General Optical Council

University of the Highland and Islands
GOC PROVISIONAL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
BSc (Hons) Optometry
24 and 25 January 2024

Report confirmed by GOC	12 June 2024

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PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS

1.2 Programme details

Programme title	BSc (Hons) Optometry
Programme description	- Full time. 4 years (40 hours per week). - Online study, face to face lectures, and practical skills sessions/problem-based learning. - Placements in community optometry in years one, two, three, and four, and hospital optometry in years three and four of the programme.
Approval status	Provisionally approved (PA)
Approved student numbers	**Approved student numbers**: 60 students per cohort - A maximum of 40 students at the Inverness campus and - A maximum of 20 students at the Moray campus **Current student numbers**: 30 students in total across four cohorts of the programme.

1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (EVP)

Chair	Andy Husband – Lay Chair.
Visitors	- Mark Chatham – Dispensing Optician and Contact Lens Optician. - Pam McClean – Optometrist/Independent Prescriber. - David Hill – Optometrist/Independent Prescriber.
GOC representative	Shaun de Riggs – Education Operations Officer.
Observers	N/A

1.4 Purpose of the visit

Visit type	PROVISIONAL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT

The purpose of this provisional approval quality assurance visit (virtual) was to:

1. review UHI's Optometry programme to ensure it meets the requirements as listed in the GOC's *Optometry Handbook* 2015 and the *GOC Education A&QA-Supplementary Documents-List of Requirements* (Optometry).
2. consider whether the programme sufficiently meets the GOC's requirements for it to retain provisional approval.
3. review whether the evidence submitted in support of conditions 1, 2, 3, and 4 set at the last visit on 28 and 29 September 2022, is sufficient for these actions to be deemed met.
4. review UHI's progress to date, with the delivery of Year 4 of the programme.

Due to adverse weather conditions and significant travel disruption, this in-person GOC quality assurance visit to UHI was changed to take place virtually (Microsoft Teams).

1.5 Programme history

Date	Event type	Overview

13/11/2019	Visit	Provisional approval granted by GOC Council on 13 November 2019.
19/08/2020	Visit	The EVP recommended that the provisional approval of UHI's Optometry programme should continue.
22/04/2021	Visit	The EVP recommended that the provisional approval of UHI's Optometry programme should continue.
22/04/2022	Visit	The EVP recommended that the provisional approval of UHI's Optometry programme should continue.
29/09/2022	Visit	The EVP recommended that the provisional approval of UHI's Optometry programme should continue.

PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY

2.1 Visit outcomes	
The EVP recommended that provisional approval for UHI's BSc (Hons) Optometry programme should continue, setting no new conditions. providing three recommendations and offering one commendation.	

Summary of recommendations to the GOC	
Previous conditions – met/unmet	The EVP deemed: • The previous conditions 1, 2, and 3 as **MET**. • The previous condition 4 was reviewed by the executive, after this visit, and deemed as **MET**. Details regarding the previous conditions are set out in section **2.2.**
New conditions	The EVP recommends that: • **No** requirements are deemed as **UNMET.** • **No** new conditions are set. Details regarding the conditions are set out in **Part 3.**
New recommendations	The EVP provides **three** recommendations. Details regarding the recommendations are set out in **Part 3.**
Commendations	The EVP offers **one commendation.** Details regarding the commendation is set out in **Part 3.**
Actual student numbers	Year 1 – 15 students. Year 2 – 3 students. Year 3 – 6 students. Year 4 – 6 students.
Next visit	Summer 2024.
Factors to consider when scheduling next visit e.g., when students are in, hospital, audit etc.	• The next visit will be to consider whether full approval should be granted by the GOC. • This should ideally be an in-person visit to observe the Tier 2 Exam Board for the programme which will take place on 19 June 2024. This could be a sub-panel.

2.2 Previous conditions

The conditions listed below are extracted from the report of 28 and 29 September 2022.

Requirement number	Condition number and description	Status
OP1.2	**Condition 1** UHI to submit contextualised course materials for the Optometry programme - Year 3 Semester 2.	Based on the documentation that was provided to the GOC and subsequently reviewed by the EVP, the EVP deemed that this action set for the Year 3 Semester 2 contextualised materials had been **MET**.
OP1.2	**Condition 2** UHI to submit contextualised course materials for the Optometry programme - Year 4 Semester 1.	Based on the documentation that was provided to the GOC and subsequently reviewed by the EVP, the EVP deemed that this action set for the Year 4 Semester 1 contextualised materials had been **MET**.
OP1.2	**Condition 3** UHI to submit contextualised course materials for the Optometry programme - Year 4 Semester 2.	Based on the documentation that was provided to the GOC and subsequently reviewed by the EVP, the EVP deemed that this action set for the Year 4 Semester 2 contextualised materials had been **MET**.
OP2.1	**Condition 4** UHI must provide appropriate and fit for purpose accommodation, clinic facilities and clinic equipment in academic and practice settings for the Moray campus.	Based on the documentation that was submitted to the GOC and subsequently reviewed by the executive, this condition is deemed as **MET**.

2.3 Previous recommendations

The recommendations listed below are extracted from the report of 28 and 29 September 2022.

Description	Comments
The provider must ensure that supervisors receive comprehensive guidance and training to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities and obligations.	The EVP did not identify any issues of concern regarding this recommendation at this visit.
The external examiners' remit must include all the professional requirements of the programme including any clinical portfolios.	The EVP did not identify any issues of concern regarding this recommendation at this visit.
Provide ongoing engagement and briefings to the programme's external examiners, including communicating that they will be able to access competency sign offs within the Brightspace learning environment.	The EVP did not identify any issues of concern regarding this recommendation at this visit.

2.4 Non-applicable requirements	
The EVP recommends that some requirements be deemed fully or partially non-applicable to the programme at this stage due to its structure and level and the differing, but overlapping, roles and responsibilities of UHI and the College of Optometrists (CoO) for example: • The programme is currently in Year 4 of the four-year BSc (Hons) Optometry course. • The CoO is responsible for the clinical placement and ensuring all the elements of portfolio are completed under supervision.	
OP6.7	Students must demonstrate that they have achieved a Certificate of Clinical Competence at Stage 1 in order to begin their external supervised pre-registration placement.
OP6.8	Students must have been taught and assessed as competent against each of the Stage 1 GOC Core Competencies.
OP6.9	Students must acquire the minimum amount of real patient experience with each patient group as per the competencies and patient experience requirements.
OP6.10	Students must hold certified portfolios containing a record of both their patient experience and achievement of all core competency elements.
OP6.11	The portfolio must include evidence of how and when each individual element of competence was achieved by the individual student.
OP6.12	The portfolio must contain a case record for each individual patient episode contributing to the minimum requirements.
OP6.13	The portfolio must include evidence of the development of the student's professional judgement through critical thinking and reflection.
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 No new conditions were set at this visit

3.2 Recommendations offered at this visit

The EVP offers the following recommendations to the provider.

OP2.12	The provider must ensure that the patient base is relative to the student cohort size and is of a sufficient volume and range to deliver the required level of experience as specified in the GOC Core Competencies and patient experience requirements.
Recommendation 1	**To actively maintain and develop the Optometry programme's patient base to meet future needs.**
Rationale	During the facilities and resources meeting, the Panel deemed it paramount that the patient base for the Optometry programme is maintained and developed given the model of patient exposure that the programme team have chosen to pursue. The EVP look forward to reviewing this at the next visit.

OP3.6	The provider must ensure that supervisors receive comprehensive guidance and training to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities and obligations.
Recommendation 2	**To formalise the induction and training process of clinical tutors for the Optometry programme.**
Rationale	During the experiential and practical learning meeting, the Panel heard that there is an informal process for the induction and training of clinical tutors. The EVP considered that formalising the induction and training of clinical tutors would facilitate in standardising the student experience, and the training and ongoing development of clinical tutors for the Optometry programme.

OP5.1	The provider must have a clear framework for obtaining feedback on programme quality from a variety of sources including patients, students, staff, supervisors, and employers.
Recommendation 3	**To continue finding ways to improve student engagement with existing feedback mechanisms, and the implementation of obtaining patient feedback in clinics and placements.**
Rationale	During the Governance, monitoring, and evaluation meeting, the Panel noted the existing efforts of the programme team to increase engagement with student feedback and patient feedback. To facilitate this, the EVP recommended that the programme team continue finding ways to improve student engagement with existing feedback mechanisms, and implement obtaining patient feedback in clinics and placement, and that this is operationalised where appropriate.

3.3 Commendations made at this visit

The EVP wishes to commend the following area:

- The successful start to the long placement in Year 4 of the programme, and the positive feedback received from students and supervisors.