

Hospital Pre-reg Year

A pre-registration year in a hospital allows you to gain experience in a wide variety of optometric disciplines which are directly related to the PQE syllabus. Optometry departments vary in size but in all you would expect to examine patients ranging from young infants to the elderly. In addition to routine optometric disciplines such as refraction and dispensing, you are likely to be involved on a daily basis in contact lens and low vision aid clinics, visual field examination, ultrasound biometry and the examination of patients with orthoptic anomalies. Some departments will offer more specialised investigative techniques. You will routinely encounter all types of ocular and systemic pathologies.

All departments are well equipped and you will have access to a full range of optometric drugs. You will be working not just with optometrists but also ophthalmologists, orthoptists, nurses and other health care professionals, ensuring a sound grounding for your professional future.

All hospital departments are geared towards teaching and will offer on-going education, not just for pre-registration optometrists but also for junior medical staff. Some hospitals run their own courses and ophthalmic study days, and all will encourage attendance at refresher courses.

In addition to provision for attendance at external refresher courses, preparation for the PQEs is usually assisted through in-house tutorials. Further guidance on the PQEs and pre-registration year in general is facilitated by the large number of hospital optometrists who are either College examiners or contribute in other ways to academic and professional matters within optometry. Attendance at the annual Hospital Optometry Conference is usually encouraged and provides yet another platform for discussion about the pre-registration year.

A hospital based pre-registration year should offer not just academic and clinical experience but also access to hospital social life including club and sporting facilities. This can be invaluable if you are moving to a new area from your university. Some hospitals will offer accommodation at a subsidised rate and all will provide subsidised canteen facilities.

Your pre-registration year will equip you to deal with a full range of optometric/orthoptic problem cases and will serve as an excellent professional grounding for a career within the Hospital Eye Service or in General Practice. Above all, it will suit graduates seeking a varied and challenging year of training.