Perceptions of UK optical education

Appendix A – Questionnaire

Perceptions of UK optical education

Thank you for your interest in the General Optical Council's (GOC) perceptions of UK optical education survey.

As part of its Education Strategic Review, the GOC is undertaking a programme of research into the experiences and perceptions of newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians about the education and training that led to their professional registration with the GOC.

This survey is open to all optometrists and dispensing opticians who became professionally registered with the GOC for the first time from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2017. The findings of this research will be used by the GOC to help inform their Education Strategic Review and ensure that future UK education and training requirements leading to professional registration with the GOC remain fit for purpose as the optical sector evolves.

You can navigate through this questionnaire using the arrow buttons below. To remove your answers to a question click on the reset button. If you wish to save your responses and return to the question at another time, click the save button.

If you have any questions about completing the questionnaire, please call the survey helpline on 0800 0092 117 or email helpline@enventure.co.uk The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Confidentiality - This survey is being carried out independently on behalf of the GOC by Enventure Research, an independent research agency, bound by the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct. This ensures that your personal details and other information will only be used for the purposes of the research and will not be disclosed to any third parties.

Your GOC registration and role

	in deer region and rele
Q1	Which of the following roles apply to you? Please select all that apply Optometrist Dispensing optician Contact lens optician Independent prescriber Other
	Other Please specify
Q2	What year did you become fully qualified? 2017 2016 2015 2014 2013 2012
Q3	Which university or college did you attend? Anglia Ruskin University ABDO College Aston University Bradford College Cardiff University City and Islington College City University Glasgow Caledonian University Plymouth University University of Bradford University of Manchester University of Ulster Other

	Other Please specify		
Q4	Some registrants undertake a period of pre-registration college. If you did this, what route did you take? College of Optometrists ABDO College Other I did not undertake pre-registration training	on tr	raining after their time at university or
	Other Please specify		
Q5	Where is your current main place of work situated? I England I Scotland I Wales I Northern Ireland I Other		
Q6	Please choose the options below which best described GOC's professional register <i>Please select all that app</i> Independent opticians practice National chain of opticians Regional chain of opticians Hospital Domiciliary care Other <i>Please specify</i>	oly	c areas you have worked since joining the Charity/Not for profit Academia Manufacturing and supply Locum Other
07			
Q7	Please choose the options below which best describe Please select all that apply ☐ General contact lens fitting and aftercare ☐ Complex contact lens fitting and aftercare e.g. keratoconic or post-surgical patients etc. ☐ Independent prescribing, supplementary prescribing or additional supply of therapeutic drugs including patient group directives	yol	Practice based student supervisor University based tutor or supervisor Academic or research role
	Low vision management Specialised dispensing (e.g. handmade frames, complex lenses or other special optical appliances)		Domiciliary care Minor Eye Condition Services

■ Refractive surgery

□ CET training

■ None

□ Other

■ Management and training

discharged from hospital

☐ Involvement in the management of patients recently

Other Please specify

management

□ Acute referral scheme

scheme

☐ Diabetic retinopathy screening

■ Post-operative cataract care

☐ Paediatric eye care – dispensing

☐ Glaucoma or ocular hypertension monitoring

☐ Refractive surgery pre-assessment and/or

☐ Paediatric eye care – eye examination or screening

Your course of study

Q8	Thinking back to when you chose you optician, what aspects most influence three options below Course content Location Entry requirements Level of patient contact experience Links with hospital eye services Opportunities for specialisation Facilities available		sion to take the Revious A records University	ews from previous from previou	course? <i>Ple</i>	
	Other Please specify					
Attit	udes towards your education and	d training				
Q9	Thinking about the amount of time ye training, did you feel that they were to Academic study (attending or attached to a University/College)				ength?	ducation and Not applicable
	Pre-registration period (supervised practice and assessment)					
	Your entire period of education and training					
Q10	Thinking about the amount of clinica knowledge) you received during differ the balance was too little, too much or	ent elemen	ts of your edu			
	Clinical experience during your academic study	Too little	About right	Too much	Don't know	Not applicable
	Clinical experience during your pre- registration period					
	Clinical experience during your entire period of education and training					
Q11	If you undertook a period of pre-regist during this period? Uvery supported Quite supported Not very supported Not supported at all Don't know Not applicable	ration train	ing, how supp	ported by yo	ur supervisc	or did you feel
Q12	How aware were you of the GOC's St during your education and training? Very aware Quite aware Not very aware Not aware at all Don't know	andards of	Practice for (Optometrists	and Disper	nsing Opticians

Q13	To what extent during your education Optometrists and Dispensing Optici Very integrated Quite integrated Not very integrated Not integrated at all Don't know					indards of	Practice for
Q14	What aspects of your education and Please list up to three in the box be	_	ave you fou	und most	relevant to	o your pra	ctice so far?
	What aspects of your education and Please list up to three in the box be		ave you fou	und least	relevant to	your prac	ctice so far?
Q16	Thinking about your professional ex skills or areas of knowledge you wo missing or insufficient? Yes No				•	•	•
	If yes, what areas were they? Pleas	se list in the	e box below	/			
Q17	How frequently did your education a include studying or gaining clinical edisciplines (e.g. orthoptists, pharma Very frequently Occasionally Rarely Never	experience	alongside	student he	ealth profes	ssionals fr	
Pre	paredness for practice						
Q18	Thinking about your first role as a recoverall for professional practice? Very well prepared Sufficiently prepared Not that well prepared Not prepared at all Don't know	egistered o	ptical pract	itioner, ho	ow prepared	d do you tl	nink you were
Q19	Thinking about different aspects of you think you were you for the follow		ole as a reg	istered op	otical practi	tioner, hov	w prepared do
	you ammit you wore you for and tone.	Very well prepared	Sufficiently prepared	Not that well	Not prepared at	Don't know	Not applicable
	Practising autonomously/independently			prepared	all		
	Making confident clinical decisions						
	Adapting to relevant, emerging and new technology						

	Communicating appropriately with patients and the public						
	Evaluating clinical research and evidence						
Pra	ctice settings						
Q20	Thinking about all the practice setting professional register, to what extent or received equipped you with the ability Independent optical practice	do you agı	ree or disa	gree that th	ne education tings?		
	Multiples (national or regional)						
	Hospital						
	Domiciliary care						
	Please use the box below to explain v	why you s	trongly dis	agree			
Q22	To what extent do you agree or disagto join the GOC's professional register career? Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree Don't know Please use the box below to explain when the company to	er provided	d you with	the ability t			
Furt	ther research - telephone intervie	ews					
sma	xplore attitudes towards optical educa Il series of telephone interviews. Interv convenient time for you.	_	•				_
	u indicate that you are interested in tal enture Research.	king part i	n further re	esearch, yo	u may be	contacted	by
Q23	Are you interested in taking part in ful By answering yes you are agreeing to			nventure R	esearch c	oncerning	this

research.

☐ Yes
☐ No

numl will o your	nat we can contact you about taking part in further research, please provide your name, contact ber and email address in the boxes below. Your details will not be passed on to any third parties and only be used for the purposes of conducting further research. Your details will also be separate from questionnaire answers, meaning that you will not be identified in any way, and will be stored for a imum of three months.
Q24	Name
Q25	Contact number
Q26	Email address
Abo	ut you
	lly, please could you answer the following questions about yourself so that we can ensure we hear a wide range of people and identify any differences in results between different groups of registrants
Q27	Gender Male Female Other Prefer not to say
Q28	Age group 16 - 24 25 - 34 35 - 44 45 - 54 55 - 64 65 + Prefer not to say
Q29	To which of these groups do you consider you belong? Please select one option only White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British White - Irish White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller White - Other Mixed - White and Asian / British Mixed - White and Black Caribbean / British Mixed - White and Black African / British Mixed - Other Asian or Asian British - Indian / Indian British Asian or Asian British - Pakistani / Pakistani British Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi / Bangladeshi British Asian or Asian British - Other Black or Black British - African / African British Black or Black British - Caribbean / Caribbean British Black or Black British - Other Other - Arab / Arab British Any other ethnic group Prefer not to say
	Other Please specify

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your views are greatly appreciated. Please click the tick button below to send your response.

Perceptions of UK optical education

Appendix B – In depth interview guides

General Optical Council – Perceptions of UK Optical Education Research In depth interview guide – Recent registrants

Please note this discussion guide is intended as a guide to the interviewer only. Sections may be subject to change during the course of the interview if, for example, certain questions do not illicit useful responses.

Introduction

My name is and I work for a research company called Enventure Research.

We are currently delivering a programme of research on behalf of the General Optical Council into the experiences and perceptions of newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians and their employers about the education and training that led to their professional registration with the GOC. This is part of the GOC's Education Strategic Review where they are reviewing the requirements for optometry and dispensing optician education and training so that it remains fit for purpose in the future as the optical sector continues to evolve.

This research includes an online survey of newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians who qualified between 2012 and 2017 and a series of in depth interviews like this with newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians and their employers.

During this interview we will be discussing your views and perceptions of optical education based on your experiences as someone who has recently been through it, becoming professionally registered with the GOC between 1 Jan 2012 and 31 December 2017 through a UK training route to GOC registration. We will be revisiting the responses you provided to the online survey and exploring the questions in greater depth.

The aim of the research is to provide the GOC with an understanding of how well current UK optical education prepares individuals for professional practice.

IMPORTANT: Please be assured that everything you say during this interview is totally confidential, so please be as open and honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Enventure Research is an independent research company, meaning that we are not part of the GOC.

Enventure works to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, which means that anything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence, and nothing will be tied back to your name. Any of your comments that we use when reporting will be completely anonymous.

I will be recording the interview so I do not need to take notes as you are talking. However, the recording is only used to help me write my report and is deleted once it has been used, within three months. Please can you confirm that you give your consent to be recorded?

The interview will last for around 30 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin?

About you

So that we can understand the context of your views and perceptions, please could you tell me a little about you and your current role?

- What is your role/position? Optometrist, dispensing optician, contact lens optician, independent prescriber
- Where do you work? Location, employer, setting
- How long have you been working in this position?
- Have you worked in any other roles since qualifying? If so, what was your role when you first qualified?
- What year did you become fully qualified and register with the GOC?

When discussing your views in relation to your education and training, please think about the entire period of your education and training, including both the academic study and pre-registration period, leading to you becoming fully qualified and gaining professional registration with the GOC.

Your course of study

- In the survey, you indicated that you were most influenced to take the specific course you did by the following (interviewer to refer to survey response Q8)
 - o Why did these aspects influence you the most?
 - o What were your expectations of the course like before you started?
 - To what extent did your course of study meet your expectations?
 - o Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about why you chose to study this course?

Balance of education and training

- In the survey, you indicated that the amount of time you spent in academic study, the pre-registration assessment period, and your entire period of education and training was about right / too long / too short (interviewer to refer to survey responses Q9)
 - O Why did you think that each element was about right / too long / too short?
 - What do you think about the balance of time spent between academic study and pre-registration training? Why do you say that?
 - o Could the amount of time spent on certain aspects of education and training be different?
 - Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about the amount of time spent on certain aspects of your education and training?

Amount of clinical experience

- In the survey, you indicated that the amount of clinical experience you received during your academic study, pre-registration assessment period, and your entire period of education and training was about right / too long / too short (interviewer to refer to survey responses Q10)
 - O Why did you think that the amounts were about right / too long / too short?
 - What do you think about the amount of clinical experience provided during your education and training?
 Why do you say that?
 - o What are the benefits of clinical experience during your studies?
 - Could the amount of clinical experience during education and training be different?
 - Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about the amount of clinical experience you received during your education and training?

Standards of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians

- In the survey, you indicated that you were made very/quite/not very/not at all aware of the GOC's Standards
 of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians during your education and training and that they were
 very/quite/not very/not at all integrated into your learning (interviewer to refer to survey responses Q12 &
 Q13)
 - O Why did you suggest that you were / were not made aware of the Standards?
 - Why did you think that the Standards were well integrated / not well integrated into your learning?
 - o Could how the Standards are integrated during education and training be different?
 - Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about awareness and integration of the Standards during your education and training?

Relevant aspects of education and training

- In the survey, you listed the following areas as the most / least relevant aspects of your education and training
 to your experience of professional practice so far (interviewer to refer to survey responses Q14 & Q15)
 - o Why have these been the most relevant? In what ways have you been able to utilise them?
 - Why have these been the least relevant? Do you expect that you will need to utilise them in the future?
 - Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about the most / least relevant aspects
 of your education and training?

Missing elements of education and training

• In the survey, you indicated that the following skills or areas of knowledge were missing or insufficiently covered during your education and training – (interviewer to refer to survey response – Q16)

- O Why did you list these areas?
- o In what ways were they covered during your education and training?
- Could these skills or areas of knowledge be covered differently? What would the benefits be?
- Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about what was missing or insufficiently covered during your education and training?

Training with other healthcare professionals

- In the survey, you indicated that you frequently/occasionally/rarely/never studied or gained clinical experience
 alongside student health professionals from other disciplines (interviewer to refer to survey response –
 Q17)
 - O Why did you answer in this way?
 - o Who did you study/gain clinical experience alongside?
 - o Was this beneficial to your education and training?
 - Could the frequency of studying with them be different?
 - Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about studying/gaining clinical experience alongside student health professionals from other disciplines?

Preparedness for practice

- In the survey, you indicated that you very well/sufficiently/not that well/not at all prepared overall for
 professional practice (interviewer to refer to survey response Q18) and were very well/sufficiently/not that
 well/not at all prepared in certain aspects of your first role (interviewer to refer to survey responses Q19)
 - O Why did you feel this prepared overall?
 - O Why did you feel this prepared for these aspects of your role?
 - Could anything have been different about your education and training to make you better prepared in these areas?
 - Do you have any other perspectives that you would like to share about how prepared for practice you felt in your first role?

Any other feedback

 Are there any other comments that you wish to make or areas that you wish to discuss in relation to your education and training?

Close

- What would you say are the three most important pieces of feedback for the GOC from our discussion today?
- Explanation of next steps
- Thank & close

General Optical Council – Perceptions of UK Optical Education Research In depth interview guide - Employers

Please note this discussion guide is intended as a guide to the interviewer only. Sections may be subject to change during the course of the interview if, for example, certain questions do not illicit useful responses. Times shown are based on a 30 minute interview.

Introduction (3 mins)

My name is and I work for a research company called Enventure Research.

We are currently delivering a programme of research on behalf of the General Optical Council into the experiences and perceptions of newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians and their employers about the education and training that led to their professional registration with the GOC. This is part of the GOC's Education Strategic Review where they are reviewing the requirements for optometry and dispensing optician education and training so that it remains fit for purpose in the future as the optical sector continues to evolve. This research includes an online survey of newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians who qualified between 2012 and 2017 and a series of in depth interviews like this with employers of newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians.

During this interview we will be discussing your views and perceptions of optical education based on your experiences as someone who employs or works closely with newly qualified optical professionals (those who have become professionally registered with the GOC between 1 Jan 2012 and 31 December 2017 through a UK training route to GOC registration).

The aim of the research is to provide the GOC with an understanding of how well current UK optical education prepares individuals for professional practice.

IMPORTANT: Please be assured that everything you say during this interview is totally confidential, so please be as open and honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Enventure Research is an independent research company, meaning that we are not part of the GOC.

Enventure works to the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, which means that anything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence, and nothing will be tied back to your name. Any of your comments that we use when reporting will be completely anonymous.

I will be recording the interview so I do not need to take notes as you are talking. However, the recording is only used to help me write my report and is deleted once it has been used, within three months. Please can you confirm that you give your consent to be recorded?

The interview will last for around 30 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin?

About you (3 mins)

So that we can understand the context of your views and perceptions, please could you tell us a little about you and your current role.

- What is your role/position?
- Where do you work?
 - Location
 - Employer
 - Setting
- How long have you been working in this position?
- What year did you become fully qualified and register with the GOC?

When discussing your views in relation to newly qualified optometrists and dispensing opticians and how prepared they are for professional practice by their education and training, please think about the entire period of education and training, including both the academic study and pre-registration period, leading to them becoming fully qualified and gaining professional registration with the GOC.

Interviewer note – ensure it is clear whether feedback relates to optometrists or dispensing opticians throughout.

Overall preparation for practice (3 mins)

- Based on your experience of employing and working with recently registered optometrists and/or dispensing opticians, how prepared overall do you think recently registered optometrists and dispensing opticians are for professional practice when they first start?
- In what areas do you think they are well prepared? In what areas do you think they are most confident?
- In what areas do you think they are not well prepared? In what areas do you think they are less confident?

Specific areas of practice, knowledge and skill (17 mins)

I would now like to discuss your experiences of working with and employing newly qualified optical practitioners in a number of key areas of practice, knowledge and skill.

- What is your experience of the **communication skills** of newly qualified optical practitioners?
 - What are their strengths in relation to communication skills?
 - What are their weaknesses in relation to communication skills?
 - Why do you think they have these weaknesses?
 - Does their level of skill at communicating differ depending on who they are communicating with?
 Interviewer to explore:
 - Patients / the public
 - Optical colleagues
 - Other healthcare professionals (e.g. doctors / nurses)
 - What impact does this have...
 - On their ability to practice?
 - On patients?
 - Are the communication skills that newly qualified optical practitioners are being equipped with sufficient for current practice?
 - If no, what do you require of them?
 - If no, have you had to provide any additional training?
 - What was the outcome of your actions?
 - Are the communication skills that newly qualified optical practitioners are being equipped with sufficient for the future of optical practice?
 - If no, what do you expect will be required of them?
- What is your experience of the ability of newly qualified practitioners to **practise autonomously and independently from the start**?
 - What are their strengths in relation to practising autonomously?
 - What are their weaknesses in relation to practising autonomously?
 - Why do you think they have these weaknesses?
 - o Typically, how much support do they require when they first start?
 - What impact does this have...
 - On their ability to practice?
 - On patients?
 - Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to work autonomously for current practice?
 - If no, what do you require of them?
 - If no, have you had to take any steps/provide any additional training?
 - What was the outcome of your actions?
 - o Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to work autonomously for the future of optical practice?
 - If no, what do you expect will be required of them?
- What is your experience of the ability of newly qualified practitioners to make confident clinical decisions?
 - What are their strengths in relation to making confident clinical decisions?
 - What are their weaknesses in relation to making confident clinical decisions?

- Why do you think they have these weaknesses?
- To what extent do you see newly qualified practitioners making referrals?
- What impact does this have...
 - On their ability to practice?
 - On patients?
- Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to make confident clinical decisions for current practice?
 - If no, what do you require of them?
 - If no, have you had to take any steps/provide any additional training?
 - What was the outcome of your actions?
- Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to make confident clinical decisions for the future of optical practice?
 - If no, what do you expect will be required of them?
- What is your experience of the ability of newly qualified practitioners to adapt to relevant, emerging and new technology?
 - What are their strengths in relation to technology?
 - What are their weaknesses in relation to technology?
 - Why do you think they have these weaknesses?
 - What impact does this have...
 - On their ability to practice?
 - On patients?
 - Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to adapt to relevant emerging and new technology for current practice?
 - If no, what do you require of them?
 - If no, have you had to take any steps/provide any additional training?
 - What was the outcome of your actions?
 - Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to adapt to relevant emerging and new technology for the future of optical practice?
 - If no, what do you expect will be required of them?
- What is your experience of the ability of newly qualified practitioners evaluate and draw upon clinical research and evidence?
 - o What are their strengths in relation to clinical research?
 - What are their weaknesses in relation to clinical research?
 - Why do you think they have these weaknesses?
 - What impact does this have...
 - On their ability to practice?
 - On patients?
 - Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to evaluate and draw upon clinical research and evidence for current practice?
 - If no, what do you require of them?
 - If no, have you had to take any steps/provide any additional training?
 - What was the outcome of your actions?
 - Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to evaluate and draw upon clinical research and evidence for the future of optical practice?
 - If no, what do you expect will be required of them?
- What is your experience of the ability of newly qualified practitioners to work across different practice settings (e.g. independent optical practice, multiples, hospital, domiciliary care)?
 - What are their strengths in relation to working in different practice settings?
 - What are their weaknesses in relation to working in different practice settings?
 - Why do you think they have these weaknesses?
 - What impact does this have...
 - On their ability to practice?
 - On patients?
 - Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to work in different practice settings for current practice?
 - If no, what do you require of them?
 - If no, have you had to take any steps/provide any additional training?

- What was the outcome of your actions?
- Are newly qualified optical practitioners being sufficiently equipped with the ability to work in different practice settings for the future of optical practice?
 - If no, what do you expect will be required of them?
- Are there **any other specific areas of practice** which you think newly qualified optical practitioners are not sufficiently equipped to deliver when they first start?
 - o Why do you think they are prepared/unprepared in this area?
 - O What impact does this have on their ability to practice?
 - O What impact does this have on patients?
- How would you rate newly qualified optical practitioners' enthusiasm and aspirations for their future within the optical sector?
 - O What is their understanding of how the optical sector works like when they first start?
 - To what extent do newly qualified optical practitioners feel that they can develop their career within the optical sector?

Summary (2 mins)

- Thinking about what we have discussed, what would you suggest are the important elements of confident and well prepared newly qualified optical practitioners that...
 - You are currently seeing from those that you work with?
 - You are not currently seeing from those that you work with?

Close (2 mins)

- What would you say are the three most important pieces of feedback for the GOC from our discussion today?
- Any other questions/points to raise?
- Explanation of next steps
- Thank & close