



Optometry Council of
Australia and New Zealand

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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| Education Provider: | Flinders University |
| Program: | Bachelor of Medical Science (Vision Science) & Master of Optometry Program |
| Date: | March 2022 |
| Outcome: | Accredited with two conditions until 30 June 2030 |

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 process evaluates the extent to which the 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. The School prepared a submission that addressed how it was meeting each of the Standards.

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 the imposition of conditions on the approval will ensure the program meets the standard within a reasonable time.

BACKGROUND

In December 2021, Flinders University submitted its reaccreditation 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 March 2022 assessment team site visit.

The OCANZ Board notified the Optometry Board of Australia (OBA), Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board – New Zealand (ODOB) and the Head of School and the Vice-Chancellor of Flinders University of its decision.

KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The assessment team is satisfied that the graduates of the Flinders University 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 program’s academic and administrative staff and the transparency of discussion. Also appreciated was the promptness of response and clarification of queries throughout the accreditation process.

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 | |
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| 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. | |

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| 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 | |
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| 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. | <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative processes in place that are informed by stakeholder feedback. • Strong employer engagement and support. |
| 2.2 Quality improvement processes use student and other evaluations, internal and external academic and professional peer review to improve the program. | |
| 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. | |

| Standard 3 Program of Study - Standard 3 is SUBSTANTIALLY MET WITH CONDITIONS | |
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| Criteria | Comments |
| 3.1 A coherent educational philosophy informs the program of study design and delivery. | <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiastic and engaged staff • Sound leadership and direction provided to the optometry staff • Diversity of clinical placements <p>Observations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that referrals processes are clearly articulated to all students where applicable in program of study. • Continue to offer flexible training options for external clinical placement providers. • Ensure troubleshooting refraction issues is adequately addressed. • Strengthen personnel support and additional systems for managing clinical placements as well as staff to support teaching lab and clinic preparations. <p>Conditions</p> <p>1a) The optometry program will be required to notify OCANZ when the new curriculum is</p> |
| 3.2 Program learning outcomes address all the professional competencies endorsed by OCANZ. | |
| 3.3 The quality, quantity and diversity of clinical training are sufficient to produce a graduate competent to practice across a range of settings. | |
| 3.4 Learning and teaching methods are intentionally designed and used to enable students to achieve the required learning outcomes. | |
| 3.5 Principles of inter-professional learning and practice are embedded in the curriculum. | |
| 3.6 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the units that they teach. | |

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| <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>approved and provide an interim report outlining the curriculum changes (by 31 August 2022).</p> <p>b) The 2022 Annual Report must detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The strategy for implementation of the new curriculum, including resourcing and staff professional development, and ii) Progress against the implementation of the new curriculum, including the impact of curriculum changes to the program of study. <p>c) The 2023 Annual Report must detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The strategy for implementation of the new curriculum, including resourcing and staff professional development, and ii) Progress against the implementation of the new curriculum, including the impact of curriculum changes to the program of study. <p>2a) The 2022 Annual Report to OCANZ must report on progress on the implementation of the Flinders optometry cultural competence plan outlined in the reaccreditation submission.</p> <p>b) The 2023 Annual Report to OCANZ must report on progress on the implementation of the Flinders optometry cultural competence plan outlined in the reaccreditation submission.</p> |
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| Standard 4 The Student Experience – Standard 4 is MET | |
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| Criteria | Comments |
| 4.1 Course information is clear and accessible. 4.2 Admission and progression requirements and processes are robust, equitable and transparent. 4.3 Students have access to effective grievance and appeals processes. 4.4 The provider identifies and provides support to meet the academic learning needs of students. 4.5 Students are informed of and have appropriate access to personal support services provided by qualified personnel. 4.6 Students are represented within the deliberative and decision making processes of the program. 4.7 Equity and diversity principles are observed and promoted in the student experience. | Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong culture of student support. • Students are engaged at University, College and Discipline level. • Responsiveness by the Discipline to feedback from various sources. |

| Standard 5 Assessment – Standard 5 is MET | |
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| Criteria | Comments |
| 5.1 There is a clear relationship between learning outcomes and assessment strategies. 5.2 Scope of assessment covers all learning outcomes relevant to the competencies. 5.3 Multiple assessment tools, modes and sampling are used including direct observation in the clinical setting. 5.4 Program management and co-ordination, including internal and external moderation, ensure consistent and appropriate assessment and feedback to students. 5.5 Suitably qualified and experienced staff assess students, including external experts for final year. 5.6 All learning outcomes are mapped to the required competencies, and are assessed. | Recommendation Provide external assessors with clear instructions identifying their role and expectations and ensure appointment procedures and selection criteria are clear and transparent and that regular feedback is provided to the assessors. |

OUTCOME

OCANZ is satisfied the Bachelor of Vision Science/Master of Optometry program at Flinders University meets the OCANZ Accreditation Standards with conditions.

The OCANZ Board had agreed to accredit the program until 30 June 2030 with two conditions, provided there are no material changes to the program during this period. The conditions are:

Conditions:

- 1a) The optometry program will be required to notify OCANZ when the new curriculum is approved and provide an interim report outlining the curriculum changes (by 31 August 2022).
- b) The 2022 Annual Report must detail:
 - i) The strategy for implementation of the new curriculum, including resourcing and staff professional development, and
 - ii) Progress against the implementation of the new curriculum, including the impact of curriculum changes to the program of study.

- c) The 2023 Annual Report must detail:
 - i) The strategy for implementation of the new curriculum, including resourcing and staff professional development, and
 - ii) Progress against the implementation of the new curriculum, including the impact of curriculum changes to the program of study.

2a) The 2022 Annual Report to OCANZ must report on progress on the implementation of the Flinders optometry cultural competence plan outlined in the reaccreditation submission.

- b) The 2023 Annual Report to OCANZ must report on progress on the implementation of the Flinders optometry cultural competence plan outlined in the reaccreditation submission.

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.