Extracts from the **College of Optometrist-**Higher Qualification

**Completing a Higher qualification**

* Provides an in-depth understanding of the conditions you deal with every day in practice.
* Develops new skills and knowledge so you can provide new patient services or take up new career opportunities.
* Formally acknowledges your expertise and commitment to your patients, profession and personal development through the relevant affix.

Higher qualifications also provide Masters level credits.

* **Contact lens practice –** enabling you to select and fit contact lenses for common eye conditions, and more complex contact lenses for refractive management, ocular surface abnormalities and disease.
* **Glaucoma –** enabling you to manage glaucoma and related conditions effectively and participate in glaucoma clinics at varying levels of responsibility.
* **Low vision –** developing your skills in patient assessment and management and helping you to progress to more complex low vision cases and specialist populations.
* **Medical retina –** preparing you for working in photography-based diabetic retinopathy screening services and/or working under supervision in medical retina triage clinics and AMD treatment clinics. Candidates completing the Professional Certificate will be automatically exempt from the majority of the NHS England DESP training.
* **Paediatric eye care –** helping you to adapt your routine to meet the specific needs of your patient in a hospital or community setting.

Higher qualifications are **suitable for optometrists at all stages** of their careers and in all settings. There are three levels:-

* **Professional Certificate –** boosting your confidence and skills and enabling you to get more involved in community schemes.
* **Professional Higher Certificate –** enabling you to participate in community or hospital-based schemes involving the diagnosis, treatment and management of conditions such as glaucoma, or work in a consultant ophthalmologist-led medical retina service.
* **Professional Diploma –** designed for optometrists working in hospital clinics, or for community practitioners looking to offer commissioned services or run specialist clinics.

Higher qualification courses are developed and delivered by universities and hospitals and accredited by the College of Optometrists. They are delivered via a flexible commination of distance learning, coursework, assessments and practical sessions and, at higher levels, a portfolio of clinical experience.