



ensuring vision is in safe hands

a career in dispensing optics

Association of British Dispensing Opticians



a rewarding future

A career as a dispensing optician (DO) can be extremely rewarding. One of the many benefits that is often mentioned by members of the profession is that 'no two days are the same'; indeed the demands in daily practice are wide, varied and constantly changing.

Dispensing optics is a career option that suits those who, as well as having attained the basic entry requirements, enjoy problem solving and wish to strongly develop and apply the technical and communication skills acquired during their training. Successful dispensing requires a skilled consultation process to accurately assess the individual needs of the patient to

thereby be able to recommend and provide suitable eye wear products and solutions; not least the job also requires someone with commercial awareness and expertise.

Dispensing optics offers immense job satisfaction to people who are interested in combining a profession in health and social care with a mathematical/ scientific knowledge base and enjoy interacting directly with the public.





Association of British Dispensing Opticians

what does a dispensing optician do?

A dispensing optician will provide advice and supply the most comfortable fitting and aesthetically appealing spectacles after taking account of your personal visual, lifestyle and vocational needs. A major skill is the interpretation of your prescription and the recommendation of lenses, tints and coatings to provide optimum visual performance, combined

with suitable spectacle frames to ensure a comfortable fit. The specialist skills of the dispensing optician have a practical bias, including taking measurements, spectacle frame fitting, adjustments and repairs. As well as taking the necessary measurements for spectacles DOs also keep records of these specifications.

Dispensing opticians play a vitally important role in advising parents and dispensing to children. Another area of expertise is the assessment of visually impaired patients and the dispensing of low vision aids. Many dispensing opticians also become contact lens opticians (CLOs) and specialise in the fitting and supply of contact lenses.

Only registered dispensing opticians, optometrists and medical practitioners have qualifications that permit dispensing of spectacles to

children and to the visually impaired, only registered contact lens opticians, optometrists and medical practitioners have qualifications that permit the fitting of contact lenses.

All registered dispensing opticians have undergone a minimum of three years academic and practical training to qualify. Following qualification Continuing Education and Training (CET) is a statutory requirement for all fully-qualified DOs to retain GOC registration.





what is ABDO?



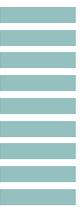
SOME OF THE ASSOCIATION'S CORE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

The Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) is the only professional body solely dedicated to the interests of dispensing opticians, both individually and collectively, and to the profession of dispensing optics.

Since it was founded in 1986 the total number of members has more than doubled and the Association has grown internationally and now has members and activities in over 25 other countries outside the UK. ABDO currently represents 5,700 qualified members in the UK who are registered with and regulated by the General Optical Council (GOC). The Association also has 800 overseas members, some 2,000 student members worldwide and over 600 Associate members.

- Political and legislative lobbying for the rights and status of dispensing opticians
- Providing professional advice and guidelines
- Setting the syllabus for ophthalmic dispensing examinations
- Acting as an awarding body for ophthalmic dispensing qualifications
- Conducting examinations and providing trained examiners
- Providing extensive CET (Continuing Education and Training)
- Encouraging lifelong learning and the provision of higher/honours qualifications
- Providing a comprehensive range of membership benefits and services
- Working proactively with other optical bodies (ABDO is an active member of the Optical Confederation and a stakeholder in LOCSU and participates in the Careers in Optics working group)

To find out more, visit the ABDO website at www.abdo.org.uk.



what qualifications are needed to start a career in dispensing optics?

Those seeking to start a career in dispensing optics will need to have 5 GCSEs of grade c or above in English, mathematics, science and two other subjects. You need to have evidence of recent study (within the last five years) and/or experience in practice of ten years or more.

Access courses are available from ABDO College which are designed to help prospective dispensing optician students to meet the necessary entry requirements. They are also a useful refresher for those who have been out of education for some time. The Access courses are available in the key subjects of English, General Science, Human Biology, Mathematics, Optics and Dispensing. Each passed access course is accepted in place of one GCSE.





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GCSEs

THERE ARE **THREE** BASIC STEPS ON THE ROUTE TO BECOMING A DISPENSING OPTICIAN

ONE

Complete and pass a three-year course of studying dispensing optics at a GOC-approved training institution.

There are three modes of study to choose from:

A. A three-year distance learning course offered by ABDO College or other GOC-approved training institution, combined with suitable employment.

This is the most popular option for many DO students and their employers.

B. A two-year full time training course at a GOC-approved training institution followed by one year's salaried work in a practice under supervision.

C. A three-year day release training course with a GOC-approved training institution, combined with suitable employment.

or

or

how to become a dispensing optician

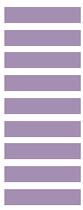
TWO

Pass all parts of the Professional Qualifying Examinations - examinations are run by the Association of British Dispensing Opticians in conjunction with the training establishments.

THREE

All students enrolling on courses that lead to ABDO qualifications must register with the General Optical Council and become ABDO members.





the 'FBDO' and other professional qualifications

The regulatory authorities (Ofqual in England, DELLS in Wales and CEA in Northern Ireland) have accredited the ABDO Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing at Level 6 on the National Qualifications Framework. This is the same academic standard as a Bachelors Degree with Honours or graduate certificates and graduate diplomas. Attainment of the Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing allows use of the 'FBDO' (Fellow of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians) suffix and enables registration with the General Optical Council to practise as a dispensing optician in the UK.

ABDO currently awards five accredited professional qualifications:

Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing*	Level 6	FBDO
Certificate in Contact Lens Practice	Level 6	FBDO CL
Diploma in Advanced Contact Lens Practice	Level 7	FBDO (Hons) CL
Diploma in The Assessment & Management of Low Vision	Level 6	FBDO (Hons) LVA
Diploma in Spectacle Lens Design	Level 7	FBDO (Hons) SLD
A refraction qualification is also available		FBDO R

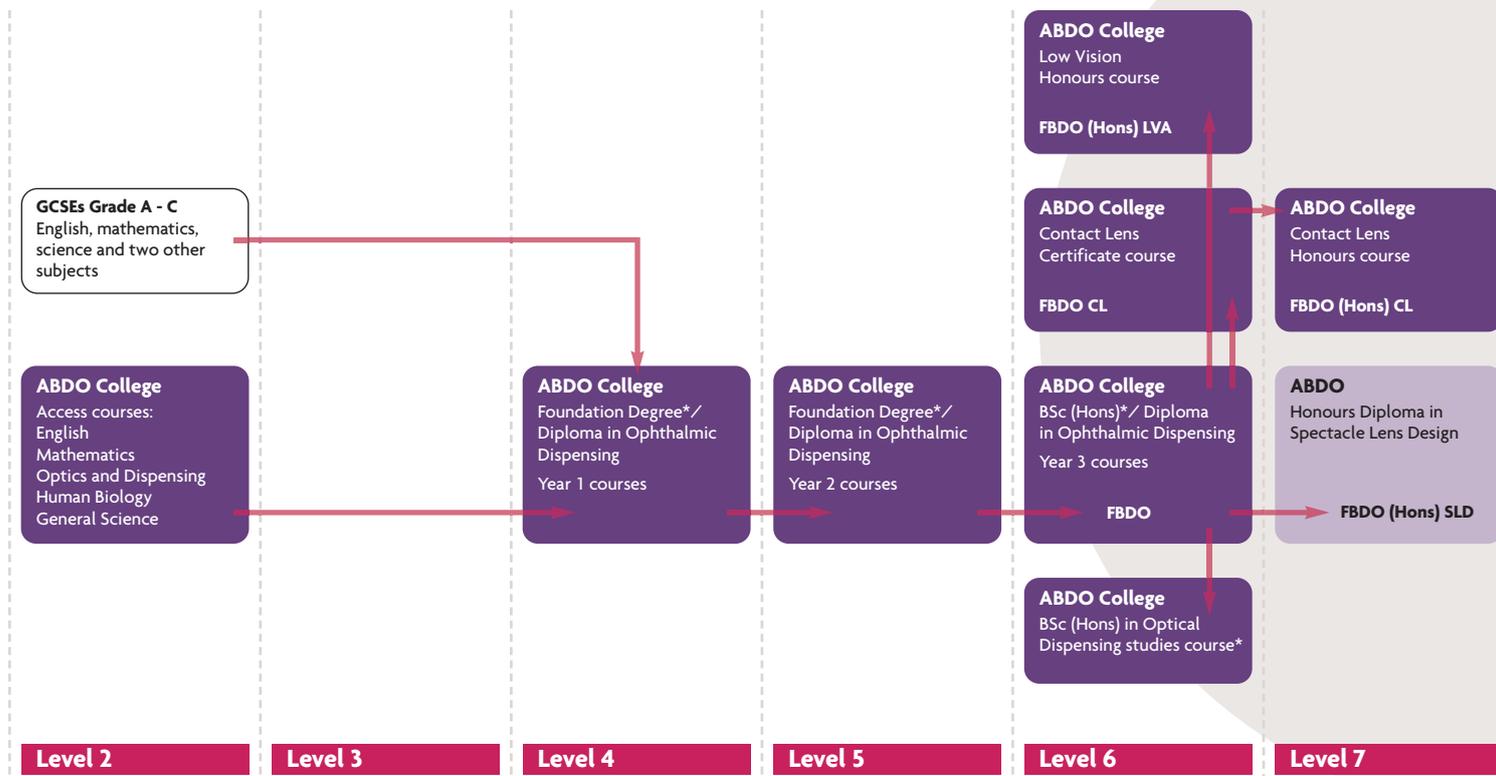
** ABDO College, working in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University, also offers the opportunity to attain a BSc (Hons) degree in ophthalmic dispensing.*



a progressive career pathway

The 'FBDO' qualification is a stepping stone to higher professional qualifications and numerous career opportunities. Many qualified dispensing opticians expand their skills and progress their career into management, practice ownership, sales and marketing, manufacturing optics, optical education or optometry.

ophthalmic dispensing career progression pathway



* In conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU)

Colleges and universities offering ophthalmic dispensing courses



The ophthalmic dispensing career progression pathway chart on the left outlines the courses offered by ABDO College and how they link with ABDO professional qualifications.

ABDO COLLEGE

Godmersham Park, Godmersham
Canterbury, Kent CT4 7DT
Telephone 01227 738 829
Web www.abdocollege.org.uk

ABDO COLLEGE & CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

ABDO College working in partnership with Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) provides distance learning courses offering a Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing leading to BSc (Hons) and the ABDO Level 6 FBDO qualifications.

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

Department of Optometry
and Ophthalmic Dispensing,
East Road, Cambridge CB1 1PT
Telephone 0845 271 3333
Web www.anglia.ac.uk

BRADFORD COLLEGE

Department of Pure and
Applied Sciences
Great Horton Road
Bradford BD7 1AY
Telephone 01274 433 333
Web www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk

CITY & ISLINGTON COLLEGE

Centre for Applied Sciences,
311-321 Goswell Road,
London EC1V 7DD
Telephone 020 7700 9333
Web www.candi.ac.uk

GLASGOW CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY

Department of Vision Sciences
School of Life Sciences,
Govan Mbeki Building
Cowcaddens Road
Glasgow G4 0BA
Telephone 0141 331 3000
Web www.gcu.ac.uk



abdo



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