resilience. All content has been tailored to the Specsavers environment and ways of working, making it readily applicable and easily transferrable.

#### Learning Library

Refresh your knowledge by re visiting learning material presented in a 'bite size' format, completed online. This includes briefing documents, information sheets; eLearning modules, videos and podcasts.

### Managing Your Own Development

Encouraging your professional team to manage their own development is helping them use the tools at their fingertips through iLearn. This development can be about being the best practitioner that they can be or pursuing a career route - perhaps as a future Partner?

There is a wealth of resources available through iLearn. We have put together a blended learning offer specifically with professional development in mind, using a variety of media such as video, podcasts and infographics to provide you with in-the-moment learning.

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## Entering the dispensing career path – Cert 3, Cert 3 CL, NEW Cert 3 EOS and Cert 4

### **NEW top-up programme for Enhanced Optical Services (EOS) support staff**

A series of online top-up modules have been developed for Cert 3 and Cert 4 qualified support staff. These are available for anytime start on iLearn and cover a range of services including: DVLA, Specsavers Enhanced Eyecare, Cataracts, Glaucoma and Eyecare for diabetes. All students must have a supervisor who is a registered optometrist. Following the successful launch of Part 1, a new suite of modules will be launched in 2018, and all EOS support staff will be required to complete both Parts 1 & 2 for accreditation.

Note CET-accredited online learning will be available for DOs and CLOs in early 2018.

### **BTEC Level 3 for ophthalmic dispensing assistants (Cert 3)**

### **BTEC Level 3 for optometric clinical assistants (Cert 3 CL)**

Specsavers' unique accredited courses the Cert 3 and Cert 3 CL develop knowledge and skills for dispensing and optical assistants performing a range of tasks in store. They are the ideal foundation for developing a career in dispensing and, later, contact lens practice. The courses are fully flexible with study and examinations taken online, at a completely flexible schedule designed to suit every individual learner. Students should complete each programme in no more than 1 year. The first semester of the Cert 3 and Cert 3 CL are the same so it takes less time for students with one of the qualifications to gain the second. The online learning is supplemented by case studies and activities in practice which are discussed with the supervisor. All students must have a supervisor who is a registered practitioner, but they may be in their first year of registered practice.

Completion of the Cert 3 programme is required for entry to the Cert 4 programme.

**Enrol via iLearn. Search 'Cert 3'**

### **BTEC Level 4 in optical dispensing (Cert 4)**

Specsavers' unique accredited course the Cert 4 further develops knowledge and skills for dispensing assistants performing a range of tasks in store. Cert 4s can take on more complex dispensing and problem solving in store and therefore contribute to maintaining accuracy and reducing remakes in high volume practice.

Cert 4 is fully flexible in schedule – three one-day workshops are compulsory and are run in several locations three times per year. Cert 4 students who may wish to progress after completion to DO study (see progression pathway below) must register with the GOC and join ABDO at the start of their Cert 4. The student should complete the Cert 4 course in no more than 12 months. There are compulsory assessments at the workshops and online. On completion of the programme students receive an internationally recognised BTEC qualification.

**Enrol via iLearn. Search 'Cert 4'**

## Cert 4 progression pathway to FBDO

The Cert 4 is currently recognised by the General Optical Council as an alternative year 1 for the ABDO distance-learning FBDO.

Cert 4 students who may wish to progress into year 2 of the FBDO programmes must register with the GOC and join ABDO before they attend the progression pathway bridging programme. They can work as an optical assistant throughout their Cert 4, as they do not formally begin their work placement hours until they enter the year 2 of the FBDO study programme. At the end of the Cert 4 the student completes a bridging programme run in Birmingham twice a year by Specsavers and ABDO, which provides practical preparation for the ABDO PQE (pre-qualifying exam), a little additional teaching, and an MCQ theory exam – covering the Cert 4 curriculum and in the same format as their online exams. They then enter year 2.

In late 2016 the General Optical Council started a review of the existing dispensing optician training programmes and the progression pathway from Cert 4 is one of the routes which may need revision in 2018. It is hoped that the outcome of the review will enable other institutions to offer the Cert 4 progression pathway.

Specsavers now arranges for payment of the student fees for ongoing study and recharges the store in three separate monthly payments, enabling stores to spread the cost of developing a new DO.

### **Enrol via iLearn. Search ‘Progression Pathway’**

Contact [tony.douglass@specsavers.com](mailto:tony.douglass@specsavers.com) for course information, explanation of enrolment and registration forms and payment details.

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## More cost-effective TDO and TClO development

Specsavers now arranges for payment of the student fees for ongoing study and recharges the store in three separate monthly payments, enabling stores to spread the cost of developing a new DO.

### **ABDO and GOC registration forms are available via iLearn. Search ‘ABDO’ or ‘GOC’**

Contact [tony.douglass@specsavers.com](mailto:tony.douglass@specsavers.com) for more details, course information, advice on enrolment and registration forms and payment details.

### **Booking process**

Students interested in the distance learning Dispensing Optician course at Anglia Ruskin please use the link below for more details and to apply:

<https://www.anglia.ac.uk/study/part-time/ophthalmic-dispensing-foundation>

### **Registration with GOC**

The regulations require that TDOs remain continuously registered with the GOC from the start of their programme until the completion of their programme, so it is very important to ensure that – even if they do not enter the second year of FBDO study straight after the progression pathway – their student registration does not lapse.

### **Spreading the cost**

Following requests from partners we have arranged with ABDO, Anglia Ruskin University and Bradford College will send Specsavers Professional Training a single invoice for student tuition fees. We will then recharge stores in a spread payment over three months.

## **TDO support**

TDO exam preparation sessions run at the PAC and selected MiniPACs. Please see iLearn for programme details from January.

## **NEW - TCLO support**

Practical exam revision is now available to any employed trainee contact lens optician (TCLO).

This one-day workshop consists of four workstations covering slit-lamp routine, keratometry, RGP fitting and CL verification including using manual radiuscopes. There will also be a Q&A session on taking the practical exams.

Workshops will be arranged at the optimum time in 2018 to prepare for examinations.

(Next workshop: Wed 23 May 2018, Crowne Plaza, NEC, Birmingham)

**For further information contact [phil.hall@specsavers.com](mailto:phil.hall@specsavers.com)**

## **TDO and TCLO supervision**

The GOC requires each training institution to demonstrate that they have informed every supervisor of their responsibilities. Every supervisor needs to know how to comply with the rigidly applied standards for operating and documenting of the required 1600 hours working as a TDO under the direct supervision of their nominated supervisor. The controls on the workplace practice have tightened and changed greatly in the last 12 months and if the institution visits the practice and finds non-compliance they may refuse to recognise the student's work towards their qualification. Significant changes are being introduced for 2018. TDO supervision training is running at selected miniPAC and PAC events in 2018.

In addition we are introducing general supervision skills training to help new DOs develop the skills necessary to take on a supervision role for TDOs and trainee CLOs, and offer them the best chance of success. Good supervision has been proven to have a great impact on student outcome and the supervisor shares responsibility for any mistakes they make while in training, so it is strongly recommended to complete relevant training before taking on this role.

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## Core development for dispensing and contact lens opticians

Below are the core development elements for every Specsavers DO and CLO in the UK and key themes for 2018.

### **Excel – newly qualified dispensing opticians**

Excel is the first step in the post-registration career pathway. This one-day programme gives the new dispensing optician a boost in confidence and a greater understanding of risk management so they are ready for autonomous practice. Skills development in patient communication and problem solving aim to enhance the efficiency and quality of their interaction with customers and give them the knowledge to supervise optical assistants and Cert 3 students.

**For further information contact [phil.hall@specsavers.com](mailto:phil.hall@specsavers.com)**

### **ProFile online journal – all practitioners, monthly CET and Specsavers engagement**

ProFile professional staff magazine offers news, views and features which aim to engage Specsavers practitioners with Specsavers vision, values and new initiatives.

The editorial board of the magazine have been able to produce a series of accredited articles which meet registration requirements for all practitioner groups in the UK.

**ProFile CET and CPD is available online** – along with Specsavers professional news and highlights in electronic format accessible on a range of mobile devices. Specsavers practitioners access the CET by registering with our online e-zine.

Interactive CET points are available through ProFile online CET.

### **PAI – attendance of peer discussion for Professional Advancement In-store**

Every store should already have at least one practitioner who is accredited to lead a peer discussion in store. Most of these modules are accredited for DOs or CLOs in addition to optometrists and they are ideal for practitioners who are unable to attend miniPAC or PAC events, in order to keep aligned with Specsavers policies and priorities.

At least one of the modules is accredited for contact lens-related peer discussion points. See iLearn Lead Professional resources for details of all the available topics.

**Keep an eye on ProFile and Connect for more details.**

### **MiniPAC – all practitioners**

The miniPAC roadshow is a series of professional advancement conferences which, ideally positioned in the first quarter of the year, offers annual plan-focused development for your optometrists, dispensing opticians and contact lens opticians.

Key themes are:

- 2018 priorities for contact lenses and dry eye
- Varifocal expertise
- Contact lens aftercare



- Advanced CL practice
- Regulatory standards and enhanced optical services

### Dates and locations are:

All 2018 events are for optometrists, contact lens opticians, dispensing opticians and trainees.

4 March, 9am - 5pm.	ICC, Birmingham B1 2EA (includes pre-reg supervision)
6 March, 9am - 5pm.	Jury's Inn, East Midlands Airport, Castle Donnington DE74 2SH
7 March, 9am - 5pm.	Haycock Hotel, Wansford, Peterborough PE8 6JA
14 March, 9am - 5pm.	Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London SW7 4LH
20 March, 9am - 5pm.	Durham County Cricket Club, Chester-le-Street DH3 3QR
21 March, 9am - 5pm and 5.30pm - 9pm.	Celtic Park, Glasgow G40 3RE (includes evening programme)
17 April, 9am - 5pm.	Bolton Whites, De Havilland Way, Bolton, Greater Manchester BL6 6SF (includes pre-reg supervision)
25 April, 9am - 5pm.	Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London SW7 4LH (includes pre-reg supervision)
29 April, 9am - 5pm.	Radisson Blu, Dublin Airport
1 May, 9am - 5pm.	Stormont Hotel, Belfast BT4 3LP
9 May, 9am - 5pm.	Crowne Plaza Plymouth, Armada Way, Plymouth, PL1 2HJ
10 May, 9am - 5pm.	Doubletree, Cadbury House Hotel, Frost Hill, Congresbury nr Bristol BS49 5AD (includes pre-reg supervision)

**Bookings (Specsavers employees) - iLearn search miniPAC/Bookings and (non-employees) - <https://specsavers-spectrum.com>**

### PAC - all practitioners

The date of the 2018 PAC conference is Sunday 21 October and it will take place at the ICC in Birmingham. Booking and programme information will open in May 2018 on iLearn, see ProFile online journal, Connect and iLearn for details.

An exciting programme of lectures, peer discussions and workshops will focus on core development priorities for Specsavers DOs and CLOs.

## Specialist development for dispensing and contact lens opticians

### **NEW - EOS-related development**

A suite of Specsavers CET will be available in 2018 for DOs and CLOs to explore the range of eyecare services that are being developed and how the scope of practice of DOs and CLOs may extend to support these new services.

#### **Available via iLearn: Available training/ Learning catalogue/Professional development/CET articles**

In addition CLOs may now complete level 1 WOPEC MECS and glaucoma accreditation online courses (codes available from ABDO).

ABDO is working with WOPEC and LOCSU to develop a pathway for CLOs to gain further level 2 accreditation in skills appropriate for anterior eye elements of eyecare pathways (Minor eye conditions, MECS and Goldmann repeat readings, GRR). Although it will take time for EOS services to include practitioners other than optometrists, advancement of skills through accredited learning is a welcome addition to the opportunities for CLO development.

**For further information [general@abdolondon.org.uk](mailto:general@abdolondon.org.uk) (mark email MECS/CLOs)**

### **NEW - BCLA Dry Eye Certificate**

CLOs can now work towards a certificate in Dry Eye as part of a new education programme launched by the British Contact Lens Association. This certificate will need to be renewed every four years. The new CET-accredited programme will focus on clinical skills for Ocular Surface Health (OSH) and Dry Eye, allowing BCLA members to gain CET points while working towards a Dry Eye certificate or a higher level to lead to a BCLA Fellowship.

**For further information [www.bcla.org.uk](http://www.bcla.org.uk)**

### **Advanced Contact Lens Practice**

Essential to every CLO's skill set is a thorough grounding in contact lens products and contact lens fitting and aftercare. Beyond the first year of practice we produce a bundle of CET-accredited training which develops their expertise to deal with more challenging cases – custom-made lenses, fitting and managing very young or post-60 patients, dry eye management, those with ongoing health problems such as allergies or diabetes, keratoconics, RGP fitting and aftercare, fitting for leisure, sports or occupational needs etc. Online CET is supplemented by discussion workshops on advanced CL topics at the miniPACs.

**Keep an eye on ProFile for more details.**

### **Specialist accredited learning for DOs 2018**

Children's eyecare remains a focus of development activity, through the Level 6 BTEC and discussion workshops at the miniPACs.

Varifocal dispensing is an important development opportunity for 2018. A new bundle of accredited online CET will be supplemented by a discussion workshop at the miniPACs.

**Keep an eye of ProFile for more details.**

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## Training support development

In order for Specsavers stores to develop new staff and to give practitioners the opportunity to pass on their knowledge and experience, we have established a programme to enhance training support skills. This programme begins with guidance on the requirements for supervision of optical assistants in regular practice, which is an important task for every registered DO and CLO.

### **Supervision of Cert 3&4 students**

These courses are governed by rules and regulations which are important to comply with so that the student can gain a pass in these nationally recognised examinations. The programmes are revised and updated in 2018 to comply with new GOC and Pearson requirements. Before supervising a student in 2018, it is important to update your understanding of the role of the supervisor to assist student understanding and application of the course content to practice, to verify completion of set activities and to invigilate examinations.

### **Supervision skills – generic and course-specific**

It is important to prepare well for the role of supervisor of trainee CLOs and/or TDOs. The GOC and the training institutions have stringent requirements for work placements which must be complied with to avoid jeopardising the student's ultimate registration. In addition the student's performance in their professional examinations often depends on good support from their supervisor.

At selected miniPAC events and main PAC are sessions which are designed to prepare supervisors for this important role. There are generic skills development in areas such as coaching and feedback, and there are course-specific sessions as well.

**See ProFile and iLearn for miniPAC programme details.**

### **DLP and CLP accreditation (Dispensing/contact lens lead professional)**

Every store should have DLP or CLP who is accredited to deliver peer discussion sessions in store.

**If you have any queries please email [people.development@specsavers.com](mailto:people.development@specsavers.com)**

The DLP is responsible for ensuring that appropriate PAI modules are delivered to the DOs and CLOs in store as well as the optometrists in store.

Following feedback from partners we have redesigned the PAI programme so it no longer requires the store to interact with the GOC's CET provider web site.

### **The Guide to running a PAI is available via iLearn. Search 'PAI'**

All DLPs should keep their contact email details updated on iLearn so they can receive news and information direct to their inbox.

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## Senior practitioner development

Development is a career-long activity and with changes in the profession and the NHS there will be a wealth of opportunity for new avenues of development over the next few years. Developing new training and development options for experienced DOs and CLOs, whether or not they take on management responsibilities or follow the career path to partnership, are a priority for Professional Advancement.

### ILM Level 3 Certificate in Leadership & Management

ILM Level 3 builds on the knowledge gained from Level 2 and is designed to develop experienced managers and support those wishing to attend Pathway as part of their future development. Successful completion of ILM Level 3 is a pre-requisite to applying for Pathway. The content of this certificate covers a range of topics which will support the everyday operation of the store.

Each of the modules has online development, and an in-store workplace assignment to develop skills and offer the opportunity for your optometrist to take on some of the people challenges that will enable them to be a truly rounded professional, contributing to the whole store and giving the best professional service to the customer.

The modules are:

**Understanding leadership** - This module will clarify the role of a leader and give direction in how you can develop your own leadership style and approach whilst maintaining the day to day challenges that management provides.

**Solving problems and making decisions** - This module will support you to identify issues, establish the root cause, solve problems and make decisions which are then implemented to improve performance.

**Planning change** - This module will give you the knowledge to be able to plan change in a business. It considers change more strategically and provides you with tools to being the process of planning change.

**Performance management** - This module will develop your knowledge and understanding to be able to manage performance at all levels in the workplace. Practical tools will give you the knowledge, skills and confidence to drive business and personal success.

**Workplace coaching** - The role of a manager is increasingly focused on coaching to drive performance. This module will enable you to understand good practice in workplace coaching.

**Discipline in the workplace** - This module will develop your knowledge and understanding of discipline in the workplace. This covers the Specsavers policies and procedures and develops the information available to all on Connect.

**Conflict management** - Managing conflict is part of the work of a manager. This module will help you to identify ways of managing conflict but also understand creating harmony within teams.

**Negotiating & networking** - This module will develop your knowledge and understanding of negotiation and networking in the workplace.

**For further details see iLearn under Available Training.**

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## What are my next steps?

The dispensing and contact lens optician career path is refreshed each year to ensure our programme of development secures Specsavers' position as employer of choice for aspiring and qualified DOs and CLOs and enhances our professional reputation with customers.

Salary and package guidance is beyond the scope of this document. Please contact Specsavers Recruitment Services for this information.

Participation in the training described in this pack is logged on the individual's iLearn training record so it can be used as part of a regular meeting with the practitioner's line manager for planning training and career development and performance management.

Feedback on all elements of the career path and suggestions for new initiatives are welcome.

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## Contacts:

Further information on professional training and development events and courses. To set up an iLearn account or check passwords:

**people.development@specsavers.com / 01489 862 246**

TDO and Cert 4 supervision queries:

**tony.douglass@specsavers.com / 01695 554 209**

Contact SRS for all your recruitment needs:

Specsavers Recruitment Services **uk.recruitment@specsavers.com / 01566 771 888**

Fax **01566 771 897** / Web **jobs.specsavers.co.uk**



