

Ulster University
General Optical Council (GOC) Full Approval Quality Assurance Visit
Postgraduate Certificate in the Theory of Independent Prescribing
21 & 22 October 2020 (2 days)

Date report completed	22 October 2020
Report confirmed by GOC	29 October 2020

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PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS

1.1 Provider details	
Address	School of Biomedical Sciences Ulster University Cromore Road Coleraine Co. Londonderry BT52 1SA
Responsible officer	Julie McClelland
Responsible officer telephone	02870124216
Responsible officer email address	jf.mcclelland@ulster.ac.uk

1.2 Programme details	
Programme title	The Theory of Independent Prescribing
Programme type	Postgraduate Certificate
Programme description	The programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is delivered online • runs from January to June
Current approval status	Full approval
Approved student numbers	15 per cohort granted in February 2017 100 per cohort granted in May 2020* * See box 1.5 for further information

1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (EVP)	
Chair	Mark Bissell - Lay member
Visitors	Alan Kershaw-Lay Member Pam McClean-IP Optometrist Richard Allen-IP Optometrist
GOC representative	Ella Pobee - Approval & Quality Assurance Officer Shola Smith-Education Administrator

1.4. Purpose of the visit	
Visit type	Quality Assurance Visit
<p>The purpose of this full approval quality assurance visit is to review the Postgraduate Certificate in the Theory of Independent Prescribing programme (programme) in relation to the Handbook for Optometry Specialist Registration in Therapeutic Prescribing 2008 and the GOC Education A&QA-Supplementary Documents-List of Requirements.</p> <p>Due to the COVID-19 emergency this visit took place remotely.</p>	

1.5 Programme history		
Date	Event type	Overview
22 & 23 April 2015	Visit	An approval visit is carried out. The EVP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommends that provisional approval be granted

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommends a cohort size of 15 • requests the submission of all programme materials • recommends a further visit to approve module content and assessment prior to students starting the course
2 July 2015	Event	The GOC Education Committee grants provisional approval to the programme, subject to the recommendations of the visit carried out on 22-23 April 2015 being addressed.
20 October 2015	Visit	A second visit is carried out to review the programme content and assessment. The EVP concludes a number of conditions have not been met and requests further evidence is submitted to the GOC for review.
20 January 2016	Event	The university submits the requested information. This is reviewed by the GOC Education Committee. The Education Committee requests that the EVP meets with the university to consider whether the information is sufficient to meet the outstanding conditions and recommendations.
5 April 2016	Meeting	A meeting between the EVP and the university is held. The EVP recommends that the conditions set at the visit carried out in October 2015 be deemed met and notes progress has been made on the recommendations offered. The EVP requests that the university submits the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) results of all assessments for all students. b) the external examiner's report and disseminate a GOC-generated questionnaire to be completed by at least 33% of the cohort.
22 February 2017	Event	The programme is granted full approval by the GOC Council
14 May 2020	Change	The university submits a request to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • admit an additional one-off cohort in June 2020 • increase student numbers in this cohort from 15 to 100
22 May 2020	Change	The request to admit an additional one-off cohort of 100 students in June 2020 is agreed by the GOC

PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY

2.1 Visit outcomes & summary of EVP recommendations to the GOC	
Requirements	0 requirements are identified as unmet. 0 actions are set.
Student numbers	125
Next visit	The EVP recommends that the next full visit takes place in October 2025
Factors to consider when scheduling next visit e.g. when students are in, hospital, audit etc.	The programme is usually delivered online from January to June.

PART 3 – CONDITIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conditions set at this visit

Conditions are applied to training and assessment providers if there is evidence that the GOC requirements are not met. The conditions (unmet requirements) for this visit are set out below along with the actions that are required to meet the requirement.

No conditions were set at this visit

3.2 Recommendations offered at this visit

The EVP offers the following recommendations to the provider. Recommendations indicate enhancements that can be made to a programme that are not directly linked to compliance with GOC requirements

IP5.1	Providers must have quality assurance information/handbooks which indicate the QA arrangements to audit the appropriateness of the learning/assessment environments and provide guidance to achieve the requirements of this handbook.
Recommendation 1	The EVP was assured that programme material is reviewed at least annually however, it considers a more formal process would benefit the programme. The EVP recommends that the annual review of programme materials be formalised to ensure all content remains up to date and relevant.
IP5.1	Providers must have quality assurance information/handbooks which indicate the QA arrangements to audit the appropriateness of the learning/assessment environments and provide guidance to achieve the requirements of this handbook.
Recommendation 2	Stakeholders informed the EVP that the programme team is very responsive to feedback. The EVP was assured that the programme team encourages the provision of feedback and acts on it appropriately. The EVP considers the current feedback processes can be strengthened and suggests the programme team create a formal communication framework for e-tutors, academic team and students within the university's structure to ensure clear and documented communication between all parties.

3.3 Commendations made at this visit

The EVP wishes to commend:

- the high degree of engagement between staff and students and the promptness of responses to requests for support.