

Dispensing Optician

Dispensing opticians make up prescriptions for spectacle lenses, which they get from the optometrists or ophthalmologist who have tested a patient's eyes. They also fit and adjust the spectacle frames to the patient's face.

The Work

You could be:

- using a computer to make up the prescription for lenses from information from the optometrists
- helping a patient choose a pair of spectacle frames and advising on frames which are suitable for the lenses prescribed
- measuring distances on the face, to make sure the spectacles will fit
- ordering the spectacles from a prescription house and checking the delivery when it arrives
- fitting the completed spectacles, adjusting them if need be, and carrying out minor repairs on spectacles
- liaising with optical, retail and lab teams
- after further training, fitting contact lenses and advising on their use and maintenance
- arranging further visits in case alterations are needed
- managing the general running of the shop or practice.

Pay

Pay rates vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for qualified dispensing opticians in private practice in the UK tend to be about £30,000 a year. With experience, and taking on a management role, this can rise to around £35,000.

Conditions

- You usually work in an optician's shop or practice, although a few dispensing opticians work in hospitals.
- Hours are normally regular, but in shops weekend work is common.

Getting In

You must be registered with the General Optical Council (GOC), first as a student, then as a professional.

- Most enter this profession as a trainee with a qualified dispensing optician, and complete a three year Dispensing Optician Apprenticeship distance learning with the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) College – entry requirements are 5 subjects at National 5 including English, Maths and a science subject. Some employers may ask for additional subjects at Higher.

- Glasgow Caledonian University offers an earn as you learn BSc Ophthalmic Dispensing degree online for those employed as a trainee dispensing optician. For entry you would require 3 Highers at BCC including Biology (or Human Biology) Chemistry or Physics plus English and Maths at National 5 at B. On completion you will be eligible to register with the General Optical Council (GDC).
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.
- Relevant work experience is helpful.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- accurate and precise
- able to deal with scientific information
- prepared to pay attention to detail
- able to handle fine instruments
- able to get on well with people of all backgrounds and of all ages
- patient and caring.

You should have:

- a good eye for knowing which spectacles will suit customers
- good sales and communication skills
- a smart appearance.

Training

- After qualifying (through qualification and supervised work-based training) and registered with the GOC, you are required to complete Continuing Education and Training (CET).
- Many dispensing opticians specialise in the fitting and supply of contact lenses.
- Once you have gained registration, training is on the job, with short courses to keep you up to date.
- You need to renew your registration every year.
- ABDO offer post-diploma honours level courses to help qualified dispensing opticians advance their knowledge.

Getting On

- You might move into a senior post or into management.
- You might specialise in a particular area such as work with partially sighted people.
- You could become self-employed.
- You could go into teaching dispensing optics.

Contacts

Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO)

Tel: 01227 733 905

Email: membership@abdo.org.uk

Website: www.abdo.org.uk

Website (2): abdocollege.org.uk

X: @MembershipAbdo

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ABDOMembers

Careers in Eyecare

Website: www.careersineyecare.org.uk

General Optical Council

Tel: 020 7580 3898

Email: goc@optical.org

Website: www.optical.org

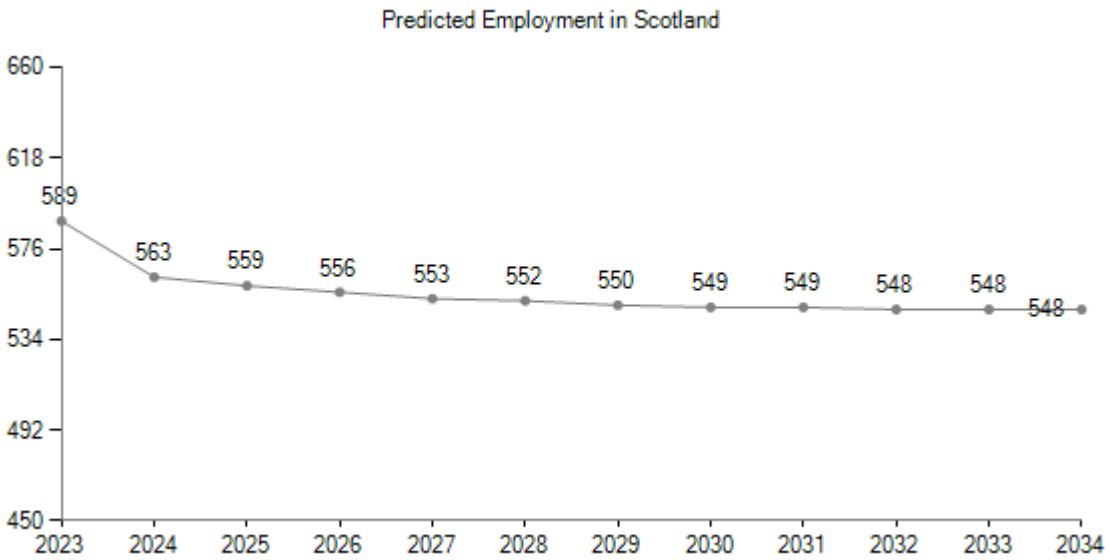
X: @GOC_UK

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.



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