

NOD Cataract and Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Audits: Policy for withdrawal of participation and removal in the absence of timely data submission

1. Purpose and notification requirements

This policy outlines the procedures and financial implications for organisations that wish to pause or withdraw from participation in either the Cataract and/or Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) audits run by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) National Ophthalmology Database (NOD). It also covers the removal from an audit cycle of centres that have signed up to participate but are unable to submit data within the audit cycle timeframe required by the RCOphth NOD audit team.

The RCOphth NOD requests sufficient notice if an organisation requests to pause or withdraw its participation for any legitimate reason. Please refer to the organisation's signed Participation and Data Sharing Agreement regarding the relevant notification and termination clauses. All notifications must be provided in writing and adhere to the agreed contractual notice period. Notifications can be made to noa.project@rcophth.ac.uk.

2. Submission deadlines and confirmation of participation

Data extractions for a NOD audit cycle typically occur throughout June and July. These dates are reviewed annually with slight variations each year. These deadlines and a request for confirmation of participation are communicated to participating centres in February each year and include specific deadlines for each of the different modalities that the NOD audits accept data. Confirmation of participation in each audit cycle's data extraction and a copy of the purchase order for the participation fee is required by **31st March** each year.

Any centre which has concerns over meeting the deadlines must communicate these with the RCOphth NOD audit team as soon as possible.

More details regarding participation requirements can be found at this link:
<https://nodaudit.org.uk/healthcare-professionals/audit-participation-and-access>

3. Withdrawal and removal charges

To ensure fair cost recovery and operational planning, the following withdrawal and removal charges will apply if a participating centre notifies the NOD Audit Team of its withdrawal from the NOD audit(s) either for a given year or the foreseeable future:

Date	Action	Charge
Before 14 th May	RCOphth team informed of withdrawal/pausing participation	No charge
Between 15 th May and 30th June	RCOphth team informed of withdrawal/pausing participation	17.5% of total participation fee
Between 1 st July and 31 st July	RCOphth team informed of withdrawal/pausing participation	25% of total participation fee
After 1 st August	No data submitted by centre – centre removed from audit cycle	50% of total participation fee

This structure balances fairness with cost recovery, ensuring that IT support costs from EMR providers, as well as administrative and preparatory work undertaken by the NOD Audit Team is appropriately covered while maintaining flexibility for participating organisations. It also helps to ensure that data is submitted on time allowing the RCOphth NOD team to produce audit outputs in a timely manner for participating centres.

4. Pausing Participation

Organisations may request to pause and subsequently rejoin the audit(s) without additional cost, provided that such arrangements are made in writing and approved by the RCOphth NOD Audit Team before 14th May in any given year. Requests to pause participation must be submitted with sufficient notice to ensure continuity of data management and compliance with data governance standards.

5. Withdrawal in exceptional circumstances

Withdrawal for legitimate and unavoidable reasons—such as organisational restructuring, service cessation, or other significant operational changes—may be exempt from withdrawal fees, provided reasonable written notice is given and approved by the RCOphth NOD Audit Team. In order to respect the publicly visible quality assurance process of the NOD Audits, we cannot agree to withdrawal of data after this has been analysed and provisional results provided to centres; this is to avoid bias in reporting and to maintain data-driven quality improvement efforts nationally.

6. Additional Guidance

Organisations are encouraged to plan participation changes carefully to avoid unnecessary costs and ensure compliance with data handling and reporting obligations. For further information or clarification, please contact the RCOPht NOD Audit Team via noa.project@rcophth.ac.uk .