



ICO Exemptions: Transitional Rules

In September 2026 the College announced that the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO) qualifications would cease to be accepted as exempting qualifications for our FRCS Ophthalmology Part 1 and 2 exams from 1 January 2028.

Candidates who hold the relevant ICO qualifications and have had one or more attempts at either Part 2 or Part 3 of the FRCS Ophthalmology before 1 January 2028 will be permitted to continue to sit the FRCS examinations through to completion.

Candidates who hold the relevant ICO qualifications and have not attempted either Part 2 or Part 3 by 1 January 2028 will no longer be eligible to apply for the FRCS Ophthalmology exams through this route, and must enter through another examination route.

The transitional arrangements outlined in this document apply to candidates who hold ICO qualifications and wish to progress through the FRCS Ophthalmology exams. Candidates can also refer to the Exempting Qualifications document and should review both the text below and the images on pages 3 and 4 to assist them in their decision regarding their exam application.

All other candidates should refer to the regulations and exempting qualifications documents for information on eligibility.

Candidates who hold ICO exemption from Part 1

- Candidates who have already attempted Part 2 are permitted to continue applying for FRCS Ophthalmology exams.
- Candidates who have not yet attempted Part 2 must do so by 1 January 2028 to continue through this route.
- Candidates who are unable to take their first attempt at Part 2 by 1 January 2028 must either apply to sit FRCS Part 1 or apply for Part 2 through an alternative exempting qualification as listed on our website.
- Please see diagram on page 3.



Candidates who hold ICO exemption from both Part 1 and Part 2

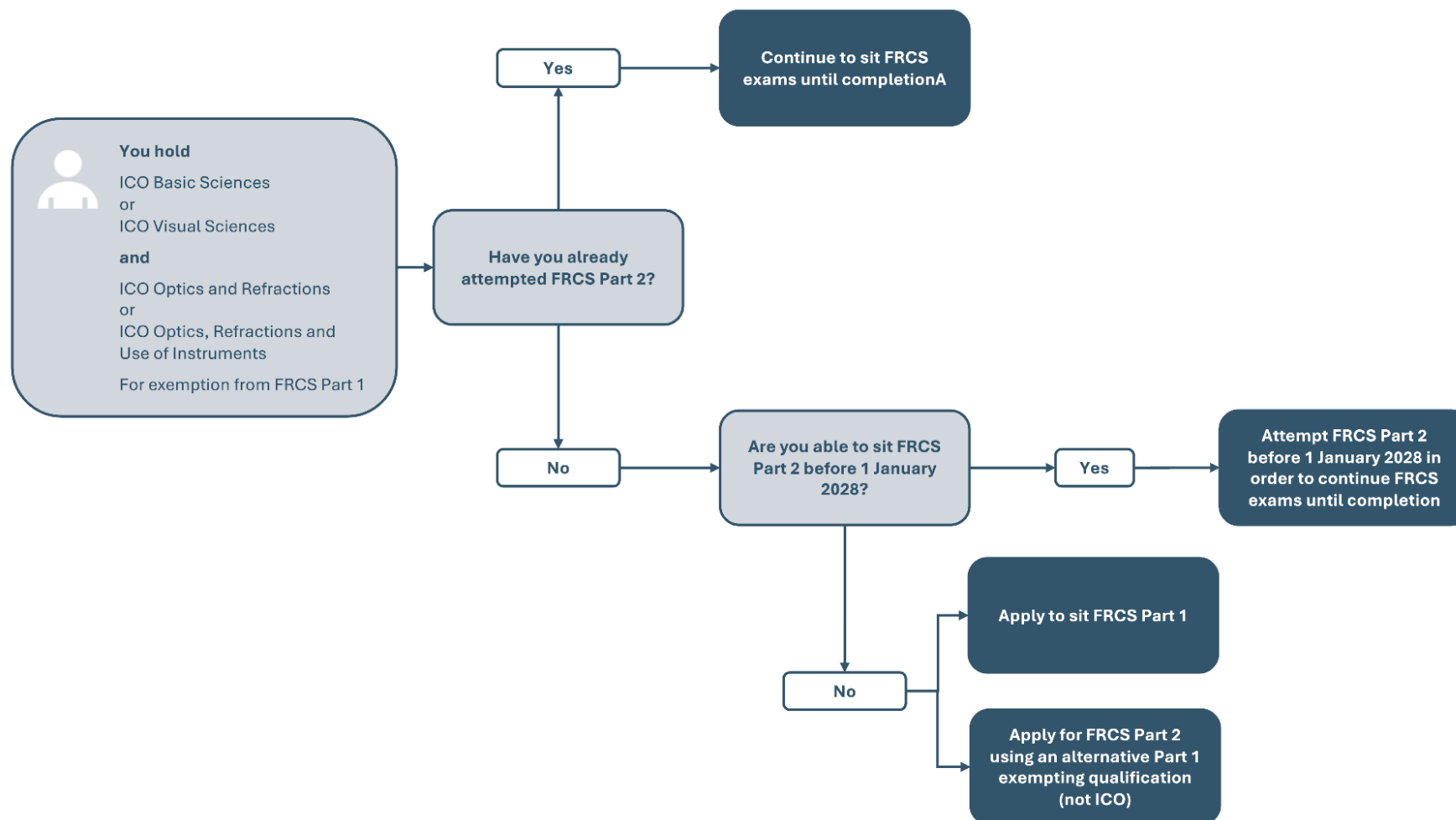
- Candidates who have already attempted Part 3 are permitted to continue applying for FRCS Ophthalmology exams.
- Candidates who have not yet attempted Part 3 must do so by 1 January 2028 to continue through this route.
- Candidates who are unable to take their first attempt at Part 3 by 1 January 2028 must either:
 - sit FRCS Part 2 before 1 January 2028 to continue with the exams, or;
 - sit FRCS Part 2 through an alternative exempting qualification as listed on our website, or;
 - apply for Part 3 through an alternative exempting qualification as listed on our website, or;
 - sit FRCS Part 1
- Please see diagram on page 4

Candidates who hold FRCS Part 1 or another exempting qualification (non-ICO) and hold ICO exemption from Part 2

- Candidates who have already attempted Part 3 are permitted to continue applying for FRCS Ophthalmology exams.
- Candidates who have not yet attempted Part 3 must do so by 1 January 2028 to continue through this route.
- Candidates who are unable to take their first attempt at Part 3 by 1 January 2028 must either:
 - sit FRCS Part 2, or;
 - apply for Part 3 through an alternative exempting qualification as listed on our website.



Candidates who hold ICO exemption from Part 1





**Candidates who hold ICO exemption from both Part 1 and Part 2, and
Candidates who hold FRCS Part 1 or another exempting qualification (non-ICO) and
hold ICO exemption from Part 2**

