



Optometry Council of
Australia and New Zealand

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Provider: University of Western Australia
Program: Doctor of Optometry Program
Date: April 2022
Outcome: Accredited with five conditions until 30 June 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) was established in 1996. Its function includes assessment, for the purposes of accreditation, programs designed to produce graduates suitable for registration as optometrists in Australia or New Zealand.

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The assessment follows the process and procedures described in the OCANZ publication *Accreditation Manual for Optometry Programs in Australia and New Zealand Part 1- Processes and Procedures August 2012* (www.ocanz.org). The accreditation of a new program follows a two-stage process. Stage 1 involves a preliminary submission outlining the case for the establishment of the program and providing the necessary preliminary government and stakeholder approvals.

The Stage 2 accreditation process evaluates the extent to which a program of study complies with the OCANZ Standards set out in *Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide for Entry-Level Optometry Programs, Part 2 – Standards*, effective January 2017.

Under the Australian *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*, OCANZ may grant accreditation if it is reasonably satisfied that a program of study, and the education provider that provides it, meet an approved accreditation standard. It may also grant accreditation if it is reasonably satisfied that the provider and the program of study substantially meet an approved accreditation standard, and that the imposition of conditions on the approval will ensure that the program will meet the standard within a reasonable time.

A satisfactory Stage 2 submission for a new program will result in Accreditation with conditions being granted. The primary condition is to consider the program for re-accreditation once the first cohort of students completes the program. Other conditions may also apply and will be detailed in the assessment team report. Subject to a satisfactory response to conditions, OCANZ will conduct a follow up site visit once the first cohort of students has graduated. An unsatisfactory Stage 2 submission will result in Accreditation not being granted.

BACKGROUND

In October 2021, the University of Western Australia provided its Stage 2 accreditation submission, addressing each of the OCANZ Standards and providing the associated 15 core pieces of evidence outlined in the OCANZ Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide as well as a wide range of additional evidence. This report outlines the findings of the assessment team which assessed the submission and conducted the November 2021 assessment team site visit. Due to COVID-19 pandemic border restrictions, the entire site visit was conducted virtually via video conferencing.

The OCANZ Board reported its accreditation decision to the Optometry Board of Australia (OBA) and the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board – New Zealand (ODOB) to enable them to make a decision on the approval of the program of study for registration purposes.

KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The recommendation of the assessment team is that accreditation is granted until 30th June 2024 with conditions. The assessment team is recommending conditions in relation to Standard 3 (Program design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required professional competencies) and Standard 5 (Assessment is fair, valid and reliable).

The assessment team is satisfied that the graduates of the University of Western Australia optometry program will have the knowledge, skills and attributes to meet competency standards as entry level practitioners in Australia and New Zealand and that they will be equipped with the necessary skills to maintain those competencies.

The assessment team appreciated the positive approach taken by the school in their participation in the accreditation process. The assessment team appreciated the prompt responses to requests for further information or clarification on issues raised.

The following table displays the key findings of the assessment team. Where Accreditation Standards are noted as “substantially met” the School is required to provide evidence to OCANZ that the actions detailed in order to meet the specific standard have been appropriately completed. A condition needs to be reported on by the education provider at a time specified by OCANZ. A recommendation refers to an action or a course of actions that should be considered by the provider to improve the delivery and/or outcomes of the program.

Standard 1 Public safety - Standard 1 is MET	
Criteria	Comments
1.1 Protection of the public and the care of patients are prominent amongst the guiding principles of the educational program, clinical training and student learning outcomes.	
1.2 Screening for and management of student fitness to practice are effective.	
1.3 Students achieve the relevant competencies before providing patient care as part of the program.	
1.4 Suitably qualified and registered optometrists and/or health practitioners supervise students during clinical education.	
1.5 Health services and optometry practices providing clinical placements have robust quality and safety policies and processes and meet all required regulations and standards.	
1.6 Patients consent to care by students.	
1.7 Where required, all students are registered with the relevant regulatory authority/ies.	
1.8 The education provider holds students and staff to high levels of ethical and professional conduct.	

Standard 2 Academic Governance and Quality Assurance - Standard 2 is MET	
Criteria	Comments
2.1 The provider has robust academic governance arrangements in place for the program of study that includes systematic monitoring, review and improvement.	Strength The University's strong support for the program
2.2 Quality improvement processes use student and other evaluations, internal and external academic and professional peer review to improve the program.	Recommendations The Advisory Board and the advisory sub-committees strengthen attention to other Terms of Reference elements (aside from clinical placements) such as to vertical integration in and review of the entire curriculum.
2.3 There is relevant external input to the design and management of the program, including from representatives of the optometry professions.	
2.4 Mechanisms exist for responding within the curriculum to contemporary developments in health professional education and practice.	Review ways to increase SELT response rates such as administering the survey during class time.

Standard 3 Program of Study - Standard 3 is SUBSTANTIALLY MET WITH CONDITIONS

Criteria	Comments
<p>3.1 A coherent educational philosophy informs the program of study design and delivery.</p> <p>3.2 Program learning outcomes address all the professional competencies endorsed by OCANZ.</p> <p>3.3 The quality, quantity and diversity of clinical training are sufficient to produce a graduate competent to practice across a range of settings.</p> <p>3.4 Learning and teaching methods are intentionally designed and used to enable students to achieve the required learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.5 Principles of inter-professional learning and practice are embedded in the curriculum.</p> <p>3.6 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the units that they teach.</p> <p>3.7 Learning environments support the achievement of the required learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.8 Learning environments support the achievement of research skills appropriate to the academic level of the program</p> <p>3.9 Facilities and equipment are accessible, well-maintained, fit for purpose and support the achievement of learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.10 Cultural competence is appropriately integrated within the program and clearly articulated as required disciplinary learning outcomes: including an emphasis on Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Māori and Pasifika cultures.</p> <p>3.11 The optometry program has the resources to sustain the quality of education that is required to facilitate the achievement of the competency standards.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <p>Enthusiastic and dedicated staff</p> <p>Curriculum mapping tool</p> <p>Preclinical facilities and equipment</p> <p>The support for the program by external stakeholders</p> <p><u>CONDITION 1</u></p> <p><u>CONDITION 2</u></p> <p><u>CONDITION 3</u></p> <p><u>CONDITION 5</u></p>

Standard 4 The Student Experience – Standard 4 is MET

Criteria	Comments
<p>4.1 Course information is clear and accessible.</p> <p>4.2 Admission and progression requirements and processes are robust, equitable and transparent.</p> <p>4.3 Students have access to effective grievance and appeals processes.</p> <p>4.4 The provider identifies and provides support to meet the academic learning needs of students.</p> <p>4.5 Students are informed of and have appropriate access to personal support services provided by qualified personnel.</p> <p>4.6 Students are represented within the deliberative and decision-making processes of the program.</p> <p>4.7 Equity and diversity principles are observed and promoted in the student experience.</p>	

Standard 5 Assessment – Standard 5 is SUBSTANTIALLY MET WITH CONDITIONS

Criteria	Comments
<p>5.1 There is a clear relationship between learning outcomes and assessment strategies.</p> <p>5.2 Scope of assessment covers all learning outcomes relevant to the competencies.</p> <p>5.3 Multiple assessment tools, modes and sampling are used including direct observation in the clinical setting.</p> <p>5.4 Program management and co-ordination, including internal and external moderation, ensure consistent and appropriate assessment and feedback to students.</p> <p>5.5 Suitably qualified and experienced staff assess students, including external experts for final year.</p> <p>5.6 All learning outcomes are mapped to the required competencies, and are assessed.</p>	<u>CONDITION 4</u>

OUTCOME

OCANZ is satisfied the Doctor of Optometry Program at the University of Western Australia meets the OCANZ Accreditation Standards with conditions. The recommendation of the assessment team is that accreditation is granted for a period until 30 June 2024 with conditions, provided there are no major changes to the program during this period. The OCANZ Board approved this recommendation. The conditions are:

CONDITION 1

UWA is required to undergo a site visit by the assessment team at the start of 2023 to:

- view preclinical and clinical facilities and other teaching spaces
- interview a sample of the first and second cohort of students about the program
- interview nominated staff about the program, particularly new appointments
- interview prospective clinical residency program supervisors who have completed the online training
- review arrangements for third year clinical rotations
- speak to the optometry leadership group about any of the conditions of accreditation.

To inform the visit, UWA must before end December 2022:

- provide the completed web-based clinical residency supervisor training, outlining how the training will support adequate supervision of students on placement and inform any mechanisms for feedback to UWA on student performance.
- confirm which elements of the proposed UWA optometry cultural safety program for students have been implemented and detail a timeframe for remaining components, as well as documenting which staff teaching in the optometry program have completed training in cultural safety and participated in any available on-country experiences.
- provide a table updating staffing numbers, staff qualifications, fractions and level of appointments, and roles in the program
- detail the 10 OSCEs to be conducted at the end of final year, including providing marking rubrics and advising any red flags
- outline the cohort results for the first, and if available, second years of teaching
- provide an update if the planned build of any facilities has been delayed, and if so, report on contingency actions
- advise any program development initiated by UWA since the Stage 2 assessment by the assessment team.

CONDITION 2

In June 2022, the program must report to OCANZ that the program is meeting or exceeding implementation of the program's planned staff numbers as outlined to OCANZ in the Stage 2 submission supplementary report of 20 October 2021, table titled *UWA Optometry Current and Future recruitment*. The report should also address how the recruitment of staff and/or the redistribution of staff duties are ensuring the robustness and continuity of program delivery in the face of any planned and/or unplanned full-time or fractional staffing changes.

CONDITION 3

At the end of the Year 3, Trimester 1 (May 2023), at the end of Year 3, Trimester 2 (August 2023), and prior to reaccreditation (December 2023) the program must

- a) provide aggregated data drawn from Meditrek data plus a short analysis and commentary on the number and diversity of patients being seen by the first cohort of students. The report must encompass all areas of clinical practice including general examinations, therapeutic management, and special areas of clinical practice such as contact lenses, paediatric, binocular vision and low vision management. The data must include which

student encounters are observational, partial or full examinations under supervision. The discipline must also outline how any failure of the clinical residential placement program to meet the agreed diversity of experiences for particular students is being managed.

- b) provide in a table all the clinical residency placement sites for each student in the first cohort (de-identified) including: the site type (UWA, corporate, independent, ophthalmology etc.), if external to UWA the name and qualifications of the supervisor/s (including if therapeutically qualified), the length of placement and if the site is offering students participative and/or management experiences in any special clinical areas (including low vision, contact lenses and paediatrics).

CONDITION 4

The OSCEs to be held for the first cohort at the end of the program (November 2023) are to have significant involvement of independent external assessors acceptable to OCANZ. OCANZ will send one assessment team member to observe the delivery of the final OSCEs.

CONDITION 5

The reaccreditation submission (due 31 December 2023) must include a report on a formal review of the ways in which program is delivering content in:

Contact lenses
Paediatrics
Myopia management
Binocular Vision
Low vision
Therapeutics
Glaucoma.

This review is to address the volume of learning and patient management in each area and the efficacy of integrating it vertically (separation across years) and horizontally (across units) throughout the program. This review is to include external input.

The assessment team recommends a full site visit in early 2024 for the purposes of assessing the program for reaccreditation. This timing will allow OCANZ to assess the outcomes for the first cohort of students entering the program.

The Discipline is required, within its annual report, to include any changes made to the program in the preceding year and describe any significant changes to the resources allocated to the program during that year.