



Resource review

For the first of a new series describing various contact lens resources available to optical professionals, *Optician* gives an overview of the CIBA Vision Academy website

As one of the best known online resources for optical professionals and students involved in contact lens related activity, the CIBA Vision Academy for Eyecare Excellence is certainly comprehensive in its scope. The overall aim of the website is to aid users to achieve success in both the clinical and business related areas of the optical sector.

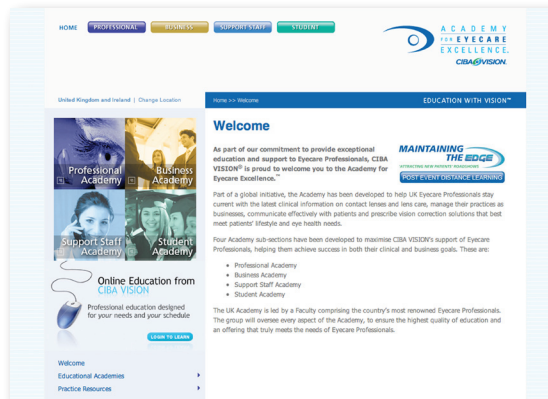
Although CIBA developed the Academy as a global project, the UK Academy benefits from being overseen by a faculty comprised of various experts on contact lenses and business management. To help users navigate effectively around the various resources, the Academy is divided into four sub-sections:

- Professional Academy
- Business Academy
- Support Staff Academy
- Student Academy.

CIBA say that the main purpose of the Professional Academy is to provide users with up-to-date clinical thinking on contact lenses and lens care. Specifically it offers users the chance to earn CET points by watching contact lens related video presentations online and then answering questions. There is also a lens fitting guide with information designed to help optical professionals maximise their ability to fit CIBA contact lens products. Practice owners can also join CIBA's Specialist Club (<http://specialist.cibavision.co.uk>) and use the website forums to discuss any of the topics presented within the Professional Academy.

Improve business

The Business Academy section of the website is to help practice owners achieve success by maximising their business skills. It contains information on CIBA's Management and Business Academy (MBA) Programme, together with links to the separate website and forum. The MBA meetings are typically held over two days and offer practitioners the opportunity to learn about various fields of practice management and network with like-minded professionals.



A professional fee guide can be accessed in the Business Academy. This is useful for practitioners who need assistance in changing their fee structures as the process is broken down into several manageable steps. One of the most useful tools provided is a spreadsheet that will calculate a level of fee that is in accordance with covering practice overheads and generating a reasonable level of profit. There is also a case study from a practice and a patient communication leaflet, which can be customised for different needs.

Concentrating on the significant role played in any optical practice by support teams, the Support Staff Academy contains practical learning resources to help with general motivation and encourage involvement on contact lens related matters. To benefit assistants who lack specific knowledge in this field, it is possible to order a copy of the *Optical Assistant's Guide to Contact Lenses* by Sarah Morgan. This training DVD and booklet informs as to the benefits

of contact lenses, and also imparts an understanding of the key issues involved in patients choosing contact lenses. There are also patient scenarios and ideas to use in practice.

Other resources available in the Support Staff Academy include a lens insertion and removal guide to help build confidence for discussion of contact lenses with patients.

Student support

CIBA's support for the future of the optical industry is apparent through the extensive Student Academy section of its Vision Academy website. This part has been developed specifically for students studying at university or in their pre-registration year. A highlight of this area is the 'Surviving Pre-reg' advice page, which aims to prepare students for what can be 'the hardest year' of their lives and includes a selection of top tips - the first of which is 'don't panic'.

The website also offers students and pre-regs the chance to pose clinical or business questions on the site, which will be answered by the appropriate members of the CIBA faculty.

Furthermore there is a section within the Student Academy on how to prepare for practical examinations and also some general optical career tips. Students and pre-regs can order a student pack, which includes a clinical contact lens management guide, an occluder and a yellow barrier filter.

A recent addition to the Vision Academy website is a section devoted to helping optical professionals deal with the teen demographic, which represents a strong business opportunity, according to CIBA, as it is possible to gain loyal customers at an early stage in their life. This 'Help Teens Say It With Their Eyes' area includes a document offering advice on how to remove barriers to contact lens use for teens.

This part of the website also aims to communicate the 'Wow Moment' experienced by a newly fitted patient. There is a video that features a UK-based optical professional talking about their experience of dealing with teens, and this is supplemented by a video of teens expressing their feelings about contact lenses.

In terms of marketing materials there is a downloadable and printable leaflet that will help teens think through and understand the benefits of contact lenses. ●

● CIBA Vision Academy for Eyecare Excellence
www.cibavisionacademy.co.uk