



European Council for Optometry and Optics

Guidelines for the accreditation of qualifications which meet the standards of the European Diploma in Optometry

Part III:

Guidance for Training Institutions, Candidates and Examiners

Exemplar Portfolio

Introduction

The European Diploma is the highest non-therapeutic qualification in Europe and is equivalent to World Council of Optometry Category 3. To demonstrate you have achieved this standard you need to keep a record of all the primary healthcare eye examinations that you undertake on real patients, either as a student in supervised university clinics, during externships or in your professional practice following graduation.

This evidence is presented in the form of a Portfolio and the European Diploma can only be awarded to candidates who successfully complete this.

The requirements for the Portfolio are set out in the Exemplar Portfolio at the end of this document. To complete, you should select 150 cases seen over the last two years that demonstrate your optometric knowledge and skills. For 130 of these cases full clinical details are not required but you must include in the Portfolio a list of these cases, in the tabular format shown in Section 5 of the Exemplar Portfolio, so that these patient records could, when necessary, be retrieved from the practice and examined by assessors either from a training institution or externally as part of the Accreditation process. The remaining 20 cases are to be submitted with the portfolio in sufficient detail to demonstrate that you have been offering optometric care at the European Diploma scope of practice. These should be cases that demonstrate the range of your optometric skills and knowledge. Five detailed case descriptions are required under each of the four headings given in Section 3 of the Exemplar Portfolio.

This document provides guidance for candidates and the institutions where they train. It is possible that the Portfolio will be completed during the time spent at the Training institution (pre-qualification), in which case Training Institutions need to guide their students as to what is required to successfully meet the Portfolio requirements of the European Diploma qualification. It is also possible that all or some of the Portfolio will be completed after qualification. In the latter cases, the Training institution will provide a framework for completion of this.

The Purpose of the Portfolio

The Portfolio provides ECOO with the evidence to that you have the patient experience and clinical skills to offer optometric care at the level of the European Diploma. This Guidance is for candidates and the training institutions where they train, and for the Examiners. The purpose of this Guidance is to suggest what level of detail might be expected in the detailed cases and in particular how to present these data in the twenty detailed case studies.

Guidance is given below on each of the three sections of the Portfolio to help the Training Institution advise candidates when completing up their portfolio, and to help Candidates who have left their Training Institution. The guidance is also for Examiners who assess portfolios. It is hoped that this guidance will ensure consistency in the presentation of the patient experience data by Candidates (guided by the staff of fully accredited institutions, in the case of Candidates who are still student) and of the evaluation of these data by examiners from ECOO.

1. Guidance for Candidates & their Training Institutions

Guidance for Completion of each Section of the Portfolio

Section 1. Candidate details

In this section the Candidate provides his/her name, student identification number and address and contact details.

The remainder of this section lists the educational route the Candidate has followed to reach the stage of submitting the Portfolio and lists what supporting evidence is required.

Candidates submitting the Portfolio will have successfully completed an ECOO-accredited course and the ECOO accreditation will cover the period when the student trained there. It is possible the course they took was only partially accredited by ECOO and a follow-up course (or additional ECOO-accredited learning) was undertaken at another Institution, or at the same Institution at a later time, in order to ensure that in sum, their training leads to full ECOO accreditation of their programme of learning. In both of these scenarios, there are two possibilities:

- (i) Candidates complete their Portfolio whilst registered as a student in a Training Institution which has been approved by ECOO or
- (ii) Candidates that are unable to gain sufficient patient experience within their period of training for them to fulfil the Portfolio requirements. In this scenario, the Candidate completes a Portfolio after graduation containing any suitable patient experience gained within the training programme and further patient experience gained as a qualified optometrist. The candidate then submits this to the training institution and this is assessed by the training institution based on the criteria of the European Diploma Portfolio requirements.

For both (i) & (ii), the following information is required: The name of the training programme(s) attended, the name and address of the training institution, the starting and finishing dates of study at the institution. The name and address of the practice(s) where the candidate gained clinical experience, who their supervisor/manager was, and start and finish dates of placements. A certified copy of the national (professional) diploma and/or university diploma.

Section 2: Evidence of Clinical Experience

The objective of this section is to broadly define the nature and extent of the Candidate's optometric experience on the basis of the approximate numbers of patients seen over a typical time frame of two years, up to a maximum of three years.

Approximate patient numbers are divided into: Eye examinations; Ophthalmic dispensings; Contact lenses (RGP and Soft); referrals for ocular disease and abnormalities; Patients seen under ophthalmological supervision in a hospital or eye clinic.

Supporting evidence

A list of 130 Patients presented in the tabular format indicated in the Exemplar Portfolio, with each patient classified into the appropriate group(s). The 130 patients should **not** be identified by name but by a unique reference number that will permit the original record to be retrieved if necessary.

Section 3: Evidence of scope of practice

The requirement of this section is that the candidate presents twenty detailed case records that demonstrate experience of the whole range of optometric practice at the level of the European Diploma (WCO Category 3).

Primary Care Eye Examinations (5) – All the records should cover a complete eye examination, starting with a summary of the history, any previous treatment up to the time of the examination and follow the guidance given below. The five patients selected should include two with binocular vision anomalies, one patient with low vision and one patient who is 12 years of age or younger.

Abnormal Ocular Condition Cases (5) – All the records should cover a complete eye examination, starting with a summary of the history, any previous treatment up to the time of the examination and follow the guidance given below. The discussion should include a description of the abnormal ocular condition and how the presentation in this case differs from the text book description. Three of the cases should include letters referring the patient to an ophthalmologist or onto the next step in the health system ladder.

Contact lenses (5) including 1 RGP fitting – All the records should cover a complete eye examination, starting with a summary of the history, any previous treatment up to the time of the examination and follow the guidance given below. The contact lens fittings should be illustrated with appropriate diagrams or photographs.

Dispensing (5) - All the records should cover a complete eye examination, starting with a summary of the history, any previous treatment up to the time of the examination and follow the guidance given below. These records should be of patients whose ophthalmic dispensings presented particular challenges. Outline the nature of the dispensing difficulty and justify the solution chosen.

Presentation of the 20 detailed cases

There is no standard template for the twenty detailed cases. Candidates should present these cases comprehensively as they think most appropriate and the cases may be all in the same format or different for each patient. The 20 patients should **not** be identified by name but by a unique reference number that will permit the original record to be retrieved if necessary. Pertinent information to the clinical case like age and sex, however, should be provided. There are many ways of presenting these detailed cases and it is for the candidate to decide what format and content is most effective for each case. The diagnosis and management

must be evidence-based and as far as is possible the evidence should be described. Further guidance on the presentation of these detailed cases is given in the '**Guidance for Training Institutions, Candidates and Examiners**' document.

The important thing is that in each of these twenty detailed cases the candidates should demonstrate:

- their understanding of the patient's problems
- how they decide which clinical tests are appropriate
- how they interpret their clinical findings
- how they come to a diagnosis, reflecting upon differential diagnoses
- the logic of their management plan
- a brief discussion of the case with supportive information used for management plan and/or prognosis.

Further Guidance for Candidates (and their Training Institutions) who may not be familiar with presenting Detailed Case Studies.

The following list of headings and content might be useful when deciding on how to present a particular case. These are just suggestions for you to consider and obviously not all are relevant to all patients.

History and Symptoms (Anamnesis):

Age, gender, ethnical background (pertinent for differential diagnosis)

- Chief complaint: Why does the patient want an eye examination?
Signs and symptoms as described by patient
What additional information do you obtain about the patient's complaints?
For contact lens or spectacle follow-up, what additional information is needed for you to evaluate compliance?
- Refractive history: Does the patient wear glasses, contact lenses (solutions used), etc.
- Ocular history: Did the patient have problems in the past? Did or does he/she have medical or surgical treatments in the past or currently? If so, when and where?
- Systemic history: Pertinent information about systemic disease such as diabetes, hypertension, thyroid disease, etc.
- Medication use: Does the patient use medication (think of side effects)? If so, what type and how often? Compliance? Including rewetting-drops for ocular problems.
- Family history: Any history of ocular disease or pertinent systemic conditions in family?

Differential diagnosis:

Based on the obtained information provided by the patient during history taking, you should be able to provide at least two diagnoses which could be the cause of the patient's complaints. Which condition do you need to rule in or out during your examination? Based on the differential diagnoses, you then build your examination strategy.

Clinical Investigation:

List the tests and the test results you performed to evaluate the patient. These should include examination of the anterior and posterior segments of the eye, cover test, ocular motility, objective and subjective refraction and any other tests as required, supporting photographs, printouts, visual fields, details of diagnostic drugs used etc. Indicate whether test results are outside normal limits and whether findings are different from what you would expect considering age, gender, appearance etc. It is essential that your examination of the eye is undertaken by direct or indirect ophthalmoscopy and that you include a description of this in your detailed cases. Fundus photographs alone do not give sufficient evidence of your clinical investigatory skills.

Pictorial evidence: Including drawings, diagrams, visual field plots and photographs in the record is recommended. If a photo slit-lamp is not available it is possible to take reasonable quality photographs of the external eye with a normal digital camera or a smartphone. Sometimes photographing through the slit lamp eye piece can give adequate results.

Tentative Diagnoses:

Provide a list of possible diagnoses. Think of refractive problems, ocular disease primary or secondary to systemic disease, systemic diseases that potentially could cause the current or future ocular problems.

Management Plan:

Each diagnosis should go along with a plan that you make on how to approach or solve the patient's problems. The plan should contain pertinent information on

- Your clinical judgment (i.e., situation stable, better, worse)
- Are there other tests you need to perform to come up with a definite diagnosis?
- Your advice and explanation to the patient
- Whether or not you need to refer the patient, to whom and the timeframe
- Do you need to see the patient again for follow-up? If so, when?
- What is the appropriate refractive correction?
- How should the refractive correction be dispensed? Spectacles or contact lenses
- Specification of spectacles lenses and frame/Contact lenses.
- Instructions for wear.

Discussion:

Provide a brief discussion of your case. What problems did you encounter? Describe the thinking process of how you came up with the differential diagnosis after history. Describe how you came to the final diagnosis and why you did or did not refer the patient. Justify your refractive correction. Why and when you want to see the patient again for a follow-up.

Additional guidance for Contact lens fitting case record**Example of information needed on Portfolio contact lens case.**

A contact lens case should not only contain the contact lens specific information but also a baseline full eye examination including posterior segment assessment prior to lens fitting.

The following is an example of the information needed for a contact lens case:

1. Full eye examination (see above)
2. Contact lens specific testing
 - Refraction
 - Cornea topographical data:
 - Central and peripheral keratometry readings OR
 - Corneal topography pictures with readable K-readings
 - Data of the selected preliminary lens
 - Evaluation of the preliminary lens including supporting evidence
 - Drawings, photos (or movie on a CD) showing the movement and positioning of the lens
 - Fluorescein evaluation (drawing or photo) for RGP lenses
 - Refraction with preliminary lens
 - Tentative Diagnoses (see information above)
 - Management Plan (see information above plus)
 - Include changes you need to make to improve the lens fitting
 - Provide an explanation why you need to make the changes
 - Include a follow-up visit with the evaluation of the adjusted lens
 - Include the data of the lens prescribed
 - Discussion (see information on discussion above)

It would be sensible to choose contact lens cases to show your skills e.g.

- 2 cases Soft-toric contact lenses (astigmatism > 2 dioptres)
- 2 cases RGP-toric contact lenses (astigmatism > 2 dioptres)
- 1 case Specialty contact lens (i.e., keratoconus, keratoplasty after refractive surgery, bifocal RGP lens, multifocal RGP or soft contact lens, scleral lens, etc.)

The above example is based on and specific to a contact lens case. Candidates will need to develop a similar testing and reporting scheme for other cases, i.e., binocular vision or ocular health problems.

Section 4: Certificates

Certificate to be completed by the candidate. Certificates of support from lecturers, colleagues etc.

Section 5: Table recording patients seen by the candidate

This table gives the format for presentation of the details of the 130 patients required in Section 2.

2. Guidance for Training Institutions and Examiners assessing the Portfolio

This advice is additional to and should be read together with earlier section 1: Guidance for Candidates.

Training institutions that are accredited with the European Diploma need to demonstrate their procedures for assessment of Portfolios, and their guidance for students in how to successfully collect and present evidence of their skills and experience. These guidelines should be consulted when assessing their students' patient experience to ensure that it is at an equivalent standard to that described below.

Notes for Assessors

Section 2: The list of 130 cases

The patients presented should cover all the classifications documented in the Exemplar Portfolio. A system should be in place for the validity of these data to be checked, perhaps by request for a specified 10% sample of patient records.

Section 3: The 20 detailed cases

The assessment is based on the completeness and coherence of the detailed cases.

Points to consider:

- Has the candidate gained sufficient information from the patient?
- Have all likely possibilities been explored? Have inconsistencies in the findings been noted and discussed?
- Is there an adequate description of the ocular and general health of the patient?
- Is the relationship between unaided vision, refractive error and corrected acuity plausible? Is the relationship between the objective refraction, the subjective refraction and the final prescription plausible? Are any differences noted and discussed?
- In the different cases is there a reasonable range of numerical descriptors e.g., C/D ratio, A/V ratio, phoria, anterior chamber angle, IOP etc.

Criteria:

Overall are you convinced that the Candidate understood the problems of the patient, performed an adequate investigation and provided a safe and satisfactory service to the patient? Are the detailed cases convincing as an eye examination performed by a reasonably experienced (1-3 years), and competent optometrist working independently with patients at the level of the European Diploma?

NOTE: The Candidate's investigation and management does not have to be the same as how the Examiner would have managed the patient!

- END -



**The European Council of Optometry and
Optics
The European Diploma in Optometry**

**Portfolio of Clinical Experience:
BLANK EXAMPLAR PORTFOLIO**

Candidate's Name

Date of Submission

The Portfolio of Clinical Experience

The Portfolio is the record of the clinical experience gained by candidates for the European Diploma in Optometry either during their undergraduate education and training or as a postgraduate or a combination of the two.

The purpose of the Portfolio is to present evidence of the quantity, diversity and quality of care that the candidate provides for patients.

Full accreditation for the European Diploma is only awarded when parts I-IV are accredited and the Portfolio has been satisfactorily completed.

Completing the Portfolio

Before starting to complete the Portfolio you should carefully read the accompanying document “**Guidance for Training Institutions, Candidates and Examiners**”. This sets out the numbers of full eye examinations required to have been conducted in the last two (maximum three) years of your training and the smaller number of detailed patient cases that you are to submit. It also explains the content and format required for these cases.

National Data Protection and Privacy Legislation

In order to comply with data protection and confidentiality laws you should ensure that you have the patients’ consent to use their case records. Also observe the privacy regulations in your country of practice. The patient should NOT be identified by name or address but by a unique reference number that will permit the original record to be retrieved if requested by the Examiner.

Further Information

For accreditation purposes of the programme and/or portfolio, the portfolio and cases may be reviewed by members of the accreditation panel of the European Diploma.



Section 1: Candidates Details

Name	
Address	
e-mail	
Contact phone number	

a) European Diploma by examination

Candidate number	
Date and examination centre of completing all the written and practical examinations of the European Diploma.	

b) Diploma by accreditation of the European Diploma Examinations

Name of accredited programme	
Name of training institution	
Address of training institution	
Period of study	
Full or Partial accreditation of the European Diploma Examinations *	
If partial accreditation, list the Parts and or Sections of the European Diploma Examination that have been accredited.	
Date of completing the non-accredited written and practical sections of the European Diploma Examination.	

***If the qualification is only partially accredited the candidate will be required to take the Diploma examination in the sections not accredited before submitting the Portfolio.**

c) Diploma by accreditation of the all European Diploma Examinations but NOT the patient experience requirements of the Portfolio.

Name of accredited programme	
Name of training institution	
Address of training institution	
Period of study at the institution	

Section 2: Evidence of Clinical Experience

Number of months/years in practice as:	
A qualified optometrist*	
A qualified optician*	

** in some countries, e.g., Spain there is a joint/single profession of optica-optometrista*

Evidence available to support this:

	Yes	No
*National certificate		
*Professional Diploma		
*A certified copy of these certificates should be sent with the application		

Number of patients examined during the last two years of career

Eye examinations		
Ophthalmic dispensing		
Contact Lens fittings RGP		
Soft		
Referrals for ocular abnormalities		
Patients seen in hospital or eye clinic		
Evidence Available:	Yes	No
Practice records		
Training institution records		
Personal logbook		

Section 3: Evidence of Scope of Practice

Please attach copies of **twenty detailed patient cases** that demonstrate that your scope of practice matches that of the European Diploma. Note that there is no standard template provided for these twenty detailed cases. Candidates should present these cases comprehensively as they think most appropriate and the detailed cases may be all to the same format or different for each patient. The 20 patients should **not** be identified by name but by a unique reference number that will permit the original record to be retrieved if necessary. Pertinent information to the clinical case like age and sex, however, should be provided.

There are many ways of presenting these detailed cases and it is for the candidate to decide what format and content is most effective for each case. The diagnosis and management must be evidence-based and as far as is possible the evidence should be described. Further guidance on the presentation of these detailed cases is given in the '**Guidance for Training Institutions, Candidates and Examiners**' document.

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- how they decide which clinical tests are appropriate,
- how they interpret their clinical findings,
- how they come to a diagnosis, reflecting on differential diagnoses
- the logic of their management plan
- a brief discussion of the case with supportive information used for management plan and/or prognosis.

Detailed cases required:

- **5 primary care eye examinations to include at least:**
 - ◆ **2 binocular vision anomalies**
 - ◆ **1 low vision case**
 - ◆ **1 paediatric case (for this purpose paediatric is 12 years or under)**
- **5 abnormal ocular condition cases to include at least:**
 - ◆ **3 referrals**
- **5 contact lens cases to include at least:**
 - ◆ **1 RGP fitting**
- **5 Dispensings to include a range of different frame and lens types**

In addition, you should include details of the practices where this experience was gained, together with the name and contact details of any professional colleagues who can provide references confirming the dates during which the experience was gained together, if possible, with references confirming your scope of practice.



Section 4: Certificate to be completed by the candidate:

I CERTIFY that the information in this Portfolio is correct and the clinical experience claimed can be substantiated by clinical records and that these records can be made available if required by the Educational Visitor panel of the European Diploma.

Signed _____

Date _____



Certificate(s) to be completed by eye care professionals

I CERTIFY that _____ was a student/colleague/employee from _____ to _____ and has undertaken the eye examinations listed in this Portfolio from _____ to _____ and that to the best of my knowledge has worked to the standards required by the European Diploma.

Signed _____

Date _____

Full Name _____

Qualification _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

e-mail address _____

A separate certificate should be completed for each period of experience at a training institution, in an optometric practice or an ophthalmology clinic.

