

PART 1

1. Acknowledgements

The GOC Education Visitors found the Programme Team to be very accommodating to their needs and wish to thank them for the co-ordination of a successful visit. The Visitors also wished to thank those who took the time to meet with the Visitors throughout the visit.

2. Introduction

This report is in relation to a GOC Re-Visit to ABDO College's ('The College') Contact Lens programme ('CLP') which was conducted on the 15th and 16th February 2017. This report should be read in conjunction with the report relating to the QA Visit conducted on 22nd and 23rd of October 2015.

The GOC Visitors consisted:

- Sally Powell - Lay Member (Chair)
- Markham May - Lay Member
- David Whitaker - Optometrist & Educationalist
- Paula Baines – Dispensing/Contact Lens Optician
- Graeme Stevenson - Dispensing & Contact Lens Optician

The Visitors were accompanied by Kabir Kareem, Accreditation & Quality Assurance Officer (GOC) and Professor Barry Mitchell (Lay Chair in training) who attended in the capacity as an observer.

The GOC is required to undertake such visits in order to obtain assurance that the standards of teaching and clinical practice within the programme are compliant with the GOC's Core Competencies and standards.

The visit was conducted in accordance with the Handbook: 'Guidelines for the approval of: (A) Training Institutions; and (B) Providers of Schemes for Registration for United Kingdom trained Contact Lens Optician – Nov 2007'

2.1 Background

The purpose of this risk based visit is to follow-up on the conditions set during the last visit in October 2015. The April 2016 Education Committee agreed that the next visit would be after the Contact Lens Examinations visit (ABDO Examinations) had been completed.

This programme has been delivered by The College since 2000. All students attending any CLP are required to sit theory and practical examinations set by ABDO Examinations in order to gain the qualification required to enter onto the GOC Specialty Contact Lens Register.

As part of the wider quality assurance review which included other institutions providing CLP's as well as the professional qualifying examinations that accompany them. The conditions that came out of the October 2015 visit were as follows:

	Conditions	ABDO College Response
1	That the College formalises their processes for the monitoring and review of programme content and	As part of the formalisation of monitoring and review processes, The College:

	delivery, to ensure effective annual quality assurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured that the new external advisor is a qualified Dispensing and Contact Lens Optician • Instigated a quinquennial review of the CLP • Included Contact Lens reports in their Diploma Board of Studies
2	To ensure consistency and greater clarity of the marking scheme, the College should revise the 'answer guide' for tutor assignment feedback.	The marking guides have been modified by The College's Course Co-ordinator and one of the senior Contact Lens tutors ready for the next academic year in September.
3	That the College should continue to provide suitably qualified and experienced staff to teach the contact lens programme. The GOC should be informed of staffing arrangements for the contact lens programme once the planned new appointments to the College's teaching team are completed.	The College have appointed three new teaching staff for this academic year, one of which is Contact Lens qualified. None of the existing Contact Lens staff have left, which means that teaching staff numbers for the Contact Lens blocks have increased by one since the 2014-15 academic year.

3. Visit Outcomes

The GOC visitors concluded that all the conditions set and approved by the April 2016 Education Committee have been met on this visit. They were pleased with the progress made with regard to the previous recommendations. No further conditions were set from this re-visit, but recommendations have been made with the objective of supporting The College to make continued improvements in specific areas based on actions taken since the last visit.

The GOC Visitors acknowledged progress had been made by The College since the last visit:

- IT developments will provide additional support for students during their training, which should be of benefit to both staff and students. The Visitors acknowledge that these actions were taken based on a previous condition that was agreed by the March 2016 Education Committee.
- A review and changes have been made to The College's approach to the conduct of tutor workshops, to optimise attendance and sharing of good practice.
- The new process for showing the breakdown of marks allocated for coursework will be beneficial for the standardisation of tutor feedback.
- A review is being undertaken to develop specific aspects of the GOC Core Competencies, stages 1 and 2 within the programme.
- The role of the External Advisor on the CLP is to be developed.

The Visitors noted The College has made a strong commitment to staff development. A number of staff members are either currently studying for or have completed their teaching qualifications. One member of staff is currently studying for an MSc degree which should enhance the individual and bring benefits to the students and the programme. There has been positive student feedback with regards to the quality of teaching and the accessibility and responsiveness of staff to student queries and providing feedback in a timely manner.

3.1 Previous Conditions

Ref	Description	Due by	Met/Not met?
1	That the College formalises their processes for the monitoring and review of programme content and delivery, to ensure effective annual quality assurance.	Not available	Met
2	To ensure consistency and greater clarity of the marking scheme, the College should revise the 'answer guide' for tutor assignment feedback.	Not available	Met
3	That the College should continue to provide suitably qualified and experienced staff to teach the contact lens programme. The GOC should be informed of staffing arrangements for the contact lens programme once the planned new appointments to the College's teaching team are completed.	Not available	Met

3.2 Previous Recommendations

The College should continue to develop proposals for the contact lens programme to utilize the external examiner currently appointed to the diploma course.

The College should consider ways in which continuing support can be offered to students who have completed the programme but not yet taken their final qualifying exams. An example would be to extend the use of the existing 'studentzone'.

In addition to its ongoing quality review processes, the College should consider the outcome of the GOC visit as part of the forthcoming quinquennial review process

3.3 Conditions

Conditions are applied to training and assessment providers if there is evidence that the GOC requirements are not met.

Ref.	Condition	Description	Due by
	No conditions were imposed during this visit.		

3.4 Recommendations

The Visitors offers the following recommendations to the provider. Recommendations indicate enhancements that can be made to a programme but are not directly linked to compliance with GOC requirements.

Ref.	Description
1	<p>ABDO College should continue with the improvements made to their internal quality assurance processes since the last GOC QA Visit. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in the frequency in the number of Board of Studies meetings, currently held annually. • The separation of the Ophthalmic Dispensing and Contact Lens Programme aspects of the Board of Studies meetings, as recommended by the External Advisor to the programme • An increase in student input to and engagement with the Board of Studies • Integration of the input from the external adviser into the development of the Contact Lens Programme, and the record thereof

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of the written record of quality monitoring activities/actions undertaken by the College.
2	ABDO College should consider seeking approval from the GOC for CET accreditation for the lectures and workshops delivered as part of the Contact Lens Programme.
3	ABDO College should ensure access to the most current educational resources e.g. online journals, is made readily available to students and staff members on the Contact Lens Programme.