

Glasgow Caledonian University
GOC FULL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
Independent Prescribing for Optometrists
13 & 14 September 2022

Report confirmed by GOC	25 November 2022
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PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS

1.2 Programme details	
Programme title	Independent Prescribing for Optometrists
Programme description	<p>The Independent Prescribing for Optometrists programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is designed to provide the theoretical background required for the Diploma in Therapeutics (DipTp) for the Independent Prescribing qualification delivered and managed by the College of Optometrists (CoO). Glasgow Caledonian University delivers the theoretical element of the route to registration, and the CoO delivers the practice-based learning and The Therapeutics Common Final Assessment (TCFA). • is predominantly distance-learning and online-based. Teaching is delivered using the virtual learning environment, Blackboard. For each module, there is 1 campus-based teaching day per academic year. • comprises three level eleven modules: MMB526587 – Introduction to Primary Care Management, MMB526591 – Glaucoma and Advanced Primary Care Management & MMB626592 – Independent Prescribing and Systemic Disease. Each module is worth 20 credits and typically lasts 2-3 months. The modules are taken sequentially and are pre-requisites to the next module. • is approximately ten months in duration.
Current approval status	Fully approved (FA)
Approved student numbers	150

1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (EVP)	
Chair	Alan Kershaw- Lay Chair
Visitors	Gail Fleming- Lay Member David Hill- Optometrist/Independent Prescribing Optometrist Nicola Szostek- Optometrist/Independent Prescribing Optometrist
GOC representative	Georgina Carter- Approval and Quality Assurance Officer
Observers	Georgia Smith- Approval and Quality Assurance Officer

1.4 Purpose of the visit	
Visit type	FULL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
<p>The purpose of this full approval quality assurance visit was to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. review the Glasgow Caledonian University Independent Prescribing for Optometrist programme (programme) to ensure it meets the requirements as listed in the GOC's <i>Handbook for Optometry Specialist Registration in Therapeutic Prescribing 2008</i> (Handbook) and the <i>GOC Education A&QA-Supplementary Documents-List of Requirements</i> (list of requirements). 	

2. consider whether the programme sufficiently meets the GOC's requirements for it to be granted continued full approval and make a recommendation to the executive on approval status.

The visit took place remotely.

1.5 Programme history

Date	Event type	Overview
6-7 September 2017	Visit	Full approval quality assurance visit took place.
10 July 2020	Change	Change to programme and module titles.
10 July 2020	Change	Students where more than 2 years have elapsed between completing GCU course and commencing Clinical Placement will retake Module 3 written examination.
10 July 2020	Change	5-year time limit on pre-requisite between modules.
10 July 2020	Change	Temporary increase to student cohort cap for 2020/21 (from 150 to 220).
8 October 2020	Change	COVID-19 response: face-to-face aspects of module 2 & 3 to be delivered online. Including open-book online examinations.
10 December 2020	Change	Temporary extension to submission of evidence to complete Module 3.
14 January 2021	Change	Timing of delivery of programme to move from March of each academic year to September of each academic year.
12 May 2021	Change	Extension to remote delivery of material and assessments.
9 March 2022	Administration	A virtual 2-day full approval quality assurance visit to GCU was scheduled for 13 and 14 September 2022.

PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY

2.1 Visit outcomes	
<p>The panel was satisfied that the programme continues to meet our standards. The panel was pleased with the supportive environment within the programme team, and the inclusion of materials from other disciplines within the course. The panel recognises that the team are working towards adapting the qualification to the GOC's new Education and Training Requirements (ETRs) and encourages them to press ahead with that. The panel set no new conditions and deemed all relevant requirements to be met. The panel made one recommendation to further enhance the programme.</p> <p>The panel was satisfied that the programme should continue to be fully approved and suggest the next visit should take place in five years (2027).</p>	
Summary of recommendations to the GOC	
Previous conditions – met/unmet	No previous conditions.
New conditions	The EVP recommends that all requirements are MET and therefore no conditions are set.
New recommendations	The EVP recommends that one recommendation is offered. Details regarding the recommendation is set out in Part 3 .
Commendations	The EVP offers two commendations. Details regarding the commendations are set out in Part 3 .
Actual student numbers	92 - 2021/22 146 - 2022/23 (as of 28.09.22).
Next QA visit	By September 2027.
Factors to consider when scheduling next visit e.g. when students are in, hospital, audit etc.	The visit should be scheduled to factor in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suitable time to speak to students from previous and current cohorts • suitable time to speak to external examiners • the implementation of the GOC's new Education and Training Requirements (ETRs).

2.2 Previous conditions	
The conditions listed below are extracted from the report of 6 September 2017	
No previous conditions.	

2.3 Previous recommendations		
The recommendations listed below are extracted from the report of 6 September 2017		
Recommendation	Description	Comments
Recommendation 1	The programme team should provide evidence that there is robust and effective external quality assurance of the Postgraduate Ocular Therapeutics Course. In particular, the external examiners should be asked to report specifically on modules 1, 2, and 3 of the Course, rather than simply providing a generic review of the MSc programme. (Section 11- Quality Assurance and Enhancement)	During the visit the panel was assured that there were several mechanisms in place to enable reviews of the programme, both formally and informally. This includes, but is not limited to, student focus groups, module evaluation surveys and programme team meetings. The panel also saw that the external examiners do report on modules as well as generic matters. The panel was therefore content that this recommendation had been taken on board.

2.4 Non-applicable requirements	
<p>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 Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and College of Optometrists (CoO) for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the University only provides the theory aspect of the route to registration. • the CoO is responsible for the clinical placement and ensuring all the elements of portfolio are completed under supervision. • the administration of the Therapeutic Common Assessment Framework (TCAF) is the responsibility of the CoO. <p>Additionally, the EVP recommends that some requirements be deemed non-applicable to the programme as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the programme is set at postgraduate level. • the programme has full GOC approval. • the programme is an Independent Prescribing qualification. • the provider does not have any commercial sponsorship for the training programme. 	
A1.3	Provisional approval must be in place prior to advertising the qualification and recruiting the first cohort of students.
A5.1	Student optometrists or dispensing opticians must always make sure a patient knows their student status.
A5.2	The award of qualifications using the protected title of optometrist and dispensing optician is limited to qualifications approved by the GOC as meeting the professional standards required.
A5.3	Students who gain sufficient academic credits to receive an award but do not meet the professional requirements must receive an alternative award to that approved by the GOC. The alternative award must not use the protected title of optometry/dispensing optician.
IP2.1	Providers inform the GOC of any commercial sponsorship of the training programme.
IP3.2	Students must receive comprehensive clinical practice.

IP3.3	It will normally be for the student to arrange the clinical practice placement and the appropriate mentorship during the placement, and to inform the College of Optometrists (the College) (and the provider, as appropriate) of the details.
IP3.4	The clinical practice placement must normally be undertaken in the UK.
IP3.5	The clinical practice placement should be spent in a hospital eye service or specialist general practice under the supervision of a designated ophthalmologist, and provide the experience stated in the patient experience requirements.
IP3.6	Where there is an issue requiring resolution concerning the suitability of a practice placement, the issue and supporting evidence must be referred to the GOC for arbitration.
IP3.7	The student must make suitable arrangements for their mentorship.
IP3.8	The choice of mentor and the environment in which the mentorship will be delivered must be recorded by the College (and the provider, as appropriate).
IP3.9	The student must register with the College in advance of commencing their practice placement, providing details of the mentorship.
IP3.10	The designated mentor must provide supervision, support and appropriate clinical exposure so that the student can develop links between theory and practice.
IP3.11	The provider must ensure that the mentor is sufficiently familiar with the requirements of the training programme and the need to achieve the stated learning outcomes and competencies.
IP3.12	The PBL must ensure that the student is competent in the assessment, diagnosis and management of the ophthalmic conditions for which the optometrist intends to prescribe.
IP3.13	The PBL must ensure that the student is able to recognise those sight threatening conditions that should be referred.
IP3.14	The PBL must ensure that the student is able to consult effectively with patients.
IP3.15	The PBL must ensure that the student is able to monitor the response to treatment to review both the working and differential diagnosis, and to modify treatment or refer/consult/ seek guidance as appropriate.
IP3.16	The PBL must ensure that the student makes clinical decisions based on and with reference to the needs of the patient.
IP3.17	The PBL must ensure that the student critically analyses and evaluates his or her ongoing performance in relation to prescribing practice.
IP3.19	Clinical training must be structured to ensure that each student is exposed to sufficient numbers of patients presenting with the conditions that he or she will manage therapeutically. In addition, the student must be exposed to a range of ophthalmic conditions so as to develop differential diagnostic skills.
IP3.20	Each student must maintain a log book of practice evidence to verify that learning outcomes and core competencies have been achieved.
IP3.21	The log book must contain details of all patients seen, signed off by the mentor, and an indication of the actual involvement of the student in each patient episode.
IP3.22	Full information regarding each patient's clinical presentation, management and follow-up must be provided.
IP3.23	A reading log of the literature that has been used by the student to inform his or her understanding of prescribing practice must be provided.
IP3.24	The log book must evidence that the student has critically reflected on his or her own performance and show evidence of personal and professional development.
IP3.25	A summary sheet showing where in the log book the evidence for the achievement of learning outcomes can be found must be provided.
IP3.26	The student's involvement in the X patient care episodes described in the log book must be signed off by the supervising medical practitioner.
IP3.27	The log book must be submitted to the examiners prior to the final assessment.

IP4.3	There must be a formal assessment, carried out by the College or other GOC approved provider, in the form of the Therapeutic Common Final Assessment (TCFA) at the conclusion of the clinical placement.
IP6.1	Optometrists must successfully complete the Common Final Assessment of Competence.
IP7.3	Applicants must have identified a mentor prior to commencing the course.
IP7.7	No more than two years may elapse between the student's completion of the clinical placement and their taking the College's Therapeutic Final Common Assessment [TCFA] (or suitable and approved alternative).

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 were set at this visit.

3.2 Recommendations offered at this visit

The EVP offers the following recommendations to the provider.

A3.1	Providers must have a robust RPL/APL policy and associated procedures in place, which are quality assured and align with GOC guidance.
Recommendation 1	Ensure that the current Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy considers latest GOC guidance, to ensure all students have demonstrated equivalent knowledge at both the appropriate SQA level and pass mark.
Rationale	<p>The GOC approved an amendment to GCU's RPL policy in February 2018, which provides the opportunity for GCU Optometry undergraduates to RPL aspects of this programme. In December 2018 the GOC published new RPL guidance. The panel recommend that GCU's RPL policy is reviewed in line with the GOC's latest guidance.</p> <p>Please see the latest GOC guidance here: Recognition of Prior Learning guidance GeneralOpticalCouncil</p>

3.3 Commendations made at this visit

The panel wishes to commend the following areas:

- The close-knit nature of working within the programme team and further support from senior members of the university is a clear asset to the programme.
- Opportunities to incorporate materials and individuals from other clinical disciplines are well sought after and further enhance the programme.