

Fellowship Dispensing Diploma Information Sheet

Please read the following carefully. By signing the course application form, you are agreeing to the following terms and conditions.

General

ABDO College specialises in the provision of blended and distance learning education for the optical profession. The Fellowship Dispensing Diploma course is for trainee Dispensing Opticians working in optical practice in the UK, Ireland or overseas who are interested in advancing their optical knowledge to achieve a professional qualification.

The distance learning assignments will be delivered through a virtual learning environment (VLE). It is a requirement therefore that you have regular access to a computer, with internet connection, a scanner and Microsoft Word/PDF software.

The course comprises of the following elements:

Coursework – 32 units to be studied by distance learning. Students will be expected to study for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

Block release – four weeks. Students will be required to attend ABDO College in Godmersham for two weeks twice each academic year for face to face learning in a classroom setting.

The course takes three years and prepares students for the fellowship diploma examinations (FBDO). The course is made up of units of work, assignment questions, block release study and practice based learning.

The dispensing courses are periodically reviewed by the General Optical Council (GOC) who have recorded their approval of the College as a recognised training institution in accordance with the Optician's Act.

Entry Requirements

The minimum entry standard (as set out by the Association of British Dispensing Opticians) is the achievement of 5 GCSEs, grades C (Level 4 from 2017) or above in:

- Mathematics
- English
- A science based subject
- Two other subjects

ABDO College recognise the importance of knowledge and skills that have been developed through work and assigns accreditation for prior learning for those applicants with at least five years relevant optical experience. Please note however that ALL candidates are required to have achieved the required academic level in Mathematics and English.

In order for your application to be processed, please ensure that you enclose evidence of your qualifications or, a letter (s) to confirm 5 years optical experience along with your Maths and English

certificate. Only photocopies of your certificates should be sent - **do not send originals**. For those that do not possess GCSEs (or equivalent) in the required subjects, please contact the college.

ABDO membership subscription

All ABDO College students must become a student member of ABDO. Please complete the enclosed application form and return it with your course application.

GOC student registration

All UK and Republic of Ireland students must hold student registration with the General Optical Council. Forms are available from www.optical.org/ and should be completed and returned to the GOC — **NOT the College**.

Overseas students

Please ensure that you check with your own regulatory body before starting this course.

Malaysian students must also retain membership with MAPO (www.mapo.org.my)

South African students must retain membership with HPCSA (www.hpcsa.co.za)

Overseas students do not need to attend the block release studies.

Employer Involvement

It is a requirement of the course to be working in a dispensing practice, for a minimum of 30 hours per week, while undertaking the Fellowship Dispensing Diploma course. This must be under the supervision of a suitably qualified person, in an environment that will provide them with opportunities to meet the GOC competencies and expectations for practical experience. This may require a change in working patterns in the practice to ensure that there are frequent, regular progress reviews between the supervisor and the student.

Trainees will be out of practice for a minimum of four weeks each academic year to attend block release sessions at ABDO College and will also require extra support and time out of practice for examinations. In addition to this, employers need to make time available for the trainee and Supervisor to spend time together in practice for the training and assessment of practical skills and for pastoral support and guidance.

Submission of assignments and continuous assessment

All students should be aware that if their work is submitted late, reduced or no marks will be allocated. Students unable to achieve course schedules will be withdrawn with no refund.

There are 32 weekly assignments to complete. The pass mark for each assignment is 40%. In order for students to be eligible to sit ABDO theory and practical examinations, 100% of assignments need to be submitted on time and, gain an average mark of 40% or more in each topic.

Block release course studies

All ABDO College students in the UK and the Republic of Ireland are required to attend ABDO College for two separate fortnights study each academic year, as instructed by the GOC. Failure to attend for your blocks will result in removal from the course.

Diplomas are awarded only to those who pass the appropriate examinations. The examining body is ABDO Examinations.

Year One Exams – Preliminary Qualifying Examination (PQE)

One Theory exam One Practical exam

Year Two Exams – Final Qualifying Examination (FQE)

Three Theory exams

Year Three Exams – Final Qualifying Examination (FQE)

Three Theory exams One Practical exam

For more information, please visit the examinations section on the ABDO website.

Students who successfully complete the three year Fellowship Dispensing Diploma course and related examinations will become qualified Dispensing Opticians and earn the right to add the suffix FBDO after their name. ABDO practical examinations can only be taken in the UK (excluding Malaysian students).