

University of Central Lancashire
GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL (GOC) PROVISIONAL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
MSci Optometry MSc Optometry
18 & 19 January 2022

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PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS

Table 1.1 - Redacted

1.2 Programme details	
Programme title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSci Optometry • MSc Optometry
Programme description	<p>The MSci Optometry programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an undergraduate Masters programme. • Is an integrated eye health and vision science programme encompassing the BSc (Hons) Ophthalmic Dispensing and MSci Optometry programmes. • Takes five years to complete. • Is a blended-learning programme delivered using online learning methods and residential teaching blocks. • Incorporates the Scheme for Registration (SfR), delivered by the College of Optometrists (CoO), within the final academic module. <p>The MSc Optometry programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a postgraduate Masters programme. • Is a fast-track programme delivered over three semesters and takes approximately three years to complete. • Provides an advanced entry route into year three of the programme for students who are already qualified dispensing opticians. • Is a blended-learning programme delivered using online learning methods and residential teaching blocks. • Incorporates the Scheme for Registration (SfR), delivered by the College of Optometrists (CoO), within the final academic module. <p>For both programmes students on the programme are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in employment for the duration of the programme. • Register with the GOC and be members of the CoO throughout the duration of their studies.
Approval status at point of visit	Provisionally approved
Approved student numbers	20 students per cohort.
1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (panel)	
Chair	Vincent McKay – Lay member
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Fishburn – Lay member • Maryna Hura – Dispensing Optician member • Brian McCotter – Optometrist member • Pam McClean – Optometrist/Independent Prescribing Optometrist member • Graeme Stevenson – Dispensing Optician/Contact Lens Optician member

GOC representative	Ella Pobee – Approval and Quality Assurance Officer
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1.4 Purpose of the visit	
Visit type	PROVISIONAL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
<p>The purpose of this provisional approval quality assurance visit was to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review the University of Central Lancashire's ('University') MSc Optometry programme and MSci Optometry programme ('programmes') to ensure they meet the requirements as listed in the GOC's <i>Temporary Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to GOC Registration for Optometrists (2020)</i> ('handbook') and the <i>GOC Education A&QA-Supplementary Documents-List of Requirements</i> ('list of requirements'). 2. Consider whether the programmes sufficiently meet the GOC's requirements for them to be granted full approval and make a recommendation to the executive on approval status. <p>Due to the pandemic this visit took place remotely.</p>	

1.5 Programme history		
Date	Event type	Overview
19/09/2018	Administration	The University submitted an application for an integrated eye health and vision science programme which would incorporate a BSc (Hons) Ophthalmic Dispensing programme and an MSci Optometry programme. The proposed programme title is MSci Optometry.
25/03/2019	Visit	A GOC approval visit is carried out. The panel recommends the MSci Optometry award be granted provisional approval, alongside the BSc (Hons) Ophthalmic Dispensing award.
10/07/2019	Event	The GOC Council awards provisional approval to the MSci Optometry programme.
04/09/2019	Event	A visit is undertaken by a sub-panel to inspect the pre-clinical facilities. The sub-panel noted the facilities as incomplete, failing to meet requirement OP2.1. The University later submitted photographic evidence that further work had completed the facilities. Consequently, the sub-panel recommended this condition could be deemed 'met'.
09/2019	Event	The University commenced delivery of the MSci Optometry programme alongside the BSc (Hons) Ophthalmic Dispensing programme.
17/12/2019	Change	The University informs the GOC that the MSci Optometry programme will be divided into BSc (Hons) Ophthalmic Dispensing and MSc Optometry awards from September 2020 and that the MSci Optometry programme will no longer be offered from that point.
29/01/2020	Change	The University's internal revalidation process divided the BSc (Hons) Optometry and MSci Optometry awards into two distinct programmes from September 2020. There were no changes to the syllabus or assessments of either award.

05/05/2020	Visit	A GOC provisional approval quality assurance visit is carried out. As a result, the MSci Optometry programme's provisional approval status is allowed to continue, and seven conditions are set.
09/2020	Event	The University admits a first cohort of students to the MSc Optometry programme.
06/07/2021	Visit	A GOC provisional approval quality assurance visit is carried out. As a result, the University is set one condition.
09/2021	Administration	The outstanding condition is deemed met by the executive.
09/2021	Event	The University admits a third cohort of students.

PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY

2.1 Visit outcomes	
Summary of recommendations to the GOC	
New conditions	<p>The panel recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All requirements are deemed MET. • No new conditions are set.
New recommendations	<p>The panel recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three recommendations are offered. <p>Details regarding the recommendations are set out in Part 3.</p>
Commendations	<p>The panel offers two commendations.</p> <p>Details regarding the commendations are set out in Part 3.</p>
Actual student numbers	<p>Year 1 – 21 Year 2 – 12 Year 3 – 20</p>
Approval & next visit	<p>The panel recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full approval be awarded to both the MSci Optometry* and MSc Optometry programmes. • The next visit takes place in March 2025. <p>* The University will not offer the MSci Optometry programme once the first cohort has graduated.</p>
Factors to consider when scheduling next visit e.g., when students are in, hospital, audit etc.	<p>The visit should coincide with students' residential blocks and include an observation of the eye health clinic in operation.</p> <p>Due to the pandemic, no physical visits have taken place since the programmes have started. The panel recommends that the next visit be a physical visit to ensure the new programme is being provided with the appropriate oversight and support.</p> <p>The eye health clinic has so far been reviewed virtually/via video which has offered sufficient assurance, but the panel recommends that at the next visit the panel physically visits/reviews the clinic space and equipment.</p>

2.2 Previous conditions

The conditions listed below are extracted from the provisional approval quality assurance visit report of 06 July 2021

Requirement number	Condition number and description	Status
OP2.2	1. The programme team must confirm that a clinic manager is in place.	<p>This condition was deemed MET by the executive prior to this visit taking place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clinic manager has been in post since September 2021.• The panel met the clinic manager during this visit and discussed their current, and future, responsibilities.

2.3 Previous recommendations

The recommendations listed below are extracted from the provisional approval quality assurance visit report of 06 July 2021

Description	Comments
All programme and marketing materials should be updated to ensure students (and prospective students) are aware that all elements of the MSci, and the College of Optometrists Scheme for Registration, must be passed for students to be eligible to register with the GOC.	The panel was provided an update on this recommendation by the programme lead during the visit. The relevant sentences within the programme handbook and programme website page have been amended.
The programme team should develop more formal procedures for obtaining feedback from all stakeholders and service-users, including mentors, clinic supervisors and patients	The panel was provided an update on this recommendation by the programme lead during the visit. Additionally, the panel reviewed feedback from students, mentors, and external examiners. Although there was no feedback from patients, the panel was informed of the future plans for obtaining patient feedback and expects to review this at future visits.
Hospital supervisors should be given access to Meditrek, be trained in its use, and use it to directly record competencies completed in hospital clinics.	The panel was provided an update on this recommendation by the programme lead and programme team during the visit. The panel was given a demonstration of Meditrek and could see that the recommendation has been implemented.

2.4 Non-applicable requirements

The panel recommends that some requirements be deemed non-applicable to the programmes at this stage due to their structure and level and the differing, but overlapping, roles and responsibilities of the University and the CoO, for example:

- The University provides only the theory aspect of the route to registration.
- It is the responsibility of the CoO to oversee the period of supervised practice and ensure that all aspects of this period are completed under supervision.
- It is the responsibility of the CoO to assess students' competence against the GOC's Stage 2 Competencies and inform the GOC when competence has been achieved.
- It is the responsibility of the CoO to confirm that students achieve the minimum patient experience required by the GOC.

OP6.14	Upon completion of the pre-registration placement, the provider must inform the GOC that the student has achieved professional competence at Stage 2 so as to allow them to apply for entry to the GOC Register of Optometrists.
OP6.15	Students must be assessed as competent against each of the Stage 2 GOC Core Competencies
OP6.16	Students must acquire the minimum amount of patient experience within each patient category (attached in Appendix F).
OP6.17	Students must hold certified portfolios containing a record of both their patient experience and achievement of all core competency elements
OP6.18	The portfolio must include evidence of how and when each individual element of competence was achieved by the individual student.
OP6.19	The portfolio must contain a case record for each individual patient episode contributing to the minimum requirements
OP6.20	The portfolio must include evidence of the development of the student's professional judgement through critical thinking and reflection.

PART 3 – CONDITIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENDATIONS

Conditions are applied to training and assessment providers if there is evidence that the GOC requirements are not met.

Recommendations indicate enhancements that can be made to a programme, these may not be directly linked to compliance with GOC requirements.

3.1 Conditions set at this visit

The unmet requirements for this visit are set out below along with the conditions that are required to meet the requirements.

No conditions are set

3.2 Recommendations offered at this visit

The panel offers the following recommendations to the provider.

Recommendation 1	The University to undertake ongoing monitoring of student workload taking into account the demands of balancing studying, working, completing the SfR, and personal life.
Recommendation 2	The University should review and update the student handbook to ensure accuracy of information and transparency of the workload expected of students taking into account the demands of studying, working, and completing the SfR.
Rationale	<p>The conflicting demands of studying, working, completing the SfR and maintaining a personal life and positive well-being were highlighted during the visit. The panel considers that, now that the initial cohort (that entered the programme under the advanced entry route available to students who were already qualified dispensing opticians), has finished the MSc Optometry programme, a review of the student journey could be completed, and information shared with applicants and students, so they have a fuller understanding of the demands of the programme.</p> <p>The panel noted some inconsistencies in the content of the handbook around the expected hours of study and attendance requirements.</p> <p>Minor changes have been made to the programme since its implementation and the panel considers the handbook could be reviewed to reflect the programme in its current format.</p>
Recommendation 3	In reference to module OP4003, enhanced structure and guidance to be provided to support students through the dissertation process. This could include the introduction of related learning in the earlier stages of the MSc Optometry programme.
Rationale	<p>The panel heard that the use of more than one platform being used to disseminate information regarding the module has led to confusion.</p> <p>Discussions held by the panel highlighted inconsistency in the number, and nature, of meetings between dissertation supervisors and students, and that students were not always being signposted to appropriate supporting resources.</p>

	The panel noted that the programme team has acknowledged support around completion of the dissertation as an area of improvement and proposes to introduce a written research task earlier in the programme. The panel welcomed this.
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3.3 Commendations made at this visit

The panel wishes to commend the following areas of the programme:

- The level of support and feedback given to students.
- The implementation, and monitoring, of systems to support and record students' achievement of clinical competencies.

PART 4 – ADDITIONAL ISSUES

4.1 Approval status	
Background	The panel was asked to review the programmes against the handbook and the list of requirements and make a recommendation on the programmes' approval status.
Conclusions	<p>The panel recommends that both the MSci Optometry* and MSc Optometry programmes be granted full approval.</p> <p>* The University will not offer the MSci Optometry programme once the first cohort has graduated.</p>
Rationale	<p>The panel was sufficiently assured that the programmes could be recommended for full approval as evidence submitted prior to the visit, and obtained through discussion during the visit, demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That all GOC requirements could be deemed met and the programmes have no outstanding conditions.• The existence, and implementation, of robust assessment and monitoring systems for both academic and professional competencies, for example, the use of Meditrek and Maxinity software.• Adequate resource to support the delivery and ongoing development of the programmes within its current approved student numbers, for example, the clinic space and equipment.• Positive feedback received from students, the external examiners, and the programme team.