Completion Guidance

Optometry and Dispensing Optics Providers, and Dispensing Optics Awarding Organisation

Annual Monitoring Return (AMR)

Introduction

This document includes guidance and tips to help you to complete the *Annual Monitoring Return Form* (AMR-FRM).

The General Optical Council (GOC) is required to "keep informed of the nature of the instruction given by any approved training establishment to persons training as optometrists or dispensing opticians and of the assessments on the results of which approved qualifications are granted", under s.13(1) Opticians Act 1989.

As part of our quality assurance and enhancement method (QAEM) of education establishments and qualifications (referred to as 'providers' or 'awarding organisations' (AOs) all providers and AOs are required to demonstrate how they satisfy our requirements, currently listed in our education handbooks and/or the education and training requirements (ETR).

Please note that your AMR submission, including information that is or is not submitted, or non-compliance with the AMR process may result in the GOC undertaking additional quality assurance activities in relation to your qualification. This may include (but is not limited to):

- requesting additional information
- conducting a desktop review of the qualification, and / or
- a visit to the qualification by the GOC.

How to use the guidance

Please note that some forms contain 'missing' question numbers. This is because some questions are not applicable to your qualification, and you are not required to provide a response.

The GOC discloses information contained in AMR submission forms for use in the annual *UK Optical Education GOC Approved Qualifications Report* on a provider-by-provider basis restricted to year 1 cohort data. Other data in the report include totals for qualification providers and awarding organisations.

If you have any queries that are not answered in this document or if you require any further assistance, please contact the **Education Department** team via **education@optical.org**.

Section one – Submission details

This section requests key information in relation to your qualification and the individuals responsible for the completion of the form.

Form completed by	
1.1	The name, including professional title of the person(s) with primary responsibility for compiling the information required and completing the form. This will usually be the programme leader.
1.2	The job title of the person(s) with primary responsibility for compiling the information and completing the form.
1.3	The email address of the person(s) with primary responsibility for compiling the information and completing the form.
1.4	The date that the form was completed.
Individual responsible for the qualification	
1.5	The professional title and name of the member of staff responsible for the qualification.
1.6	The job title of the member of staff responsible for the qualification.
1.7	The email address of the member of staff responsible for the qualification.
1.8	The date that the member of staff responsible for the qualification signed off the AMR-FRM.

Section two – Risk and strategy

The risk register (or equivalent) you submit will provide the GOC an overview of the key risks affecting your qualification. It should also provide the GOC with assurance regarding how your qualification manages risk.

In addition, the information provided by all qualifications in relation to risk will provide the GOC with oversight of the risk profile of the sector and enable the GOC to proactively adapt our regulatory approach to meet the evolving needs of the sector.

Finally, where a significant risk(s) is reported by a qualification, or on a sector-wide basis, the GOC will take steps to assist that qualification, or the sector, in managing and mitigating that risk(s).

The SWOT analysis will provide the GOC with greater insight into the internal and external factors that may be positive and negatively impacting the qualification and the optical education sector. This will assist us in putting the information we receive regarding the qualification, both through the AMR and other QAEM activities, into context and will enhance our oversight of the sector.
It will also enable us to identify key trends in the sector and proactively manage any risks, and to adapt our regulatory approach to meet the evolving needs of the sector.

Risk details

We recommend that qualifications submit a risk register that is relevant to the qualification although it may not belong solely to your qualification. If there is no relevant risk register you may itemise each risk instead along with details of impact, controls, and mitigation measures.

If submitting a risk register (or equivalent) that does not belong solely to your qualification, you may wish to remove / redact any risks that no do relate, directly or indirectly, to your qualification.

Your risk register (or equivalent) should include the following information:

- A description of each identified risk;
- A rating of the risk (usually expressed as a function of the likelihood and potential impact of each risk); and
- Details of the mitigating actions being or to be taken. These may be categorised as countermeasures (actions to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring and / or reduce its potential impact) and contingencies (actions that will be taken should the risk materialise in order to mitigate its impact).

2.1	Please confirm whether a risk register (or equivalent) has been attached to the AMR-FRM.
2.2	If risk register (or equivalent) is attached, please confirm the name of the file/annex.
2.3	The name(s) and job title(s) of the individual(s) responsible for managing risk for the qualification (if different from the individual responsible for the qualification).
2.4	Please confirm when the risk register (or equivalent) was last updated.
2.5	How often the risk register (or equivalent is updated) e.g., annually, biannually etc.
2.6 - 2.10	If no risk register (or equivalent) is attached, please use 2.6-2.10 to identify risks and your plans for mitigation and/or control. Please copy and paste the table provided as many times as required to identify as many risks as necessary and provide details of any risks identified together with details of risk impact, controls, and measures in place to mitigate risks. Please confirm if the risks you have identified relate to any specific standard or requirement.
2.11	Any further comments you would like to make regarding the risks you have identified.

Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) is technique primarily used for strategic planning. SWOT analysis aims to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieving a particular strategy, objective or goal.

The four categories are broadly defined as follows:

- **Strengths (S)** – characteristics that give an advantage over others. These are factors internal to your qualification and institution.
- **Weaknesses (W)** – characteristics that lead to a disadvantage relative to others. These are factors internal to your qualification and institution.
- **Opportunities (O)** – elements that could be exploited to your advantage. These are factors external to your qualification and institution.

• **Threats (T)** – elements that could have an adverse effect on your qualification and institution. These are factors presented external to your qualification and institution.	
2.12 2.13 2.14 - 2.17	Please confirm whether a SWOT analysis document has been attached to the AMR-FRM. If SWOT analysis document is attached, please confirm the name of the file/annex. If no SWOT analysis documents attached, please use 2.14-2.17 to identify as many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the qualification. If not attaching a SWOT analysis, please copy and paste the table provided as many times as required.
2.18	Any further comments you would like to make regarding the SWOT analysis you have provided.
Section three – Qualification delivery	
Staffing	
3.1	The number of GOC registered teaching staff on qualification. For Awarding Organisations, this should be the total number, including its centres.
Admissions	
3.2	The number of applications received admitted to the qualification for the 2024/25 year 1 cohort.
3.3	The number of students/trainees admitted to the qualification's 2024/25 year 1 cohort (for optometry and dispensing optics providers this should include from clearing but exclude retakes).
3.4	The number of students/trainees admitted to the qualification's 2024/25 year 1 cohort from clearing.
3.5	The number of UK (home) students or trainees admitted to the qualification's 2024/25 year 1 cohort (excluding retakes).
3.6	The number of international students or trainees admitted to the qualification's 2024/25 year 1 cohort (excluding retakes). International students exclude individuals living/working in the UK prior to commencement of studies.
3.7	The average entrance offer made to successful applicants to commence study in the 2024/25 year 1 cohort, expressed as UCAS points (equivalent) where applicable. Equivalent qualifications include Scottish Highers, BTEC and International Baccalaureate.
3.8	The average actual entrance attainment for students commencing study in the 2024/25 year 1 cohorts, expressed as UCAS points (equivalent) where applicable.
3.9	Please use the comments box for the following: • Where UCAS offers are not made by the qualification, please provide equivalent information (e.g. average GCSE offer)

	• Where students or trainees entering the qualification do not possess UCAS points (equivalent), please provide equivalent information (e.g. average GCSE attainment) and/or • Where your qualification has multiple intakes within the reporting period, please provide further data.
Cohort	
3.10	Please provide details of the number of students in each cohort of the qualification for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 academic years. We would expect this data to correspond to the cohort submitted to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) (where appropriate). In recognition of the fact that student numbers may fluctuate in the early part of the academic year, qualifications may wish to provide this data as of 01 December 2024 rather than at the commencement of the 2025/26 academic year.
3.11	Where your qualification has multiple intakes within the reporting period, please provide further data here.
Progression	
3.12	Percentage of first year students continuing on the qualification into the second year.
3.13	Percentage of second year students progressing to the third year of the qualification.
3.14	The percentage of third year students progressing to the fourth year of the qualification (if applicable).
3.15	Percentage of final year students successfully completing the qualification and conferred a final award.
3.16	Percentage of final year students who began the qualification that successfully completed it (for that cohort only): i.e. if 62 final year students successfully completed the qualification in 2025 and 96 students were admitted to the qualification for the same year-cohort in 2022, the percentage would be 65%).
3.17	Please tell us the percentage of students for each cohort in 2024/25 who will repeat the year in 2025/26 or exit the qualification without graduating. Data submitted in this section should relate to cohorts ending in the reporting period, e.g. students whose first year ended in June 2025 should be reported as a year 1 cohort, and so on. We would expect this data to mirror the student progression data submitted to HESA, where applicable.
3.18	Where your qualification has multiple cohorts within the reporting period, please provide further data here. Alternatively, if your qualification has an alternative way of estimating progression, please use this box to provide

	your data. Please also use this box to provide reasons for students not completing the qualification (if known).
Section four – Attainment	
Student attainment	
4.1	Please provide the percentage of students that obtained each classification at the conclusion of their studies. Data submitted in this section should relate to students finishing their studies in the reporting period, e.g. students who graduated in June 2025. We would expect this data to mirror the student progression data submitted to HESA, where applicable. Where your qualification does not award degree classifications, please provide pass and fail percentages. Alternative student attainment information may also be provided where the final qualification classification scheme is by Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail. Please check that data submitted in this section sums to 100%.
4.2	Where your qualification has multiple cohorts within the reporting period, please provide further data here.
Section five – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) offering	
5.1	Please confirm whether individuals can apply for RPL on the qualification.* *If yes, please include information on the number of RPL applications received.
5.2	Please provide the number of RPL applications received in the reporting period and the number of successful RPL applications. In addition, please provide an explanation of the grounds upon which the RPL was granted, and details of the module(s) for which RPL was granted.
Section six – Qualification feedback	
Student feedback	
6.1	Please provide the most recent National Student Survey (NSS) scores for your qualification by combining the percentage of the two positive answers i.e. “very good”/ “good” scores for each question asked. Please also comment on any changes to NSS scores compared to the 2023/24 academic year.
6.2	If your qualification did not take part in the 2025 NSS, please provide information regarding equivalent activities undertaken by the qualification to monitor student satisfaction here, including the results of the satisfaction surveys.
Section seven – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	

In this section, we are requesting two categories of EDI data. Firstly, we are requesting data relating to the status of students on the qualification – referred to as 'personal characteristics' by HESA, and secondly, we are requesting data relating to widening participation (also referred to as widening participation by HESA).

For each of the personal characteristics relating to gender, age group, disability, and ethnicity, please provide percentages and numbers for the data requested such as (but not limited to):

- The percentage and number of students on the qualification (for each personal characteristic),
- First year students admitted,
- First year students continuing the qualification into second year,
- Final year students, and
- Final year students achieving a grade required by the GOC (e.g., 2.2 or above, or a pass for alternative marking schemes).

Please give percentage figures as a proportion i.e. never exceeding 100% for the combined personal characteristics.

Personal characteristics	
7.1	Gender e.g., female, male, another term (including but not limited to): • trans man, • trans woman, • non-binary, or • prefer not to say.
7.2	Age group e.g.: • 20 and under, • 21-24 • 25-29 • 30 and over, or • unknown / prefer not to say.
7.3	Disability status e.g.: • known disability, • no known disability, or • unspecified / prefer not to say.
7.4	Ethnicity e.g.: • White (e.g., White Gypsy or Traveller, Other White background), • Black or Black British (e.g., Caribbean, African Other Black background),

7.5	• Asian or Asian British (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Other Asian background), • Mixed (e.g., White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other mixed background), or • Other and unidentified (e.g., Arab, Other ethnic background, Not Known, Information refused) Refugee status. Please check that the data submitted in this section sums to 100%.
7.6	Please use the comments box to provide any additional information on the data collected regarding personal characteristics.
Widening participation	
7.7 - 7.13	For 7.7-7.13, please indicate which widening participation data / metrics that the qualification collects by confirming either 'yes' or 'no'.
7.14	Please use the comments box to provide any additional information on the widening participation data collected or any alternative widening participation data.
7.15 - 7.19	For 7.15-7.19, please discuss the way the qualification uses the data in 7.1-7.13 to monitor achievement across different groups (i.e. across the range of EDI and widening participation data collected for your qualification).
Section eight – Lessons learned and good practice	
Lessons learned and good practice We are requesting this information to assist us in maintaining oversight of new developments and sharing good practice in the sector. For example, this may include (but is not limited to): • examples of where key events have led to improved processes or outcomes; • innovative module / qualification design; • examples of innovative teaching or delivery on the qualification; • new assessment methods; • new course content; • innovative student support and/or supervision mechanisms; • examples of where qualification changes have led to improved learning outcomes; and / or • examples of where you have developed new or improved relationships with local optical healthcare providers, for example with a local hospital or community facilities.	
8.1	Please provide details of any areas of learning that you wish to share with the GOC including the relating Standard for Approved Qualifications number or the Education Handbook requirement (as applicable).

8.2	Please provide details of any areas good practice that you wish to share with the GOC including where relevant the relating Standard for Approved Qualifications number.
Section nine – Feedback on AMR process	
Feedback	
9.1 9.2	Please provide your comments, questions, observations and / or considerations in respect of the GOC's QAEM function, including the AMR process. You may also tell us if you think there are any gaps in the knowledge, skills, and/or behaviours contained in the GOC's education and training requirements.
Section ten – Response to ETR recommendations	
Recommendations Providers and awarding organisations should complete this section for any recommendations set as part of the adaptation or application outcomes report under the education and training requirements (ETR). If a qualification has not been set any recommendations under the ETR, providers and awarding organisations do not need to complete this section.	
10.1 10.2	List the standard number the recommendation has been set against e.g., S2.1. Please provide narrative in response to the recommendation (or recommendations) set.
10.3	If accompanying documentation to support a response to a recommendation (or recommendations) is attached, please confirm the name of the file/annex.