

UK medical student ophthalmology teaching falling short

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UK medical schools are failing to comply with the recommended curriculum for ophthalmology, set out by the International Council of Ophthalmologists (ICO), suggests a survey published online in the *British Journal of Ophthalmology*.

Amid concerns that the specialty was being squeezed out of undergraduate education, the council urged medical schools to make it a core subject and produced guidance to help them do this.

But a [questionnaire](#) sent to 32 UK medical schools, which prompted 18 to complete returns, shows that while all include ophthalmology in the curriculum, the amount of time devoted to the subject varies from two to 12 days. Only four of the schools taught all 13 of the recommended formal teaching topics.

No school taught all 10 recommended clinical skills, and only one school taught nine of them, the responses show.

While most of the respondents (83%) formally assessed students' clinical skills at the end of the ophthalmic course, only seven (39%) required a pass in ophthalmology for the student to pass or complete the whole year.

The results are similar to an Australasian survey, say the authors, although there was more agreement among the Australasian medical schools on the content of the [ophthalmology](#) course.

Their findings prompt the authors to ask whether there is any point in devising "ideal" curricula if they are so widely ignored, and to wonder whether medical schools might not be wasting effort by developing their own curricula without any reference to those already produced.

They also question whether [medical students](#) are being taught the skills they need to deal with everyday [eye problems](#) that they are likely to encounter.

"This survey suggests that [doctors](#) in training receive varied ophthalmic training, most of which does not meet the recommended ICO standards, and some may receive insufficient training for their subsequent careers," they conclude.

Provided by British Medical Journal

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