Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Provider:	University of New South Wales
Program:	Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics
Date:	August 2024
Outcome:	Accredited with no conditions until 31 December 2032

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 Procedures Guide 2022* (https://www.ocanz.org/accreditation/standards/).

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 Programs of Study in Ocular Therapeutics*, effective 01 January 2024. 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 May 2024, the University of New South Wales submitted its reaccreditation submission, addressing each of the OCANZ Standards outlined in the *OCANZ Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide for Programs of Study in Ocular Therapeutics* as well as additional evidence. This report outlines the findings of the assessment team which assessed the submission and conducted the May 2024 assessment team review.

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

KEY FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The assessment team is satisfied that the graduates of the Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics have the knowledge, skills and other professional attributes and competencies that are necessary for the practice of ocular therapeutic in Australia and New Zealand.

The following table displays the key findings of the assessment team. Where Accreditation Standards are noted as "substantially met" the education provider is required to provide evidence to OCANZ that the actions detailed in order to meet the specific standard have been appropriately completed. A strength refers to a particularly significant achievement by the education provider with regard to the program. 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. An observation/suggestion is offered for optional consideration by the provider to be consistent with best practice.

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, its clinical education components and learning outcomes. 1.2 Students achieve the relevant competencies before providing therapeutic management of ocular diseases as part of the program. 1.3 Students are supervised by suitably qualified and experienced registered optometrists and/or other health professionals during clinical training. 1.4 Health services and optometry practices providing clinical placements have robust health, quality and safety policies and processes for patient care that meet all required regulations and standards. 1.5 . Patients consent to care by students.	**Strengths** • Emphasis on providing students with contemporaneous content and equipping graduates with the ability to source and evaluate evidence-based management of ocular disease • Strong emphasis on student knowledge and understanding of the legal, ethical and professional framework they will practice within as therapeutically qualified optometrists **Recommendation** • Consider implementing written patient consent procedures for clinical placements.

1.6 Students understand the legal, ethical and professional responsibilities of a registered optometry practitioner, particularly in relation to ocular therapeutics. Patients consent to care by students. 1.7 The education provider holds students and staff to high levels of ethical and professional conduct. 1.8 Processes for identification and management of student impairment are effective. 1.9 All students are registered with the relevant regulatory authority/ies. 1.10 The program has regard to cognate health care policies and standards that relate to clinical training and practice as a health care practitioner, including professional responsibilities and practices in ocular prescribing.	

Standard 2 Cultural Safety - Standard 2 is MET	
Criteria	**Comments**
2.1 Cultural safety for First Nations Peoples is integrated throughout the program and clearly articulated in required learning outcomes. 2.2 There is input into the design and management of the program from First Nations Peoples. 2.3 Students' clinical experiences encompass provision of culturally safe care for First Nations Peoples. 2.4 The education provider ensures students are provided with access to appropriate resources, and to staff with specialist knowledge, expertise and cultural capabilities, to facilitate learning about the health of First Nations Peoples. 2.5 Staff and students work and learn in a culturally safe environment. 2.6 The design and management of the program, particularly its clinical components, continue to have regard to relevant national policies concerning the health and health care of First Nations Peoples.	**Strengths** • Positive approach to the implementation and establishment of culturally safe practice • Establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Cultural Competence working group with ongoing consultation and communication **Recommendations** • Articulate cultural safety for First Nations Peoples in required Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes • Consider increasing opportunities for student placements in Indigenous settings with culturally safe providers.

Standard 3 Academic Governance and Quality Assurance - Standard 3 is MET	
Criteria	**Comments**
3.1 The education provider has robust academic governance for the program of study that include systematic periodic monitoring, review and improvement of the program. 3.2 Input is obtained periodically from internal and external stakeholders to the design, review and improvement of the program, including feedback from students, consumers, academics and representatives of the optometry profession to ensure the program remains fit for purpose. 3.3 The program responds to contemporary emerging developments in health professional education and ocular therapeutics practice. 3.4 The education provider operates in an environment informed by contemporary scholarship, research and professional	**Strengths** • Robust academic governance with good feedback mechanisms and internal quality control processes • Program staff profile and academic culture ensures contemporary emerging developments are incorporated into the program. **Observation** • The program is responding to changes in generative artificial intelligence.

enquiry that informs and fosters the development of the program, in relation to ocular therapeutics in particular. 3.5 Risks to the quality and sustainability of the program are, and continue to be, identified, managed and mitigated effectively.	

Standard 4 Program of Study – Standard 4 is MET	
Criteria	**Comments**
4.1 A coherent educational philosophy informs the design, delivery, learning outcomes and teaching and assessment methods of the program. 4.2 Program learning outcomes address all of the relevant professional competencies endorsed by OCANZ. 4.3 The quality, quantity and diversity of clinical training are sufficient to produce a graduate competent to practise ocular therapeutics across a range of settings and patient presentations. 4.4 Learning and teaching methods are intentionally designed and used to enable students to achieve the required learning outcomes. 4.5 Emerging developments in education, technology, pharmaceutical agents, practice and public health are incorporated as necessary to keep the program fit for purpose and to foster adaptation to future changes in health care delivery. 4.6 Emphasis is given to the concept of 'whole of body prescribing' in considering prescribing and administering medications. 4.7 Principles of inter-professional learning and practice are embedded in the curriculum and students work with and learn from other health professions to foster a capacity for interprofessional collaborative practice. 4.8 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the units that they teach. 4.9 Learning environments, clinical facilities and equipment are accessible, up to date, well maintained, fit for purpose and support the achievement of required learning outcomes.	**Strengths** • Responsive online synchronous and asynchronous delivery • Significant public hospital ophthalmology clinical placements • Embedded IPE • Well qualified and experienced education and research staff **Observations** • Focus of clinical training in ophthalmology settings may limit exposure to shared care models of patient management, or unclear limits to the scope of practice of a therapeutically qualified optometrist • Population of student body is expected to decline over time.

4.10 Graduates achieve research literacy appropriate to the academic level and type of program. 4.11 A capacity for responsiveness to cultures beyond a practitioner's own culture in the delivery of culturally safe health care is integrated within the program and clearly articulated among required disciplinary learning outcomes. 4.12 The optometry program has the resources to sustain the quality of education that is required to facilitate the achievement of the OCANZ-endorsed competency standards.	

Standard 5 The Student Experience – Standard 5 is MET	
Criteria	**Comments**
5.1 Course information is clear and accessible. 5.2 Admission and progression requirements and processes are equitable and transparent. 5.3 Students have access to effective grievance and appeals processes. 5.4 The education provider identifies, and provides support to meet, the academic learning needs of students. 5.5 Students are informed of and have appropriate access to personal support services provided by qualified personnel. 5.6 Students participate in the deliberative and decision-making processes of the program. 5.7 Equity and diversity principles are observed and promoted in the student experience. 5.8 Student support mechanisms reflect the adult learning model that characterises ocular therapeutic programs.	**Strengths** • Equity, diversity and wellness support provided and accessible to all students.

Standard 6 Program Learning Outcomes & Assessment – Standard 6 is MET	
Criteria	**Comments**
6.1 Program learning outcomes are specified and mapped to the relevant required professional competencies for registration to practise. 6.2 Program learning outcomes encompass skills for further study and life-long learning, including self-reflection. 6.3 On completion of the program, students have demonstrated all specified learning outcomes. 6.4 Multiple assessment tools are used, including direct observation in clinical settings. 6.5 Methods of assessment are consistent with and appropriate to the outcomes being assessed and the education provider can demonstrate that its assessment strategies are appropriate, fair, valid and reliable. 6.6 Program management mechanisms, including internal and external moderation, achieve consistent and appropriate approaches to assessment and timely feedback to students. 6.7 Suitably qualified and experienced staff assess students. 6.8 All assessors are informed of and engaged with the requirements of the assessments in which they take part. 6.9 Graduates are issued with certification that validly attests to their demonstrated competence to practise ocular therapeutics.	**Strength** • Diverse assessments strategy

OUTCOME

OCANZ is satisfied the Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics program at the University of New South Wales meets the OCANZ Accreditation Standards with no conditions.

The OCANZ Board had agreed to accredit the program until 31 December 2032 with no conditions, provided there are no material changes to the program during this period.

The University of New South Wales is required, within Annual Reports, to include any changes to the program in the preceding year and describe any material changes to the resources allocated to the program during that year.