



Optometry Council of
Australia and New Zealand

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Provider:	Australian College of Optometry
Program:	Australian College of Optometry – Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics Program
Date:	August 2021
Outcome:	Accredited with three conditions until 31 December 2029

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 (including scheduled medicine endorsement) as optometrists in Australia or New Zealand.

THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

The overall aim of the accreditation process is to evaluate the extent to which the program complies with the five OCANZ Standards set out in *OCANZ Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide for Programs of Study in Ocular Therapeutics* effective January 2018 (www.ocanz.org).

OCANZ may grant accreditation if it is satisfied that a program of study, and the education provider that provides it, meets an approved accreditation standard. OCANZ may also grant accreditation with conditions on the program's approval, if it is satisfied the program will meet the standard within a reasonable time. OCANZ's recommendation informs registration decisions made under national law in Australia and New Zealand.

BACKGROUND

In March 2021, the Australian College of Optometry (ACO) tendered its reaccreditation submission, addressing each of the 2018 OCANZ Accreditation Standards for Programs of Study in Ocular Therapeutics and providing the associated 15 core pieces of evidence required by OCANZ. This executive summary outlines the findings of the assessment team which assessed the submission and conducted a site visit in May 2021. The OCANZ Board adopted the accreditation report and recommendation.

The OCANZ Board reported its accreditation decision to the OBA and the ODOB to enable them to make a decision on the approval of the program of study in ocular therapeutics at the Australian College of Optometry for endorsement for the use of scheduled medicines.

KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The assessment team is satisfied that the graduates of the Australian College of Optometry – Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics program have the knowledge, skills and other professional attributes and competencies that are necessary for the practice of ocular therapeutics in Australia and New Zealand.

The recommendation of the assessment team is that accreditation is granted for a period of eight years with three conditions, provided there are no material changes to the program during this period.

The following table displays the key findings of the assessment team. Where Accreditation Standards are noted as “substantially met” the ACO 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 foundation of competencies in ocular therapeutics before providing therapeutic management of ocular diseases 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 SUBSTANTIALLY MET

Criteria	Comments
<p>2.1 The provider has robust academic governance arrangements in place for the program of study that includes systematic monitoring, review and improvement.</p> <p>2.2 Quality improvement processes use student and other evaluations, internal and external academic and professional peer review to improve the program.</p> <p>2.3 There is relevant external input to the design and management of the program, including from representatives of the optometry profession who have expertise in ocular therapeutics.</p> <p>2.4 Mechanisms exist for responding within the curriculum to contemporary developments in health professional education and practice, including ocular therapeutics in particular</p>	<p>Suggestion Review how advice is provided to students about any quality improvement informed by their feedback. Review the need for periodic interaction with/feedback from clinical placement supervisors about the program overall. Program to take a greater role in overseeing lecture content improvements</p> <p>Recommendation Develop succession plan for replacing academic lead when Professor Gutteridge departs.</p> <p>Condition The ACO must commission a review of the program that includes external academic and professional input. The 2022 Annual Report to OCANZ must provide a report on the review process and outcomes and advise as to how the review's recommendations, if any, are being addressed on an ongoing basis.</p>

Standard 3 Program of Study - Standard 3 is SUBSTANTIALLY MET

Criteria	Comments
<p>3.1 A coherent educational philosophy informs the design and delivery of the program of study, which is publicly available and encompasses both the conceptual bases of ocular therapeutics and the development of practical skills.</p> <p>3.2 Program learning outcomes align with and address all of the professional competencies endorsed by OCANZ that are relevant to ocular therapeutics.</p> <p>3.3 The scope of the program encompasses a range of topics sufficient to achieve the expected learning outcomes of the program including those set out in <i>Standard 5</i>.</p> <p>3.4 The quality, quantity and diversity of clinical training are sufficient to produce a graduate competent to practice ocular therapeutics across a range of settings.</p> <p>3.5 Learning and teaching methods are intentionally designed and used to enable students to achieve the required learning outcomes.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and guidance of the program by Associate Professor Ian Gutteridge • Very experienced lecturers who are committed to the program • Program design allows for a flexible approach to learning • Quality of program content • Positive feedback from all stakeholders <p>Suggestions Strengthen the current descriptions of program learning outcomes, overall and in individual unit outlines.</p> <p>Map the ACO-COT against the NPS MedicineWise Prescribing Competencies.</p>

<p>3.6 Principles of inter-professional learning and practice are embedded in the curriculum.</p> <p>3.7 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the units that they teach.</p> <p>3.8 Learning environments support the achievement of the required learning outcomes.</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 ocular therapeutics program has the resources to sustain the quality of education that is required to facilitate the achievement of the competency standards.</p>	<p>Clarify the Role of Topic Leads and consider the ways in which they might assist in enhancing the program.</p> <p>Condition The 2021 annual report to OCANZ must provide a strategy and plan for implementing cultural competence into the ACO-COT which includes how foundational skills in cultural safety and health issues specific to First Nations Peoples will be integrated into the program. The 2022 annual report to OCANZ must report on implementation of the plan.</p>
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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, including taking account of the needs of adult learning practitioners.</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>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and effective course administration • Assistance in examination techniques given to candidates <p>Recommendation Further examine how candidates might contribute to the deliberative and decision-making processes of the program other than by committee service, for example, by a periodic meeting of a representation of candidates with key staff.</p>

Standard 5 Assessment – Standard 5 is SUBSTANTIALLY MET

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 for ocular therapeutics.</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 Staff who assess students are suitably qualified and experienced for their assessment roles.</p> <p>5.6 All learning outcomes are mapped to the required competencies, and are assessed.</p> <p>5.7 Graduates are issued with certification that validly attests to their demonstrated competence to practice ocular therapeutics</p>	<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review short answer question marking guides as used in each paper• Consider increasing formative and summative feedback on assessment to candidates <p>Condition</p> <p>In time for the 2022 cohort, the program is to enhance its current guidance to oral examiners by developing and training the examiners in the use of a detailed marking rubric for the oral examination. The 2022 Annual Report to OCANZ must provide details of the changes made.</p>

OUTCOME

OCANZ is satisfied the Australian College of Optometry – Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics Program meets the OCANZ Ocular Therapeutics Accreditation Standards. The recommendation of the assessment team is that accreditation is granted for a period of eight years until 31 December 2029 with three conditions, provided there are no material changes to the program during this period. The OCANZ Board approved this recommendation.

The conditions are:

1. The ACO must commission a review of the program that includes external academic and professional input. The 2022 Annual Report to OCANZ must provide a report on the review process and outcomes and advise as to how the review's recommendations, if any, are being addressed on an ongoing basis.
2. The 2021 annual report to OCANZ must provide a strategy and plan for implementing cultural competence into the ACO-COT which includes how foundational skills in cultural safety and health issues specific to First Nations Peoples will be integrated into the program. The 2022 annual report to OCANZ must report on implementation of the plan.
3. In time for the 2022 cohort, the program is to enhance its current guidance to oral examiners by developing and training the examiners in the use of a detailed marking rubric for the oral examination. The 2022 Annual Report to OCANZ must provide details of the changes made.

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