

University of Hertfordshire
GOC FULL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
Master of Optometry (MOptom)
13 & 14 October 2022

Report confirmed by GOC	06 January 2023
--------------------------------	------------------------

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS	3
1.2 Programme details	3
1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (EVP)	3
1.4 Purpose of the visit	4
1.5 Programme history	4
PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY	6
2.1 Visit outcomes	6
2.2 Previous conditions	6
2.3 Previous recommendations	7
2.4 Non-applicable requirements	7
PART 3 – CONDITIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENDATIONS	8
3.1 Conditions set at this visit	8
3.2 Recommendations offered at this visit	8
3.3 Commendations made at this visit	9

PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS

1.2 Programme details	
Programme title	Master of Optometry (MOptom)
Programme description	<p>The Master of Optometry programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a level 7 integrated master's programme designed to provide the theoretical background and practice-based learning, including the Scheme for Registration (SfR) managed by the College of Optometrists (CoO), to enable students to join the GOC register upon graduation. • involves a collaborative partnership between the University of Hertfordshire and CoO which allows students to complete the SfR while enrolled at the University. • adheres to the standard academic year. • is a direct route to registration.
Current approval status	Fully approved (FA)
Approved student numbers	50

1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (EVP)	
Chair	Vincent McKay- Lay Chair
Visitors	Katie Carter- Lay Member Pam McClean- Independent Prescribing Optometrist Brian McCotter- Optometrist Kevin Gutsell- Dispensing Optician
GOC representative	Georgina Carter- Approval and Quality Assurance Officer
Observers	N/A

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 University of Hertfordshire's Master of Optometry (MOptom) programme (programme) to ensure it meets the requirements as listed in the GOC's <i>Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to Registration in Optometry handbook</i> (Handbook) and the <i>GOC Education A&QA-Supplementary Documents-List of Requirements</i> (list of requirements). <p>The visit took place remotely.</p>	

1.5 Programme history		
Date	Event type	Overview
November 2014	Visit	A GOC approval visit is carried. Provisional approval is granted with the University to commence the MOptom programme in September 2015 with a maximum intake of 50 students, subject to a visit being carried out to consider Year 1 course materials.
July 2015	Visit	The Panel carries out a visit to establish the readiness of the programme to receive its first cohort of students in September 2015. Both the Panel and EdCom are satisfied that the programme displays sufficient readiness to commence the programme in September 2015.
June 2016	Visit	A GOC approval visit is carried out. The Panel recommends to EdCom that provisional approval continues.
April 2017	Visit	A GOC approval visit is carried out. The Panel recommends to EdCom that provisional approval continues.
December 2017	Visit/Change	A sub panel carries out a visit to consider the impact of a major change in the proposed management of placement for the 'pre-registration' stage of the programme. The Panel recommends that EdCom considers all conditions met except Conditions 1c and 2 which are deemed partially met. These recommendations are agreed by EdCom in February 2018.
April 2018	Visit	A GOC approval visit is carried out. The Panel recommends to EdCom that provisional approval continues subject to the conditions being met.
1 and 2 April 2019	Visit	Provisional approval quality assurance visit takes place.
10 July 2019	Decision	The GOC grants full approval to the University of Hertfordshire's MOptom programme.
18 November 2019	Event	The provider notified the GOC that University wide restructuring was taking place.

14 January 2020	Change	The provider notified the GOC that there had been University wide changes to assessment regulations.
23 November 2020	Change	The provider notified the GOC that they had introduced temporary changes to the teaching delivery, assessments, patient episodes, and entry to SfR. Most of which replicated those of April 2020.
1 March 2021	Event	The GOC noted that several staff changes had taken place, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • return of one staff member after a period of absence • the departure of a staff member • the advertisement of 0.6FTE lecturer and one 1.0FTE professor.
24 June 2022	Change	The GOC noted that the University of Hertfordshire would now be running the level 3 initial year in-house, rather than through a partner institution.
24 June 2022	Change	The GOC noted that the provider will now be interviewing applicants with predicted grades equivalent to 120 UCAS points. Any offers remain at 136 UCAS points.
18 May 2022	Administration	A full approval quality assurance visit to the programme is scheduled for October 2022.
8 August 2022	Change	The GOC noted updates to staffing on the programme.

PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY

2.1 Visit outcomes	
<p>The panel was satisfied that the Programme meets GOC standards. The panel was pleased with innovative approaches used within the qualification and the relationship between the provider and stakeholders. The panel recognises that the team are working towards adapting the qualification to the GOC's new Education and Training Requirements (ETRs) and encourage them to continue doing so. The panel set no new conditions and deemed all relevant requirements to be met. The panel made two recommendations to further enhance the programme.</p> <p>The panel is satisfied that the programme should continue to be fully approved.</p>	
Summary of recommendations to the GOC	
Previous conditions – met/unmet	No previous conditions.
New conditions	All requirements were MET and therefore no conditions are set.
New recommendations	Two recommendations are offered. Details regarding the recommendation is set out in Part 3 .
Commendations	Three commendations are offered. Details regarding the commendations are set out in Part 3 .
Actual student numbers	2022/23 Year 1: 49 Year 2: 46 Year 3: 44 Year 4: 55
Next QA visit	The next visit will be scheduled within the next five years in line with the GOC's AQA process.
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"> • time to speak to students from all cohorts • time to speak to external examiners • the implementation of the GOC's new Education and Training Requirement's (ETRs).

2.2 Previous conditions	
The conditions listed below are extracted from the report of 01 April 2019	
No previous conditions.	

2.3 Previous recommendations		
The recommendations listed below are extracted from the report of 01 April 2019		
Recommendation	Description	Comments
Recommendation 1	To continue to review and update course materials to ensure accuracy and relevance.	Following discussions during the visit and evidence submitted as part of the pre-visit documentation, the panel was satisfied that this recommendation had been taken on board.
Recommendation 2	To clarify the leadership of the programme.	Following discussions during the visit, the panel was satisfied that the leadership of the programme was clear.
Recommendation 3	The Panel recommends the provision of dedicated administrative support for the management of the clinic and lab sessions.	During the visit, the panel heard that university wide structural changes had impacted the administrative support put in place in response to this recommendation. The panel appreciates that this is largely out of the hands of the programme team but have made a recommendation (2) linked to this.

2.4 Non-applicable requirements	
The EVP recommends that some requirements be deemed fully or partially non-applicable to the programme as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the programme has full GOC approval • the provider does not offer APL for this qualification. 	
A1.3	Provisional approval must be in place prior to advertising the qualification and recruiting the first cohort of students.
A3.1	Providers must have a robust RPL/APL policy and associated procedures in place, which are quality assured and align with GOC policy.

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.

A6.4	Providers must notify the GOC, as soon as practicable, of any planned or actual changes or events likely to influence the quality of the programme leading to the qualification and/or its delivery, in line with GOC notifications requirements.
Recommendation 1	The provider should notify the GOC of any events and changes related to the programme including, but not limited to, substantial changes to accommodation.
Rationale	<p>During the visit, the panel was informed that a new clinic was being built for the School, with an expectation of it being fully functional by the end of October 2022. When it is operational, an old lab will no longer be utilised.</p> <p>Whilst this had not previously been notified to the GOC, the panel acknowledges that this is a positive change and therefore the quality of the programme is not a concern. However, the team were reminded that they should notify the GOC of all relevant changes and events through the normal Notification of Changes and Events process, even if perceived as a positive contribution to the programme.</p> <p>The Notification of Changes and Events Form and Guidance can be found on the GOC website.</p>
OP5.5	The provider must ensure that the external examiners are, within a reasonable timeframe, provided with a response to their reports, detailing any actions to be taken.
Recommendation 2	The programme team should continue to improve communication with External Examiners.
Rationale	The panel acknowledges the centralised administrative restructuring that has taken place and the university wide impact that this has had.

	During the visit, the panel heard how administrative change has had some impact on the ease of communication with the programme's external examiners and recommend the team continue to seek ways to improve this.
--	--

3.3 Commendations made at this visit

The panel wishes to commend the following areas:

- The innovative approach to integrate a higher qualification into the programme, which enables registrants to deliver commissioned services to patients immediately after graduating.
- The innovative format of the E-Portfolio, which allows both staff and students to be proactive in tracking the progress of attainment of their core competencies.
- The relationship that the provider has built with the College of Optometrists and placement providers to ensure that students are well supported, and that the integrated programme is successful.