

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD
GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL (GOC) PROVISIONAL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
BSc (HONS) OPTOMETRY
29 & 30 MARCH 2022

Report confirmed by the GOC	24 June 2022
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PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS

Table 1.1 Redacted

1.2 Programme details	
Programme title	BSc (Hons) Optometry.
Programme description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BSc (Hons) Optometry programme is a three-year, full-time programme that adheres to the standard academic year. • The University of Huddersfield delivers the theory element of the route to registration including all stage one competencies. • Upon successful completion of the programme students are able to progress onto the Scheme for Registration delivered by the College of Optometrists (CoO). The CoO is responsible for the clinical placement, all stage two competencies and the qualifying examinations.
Approval status at the point of visit	Provisional approval
Approved student numbers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort one – 30 students • Cohort two onwards – 68 students

1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (panel)	
Chair	Jane Andrews - Lay member
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy Husband – Lay member • Nicola Szostek – Optometrist/Independent Prescribing Optometrist member • Pam McClean – Optometrist/Independent Prescribing Optometrist member • Graeme Stevenson - Dispensing Optician/Contact Lens Optician member
GOC representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ella Pabee - Approval & Quality Assurance Officer • Aaron Grell – Education Manager (Quality Assurance)

1.4 Purpose of the visit	
Visit type	PROVISIONAL APPROVAL QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
<p>The purpose of this provisional approval quality assurance visit was to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Huddersfield’s (University) BSc (Hons) Optometry programme (programme) to ensure it meets the requirements as listed in <i>the GOC’s Accreditation and Quality Assurance temporary handbook for optometry (July 2020)</i> (handbook) and the <i>GOC Education A&QA-Supplementary Document-List of Requirements</i> (list of requirements). • The status of condition 2, set at the provisional approval quality assurance visit in April 2021 and condition 9, set in September 2021 and consider whether the evidence submitted in support of these conditions is sufficient for them to be deemed met. • Whether the programme should remain subject to the serious concerns review process. 	

- Whether the programme sufficiently meets the GOC's requirements for it to be granted full approval.

This visit took place physically, with two panel members attending virtually.

1.5 Programme history		
Date	Event type	Overview
21/05/2018	Administration	An initial application was received by the GOC for a three-year programme entitled <i>BSc (Hons) Optometry</i> .
14/08/2018	Event	The University validation event was held and attended by the GOC Approval & Quality Assurance Officer (Officer).
09/2018	Administration	A review of the initial application was completed by a panel. It found insufficient evidence to progress to a visit. There were no significant concerns over the feasibility of the programme, however the panel was concerned about the amount of work to be achieved for a 2019 start.
26/10/2018	Administration	The outcome of the panel's deliberations was sent to the University.
15/10/2018	Event	The GOC Education Committee noted the initial application received in May 2018 and the progress made to date.
16/01/2019	Meeting	A teleconference was held between the GOC executive (executive), the panel, and the University to discuss the panel's review completed in September 2018.
03/2019	Administration	The University submitted a response to the panel's review.
16/05/2019	Visit	An approval visit was undertaken. The panel recommended that six requirements be deemed unmet and provisional approval be awarded.
25/06/2019	Event	The panel's recommendation was presented to the GOC Education Committee. Provisional approval was not recommended due to concerns regarding staffing, student quality, and student numbers.
10/07/2019	Event	The (differing) recommendations of the panel, executive and GOC Education Committee were presented to the GOC Council. Provisional approval was granted subject to a further assessment of risks and unmet requirements by the Chief Executive & Registrar (CE&R). The CE&R set a further condition.
09/09/2019	Visit	A clinic visit was undertaken. The visit panel recommended one condition was set.
09/2019	Event	The inaugural cohort started the programme.
04/2020	Change notification	The executive noted information submitted by the University in relation to COVID-19; changes involved teaching and assessment delivery being moved online. No further action was required of the University.
21/05/2020	Visit	A provisional approval quality assurance visit was undertaken. The panel recommended the following which were accepted by the executive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven requirements be deemed unmet.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four new conditions were set. • Seven new recommendations were offered. • Three new commendations were offered.
09/2020	Administration	Evidence in support of the conditions was submitted and triaged by the Officer. Further information was requested from the University as the evidence was found to provide insufficient assurance.
12/2020	Administration	The further evidence requested was reviewed by the panel. The panel recommended that conditions 1 & 2 (May 2020) be deemed unmet and conditions 3 & 4 (May 2020) be deemed met.
03/2021	Administration	The University was informed the outstanding conditions would be reviewed as part of the provisional approval quality assurance visit in April 2021 and that further action, including a serious concerns review (in line with the GOC's <i>Effective Conditions Management process</i> ¹), could be taken if the conditions were deemed to be unmet at the visit.
20/04/2021	Visit	<p>A provisional approval quality assurance visit was undertaken. The panel recommended the following which were accepted by the executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One previous condition (condition 1 set in May 2020) be deemed unmet. • One previous condition (condition 2 set in May 2020) be deemed met. • Four requirements be deemed unmet. • Three new conditions were set (conditions 1-3). • Three new recommendations were offered.
06/2021	Administration	<p>Due to concerns about condition 1 set in May 2020, the panel requested input from the executive as to the further action that should be taken. A decision was made by the executive to undertake a risk-based review (RBR), in accordance with the GOC's <i>Effective Conditions Management process</i>, with input from both the executive and the panel. The University was asked to provide further assurance on a range of requirements.</p> <p>As a result, the executive set the programme a further five conditions (conditions 4-8).</p>
07/2021	Administration	The University submitted evidence in support of the conditions. As a result of the insufficient assurance gained, and in line with the GOC's <i>Effective Conditions Management process</i> the programme was made the subject of a serious concern review.
09/2021	Administration	The University submitted evidence in support of the conditions. As a result, it was set a further condition (condition 9).

¹ https://www.optical.org/en/Education/Approving_courses/index.cfm

PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY

2.1 Visit outcomes	
Summary of recommendations to the GOC	
Previous conditions	<p>The panel recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further information is required in relation to condition 2 (April 2021). • Further information is required in relation to condition 9 (September 2021). <p>Conditions 1 and 3-8 were deemed met by the executive prior to the visit taking place.</p> <p>Details regarding the previous conditions are set out in sections 2.2 & 4.1.</p>
New conditions	<p>After reviewing the programme against the requirements as listed in the handbook and list of requirements the panel recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All requirements are deemed MET. • No new conditions are set. <p>Details regarding the conditions are set out in Part 3.</p>
New recommendations	<p>The panel recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two recommendations are offered. <p>Details regarding the recommendations are set out in Part 3.</p>
Approval status	<p>The panel recommends that:</p> <p>The programme is awarded full approval.</p> <p>Details regarding approval status are set out in section 4.3.</p>
Actual student numbers	<p>At the point of visit there were three cohorts in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort one (started in September 2019) – 28 students • Cohort two (started in September 2020) – 66 students • Cohort three (started in September 2021) – 66 students
Next visit	March 2023
Factors to consider when scheduling next visit e.g., when students are in, hospital, audit etc.	<p>The panel recommends that the next visit should take place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2023 - this is so that

	<p>assurance can be gained in relation to the larger cohort which is due to complete the programme in Summer 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a time that enables the panel to speak with students face-to-face. • Face-to-face – this is so assurance can be gained in relation to the clinical and patient experience (particularly for year three students) that will be obtained within University Valli Opticians.
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2.2 Previous conditions
The conditions listed below are extracted from the provisional approval quality assurance visit report of 20 & 21 April 2021

Requirement number	April 2021 condition number and description	Status
A6.2	#1 The University to submit evidence of completed logbooks following the Awards Board in June 2021.	This condition was deemed MET by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.
OP2.12	#2 The University must provide evidence of increased hospital placement capacity to ensure it meets the needs of the upcoming cohorts. This should include signed contracts that specify student numbers.	As a result of discussions held during, and evidence submitted as part of, this visit, the panel recommends that further information is required for this condition. See section 4.1 for further details
OP3.5 OP3.6	#3 The University must submit evidence of the guidance, training and ongoing support hospital, and practice placement, supervisors will be provided with.	This condition was deemed MET by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.

The conditions listed below are extracted from the risk-based review undertaken in June 2021

OP1.2 OP1.5 OP2.12 OP4.4 OP4.7 OP6.1 OP6.2 OP6.8	#4 The University must submit evidence that clearly identifies how the patient and clinical experience outlined in Annex F of the Temporary Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to Registration in Optometry: August 2020 will	This condition was deemed MET by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.
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<p>OP6.9 OP6.16</p>	<p>be met from September 2021, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency planning that takes into account the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 emergency. • How safe/unsafe episodes will be defined by the University and the support that will be provided to clinical supervisors to aid their understanding of this. • The number of surrogate patients required, how many have been confirmed and where they will be sourced from. • The opening date of the University eye clinic (UEC) including when the dispensary will be operational. 	
<p>OP1.2 OP1.5 OP2.12 OP4.4 OP4.7 OP6.1 OP6.2 OP6.8 OP6.9 OP6.16</p>	<p>#5 The University must submit evidence that clearly identifies how the supervision requirements outlined in Annex I of the Temporary Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to Registration in Optometry: August 2020 will be met, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contingency planning that takes into account the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 emergency. • The numbers of clinical supervisors required for academic year 2021-22 and how this number will be met. <p>This condition supersedes condition 1 (May 2020). No further action will be taken in relation to that action. The status of condition 1 (May 2020) is superseded.</p>	<p>This condition was deemed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MET</p> <p>by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.</p>
<p>OP1.2 OP1.5 OP2.12 OP4.4 OP4.7 OP6.1 OP6.2 OP6.8 OP6.9 OP6.16</p>	<p>#6 The University must ensure a contingency plan is in place should conditions 1 and 3-5, 7 & 8 not be met, to ensure students are able to complete the required amount and type of patient experience and achieve all GOC Core Competencies. Evidence submitted should include but is not limited to the University's student protection plan and details of how the student protection plan will be applied to the programme's students in the event this becomes necessary.</p>	<p>This condition was deemed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MET</p> <p>by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.</p>
<p>OP1.2 OP1.5 OP2.12</p>	<p>#7 The University must inform students that the programme is subject to a serious</p>	<p>This condition was deemed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MET</p>

<p>OP4.4 OP4.7 OP6.1 OP6.2 OP6.8 OP6.9 OP6.16</p>	<p>concerns review (SERIOUS CONCERNS REVIEW), and of the contingency plans in place to support students to achieve the required outcomes.</p>	<p>by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.</p>
<p>OP1.2 OP1.5 OP2.12 OP4.4 OP4.7 OP6.1 OP6.2 OP6.8 OP6.9 OP6.16</p>	<p>#8 The University must submit an action plan that provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update on the issues and outcomes listed in the RBR submission including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discussion with legal representatives. ○ the recruitment of clinical supervisors. ○ the obtaining of a General Ophthalmic Services contract ○ details of the proposed timescale for the opening and implementation of the clinic, etc. • Specific deadlines of when outstanding actions will be achieved/outstanding issues will be resolved. 	<p>This condition was deemed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MET</p> <p>by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.</p>
<p>The condition listed below was set in September 2021 in response to supporting evidence for conditions.</p>		
<p>OP1.2 OP1.5 OP2.12 OP4.4 OP4.7 OP6.1 OP6.2 OP6.8 OP6.9 OP6.16</p>	<p>#9 The University must submit evidence that clearly identifies how the patient and clinical experience outlined in Annex F of the Temporary Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to Registration in Optometry: August 2020 will be met from September 2022, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the opening date of the UEC. • timescales of the operation of the UEC including an update on the mission critical aspects identified. • the development of a patient database. • contingency planning that considers any ongoing impact of COVID-19 and/or how students will be supported to achieve the necessary clinical experience in the event the UEC is not operational, including the number of surrogate patients required and confirmed numbers 	<p>As a result of discussions held during, and evidence submitted as part of, this visit, the panel recommends that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">further information is required</p> <p>for this condition.</p> <p>See section 4.1 for further details</p>

	<p>and where they will be sourced from.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of how the student protection plan will be applied to the programme's students in the event this becomes necessary including the expected support from the Optometry Schools Council and timelines. 	
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2.3 Previous recommendations

The recommendations listed below are extracted from the provisional approval quality assurance visit report of 20 & 21 April 2021

Recommendation 1	Every effort should be made to provide students with meaningful multi-disciplinary learning experiences. The opportunities should increase in terms of complexity, and potentially volume, as students progress through the programme.	<p>The panel noted the progress that has been made in this area and considered that it could be further developed.</p> <p>See section 3.2 for further details.</p>
Recommendation 2	The University should implement a formal, structured feedback process for students.	The panel was assured by the evidence submitted prior to, and discussions held during, the visit that this recommendation has been addressed.
Recommendation 3	The University should implement a formal, structured feedback process for external stakeholders.	The panel was assured by the evidence submitted prior to, and discussions held during, the visit that this recommendation has been addressed.

2.4 Non-applicable requirements

The panel recommends that some requirements be deemed non-applicable to the programme due to the programme's structure and level and the differing, but overlapping, roles and responsibilities of the University and the CoO:

- the University provides the theory aspect of the route to registration including all stage one competencies.
- the CoO is responsible for all stage two competencies and ensuring all the elements of the portfolio are completed under supervision.

OP6.14	Upon completion of the pre-registration placement, the provider must inform the GOC that the student has achieved professional competence at Stage 2 so as to allow them to apply for entry to the GOC Register of Optometrists.
OP6.15	Students must be assessed as competent against each of the Stage 2 GOC Core Competencies.
OP6.16	Students must acquire the minimum amount of patient experience within each patient category (attached in Appendix F).
OP6.17	Students must hold certified portfolios containing a record of both their patient experience and achievement of all core competency elements.
OP6.18	The portfolio must include evidence of how and when each individual element of competence was achieved by the individual student.

OP6.19	The portfolio must contain a case record for each individual patient episode contributing to the minimum requirements.
OP6.20	The portfolio must include evidence of the development of the student's professional judgement through critical thinking and reflection.

2.5 Navigating this report	
For further information on the issues considered, and the recommendations offered, during the visit see the following sections of the report:	
Visit purpose	Section of report
Review of the programme to ensure it meets the GOC's requirements.	Whole report
Review of the status of the outstanding unmet requirements identified, and conditions set, at the provisional approval quality assurance visit undertaken in April 2021, the risk-based review undertaken in June 2021 and the additional condition set in September 2021.	2.2 & 4.1
Review of the programme to consider whether it should remain subject to a serious concerns review.	4.2
Review of the programme to consider whether it sufficiently meets the GOC's requirements for it to be granted full approval.	4.3

PART 3 – CONDITIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

<p>Conditions are applied to training and assessment providers if there is evidence that the GOC requirements are not met.</p> <p>Recommendations indicate enhancements that can be made to a programme and may not be directly linked to compliance with GOC requirements.</p>

<p>3.1 Conditions set at this visit The unmet requirements for this visit are set out below along with the conditions that are required to meet the requirements.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No conditions were set at this visit</p>

<p>3.2 Recommendations offered at this visit The panel offers the following recommendations to the provider.</p>	
OP1.6	Students must have access to opportunities for multi-disciplinary learning and to understand their role within the wider healthcare team.
Recommendation 1	The University should continue to make every effort to provide students with meaningful multi-disciplinary learning experiences. The opportunities should increase in terms of complexity, and potentially volume, as students progress through the programme.
Rationale	<p>This recommendation is reworded from recommendation 1 offered in April 2021.</p> <p>The panel noted the following which may have had an impact on the University's ability to address this recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The newness of the programme. • The short length of time since the last visit for this recommendation to be addressed. • The impact of the pandemic. <p>The panel considered it continues to be relevant as, although it heard verbal evidence from the programme team of multi-disciplinary work, further development is needed to embed this work within the programme.</p> <p>The panel heard positive examples of the programme team teaching optics to other disciplines and considers that further development is required to enhance the opportunity for professionals from other disciplines to teach optometry students and/or optometry students having access to joint teaching.</p>

OP5.6	The provider must have an effective mechanism to enable the monitoring and evaluation of assessments to ensure appropriate standards are maintained.
OP5.10	The provider must have an effective mechanism to identify risks to the quality of the education and training provided and to identify areas requiring development.
Recommendation 2	The University should ensure it reviews student attainment to ensure that this accurately reflects student performance.
Rationale	The panel acknowledges the impact of the pandemic on teaching and assessments and student performance and attainment.

	<p>The panel noted that this is a relatively new programme. The external examiners had had some concerns about grade inflation, the need for more complex questions, and using half as well as full marks, which they felt were being addressed. The panel accepted that grade inflation had often been a side effect of the need to arrange remote assessment at short notice due to the pandemic but noted that the average module marks remained high and therefore required assurance that these accurately reflect student performance.</p>
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PART 4 – ADDITIONAL ISSUES

4.1 Outstanding 2021 conditions	
OP2.12	The provider must ensure that the patient base is relative to the student cohort size and is of a sufficient volume and range to deliver the required level of experience as specified in the GOC Core Competencies and patient experience requirements.
Condition 2 (April 2021)	The University must provide evidence of increased hospital placement capacity to ensure it meets the needs of the upcoming cohorts. This should include signed contracts that specify student numbers.
Recommendations & Outcomes	As a result of discussions held during, and evidence submitted as part of, this visit, the panel recommends that further information is required for this condition.
Revised deadline	18 July 2022
Rationale	<p>The panel acknowledges the progress made in relation to this condition, for example, it was provided with verbal assurance from the hospital representative that there are enough hospital placements for the increased cohort starting in September 2022. The panel considered that further, written, assurance was needed to confirm this. Additionally, the programme team informed the panel of attempts that are being made to identify other hospital placements.</p> <p>The panel recommends that signed contracts, clearly identifying student numbers, are submitted to evidence the meeting of this requirement.</p> <p>The panel has recommended that sufficient assurance has been gained to enable requirement OP2.12 be deemed met in relation to cohort one. The GOC considers that this requirement is likely to be deemed met in relation to further cohorts upon receiving the supporting evidence requested.</p>
OP2.12	The provider must ensure that the patient base is relative to the student cohort size and is of a sufficient volume and range to deliver the required level of experience as specified in the GOC Core Competencies and patient experience requirements.
Condition 9 (June 2021)	<p>The University must submit evidence that clearly identifies how the patient and clinical experience outlined in Annex F of the Temporary Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to Registration in Optometry: August 2020 will be met from September 2022, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the opening date of the UEC. • timescales of the operation of the UEC including an update on the mission critical aspects identified. • the development of a patient database.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contingency planning that considers any ongoing impact of COVID-19 and/or how students will be supported to achieve the necessary clinical experience in the event the UEC is not operational, including the number of surrogate patients required and confirmed numbers and where they will be sourced from. details of how the student protection plan will be applied to the programme's students in the event this becomes necessary including the expected support from the Optometry Schools Council and timelines.
Recommendations & Outcomes	<p>As a result of discussions held, and evidence submitted as part of this visit, the April 2022 panel recommended that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">further information is required</p> <p style="text-align: center;">for this condition</p>
Revised deadline	1 August 2022
Rationale	<p>The University's plan remains for year three clinical and patient experience to be gained within the onsite, public-facing clinic, University Valli Opticians.</p> <p>The panel noted the progress that has been made in this area, for example, there do not appear to be any outstanding mission critical tasks left to complete, aside from the actual opening. However, it considers that tangible evidence is needed of when (UEC) University Valli Opticians is operational.</p> <p>The panel was informed that the (soft launch) opening date for University Valli Opticians is planned for early June 2022.</p> <p>Additionally, the panel was assured that there is an appropriate contingency plan in place if University Valli Opticians is not operational by September 2022, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The panel received sufficient assurance that the current clinical and patient experience can be expanded from 30 to 68 students if required. The panel was given evidence that there are currently 272 patients on the surrogate patient database from a range of sources, providing 547 appointments; this is sufficient for the needs of students starting in September 2022. The programme team has sufficient time to increase the number of surrogate patients on the database before September 2022. <p>The panel has recommended that sufficient assurance has been gained to enable requirement OP2.12 be deemed met in relation to cohort one. The GOC considers that this requirement is likely to be deemed met in relation to further cohorts upon receiving the supporting evidence requested.</p>

4.2 Serious concerns review status	
Background	As a result of the insufficient assurance gained in relation to condition 1 (May 2020), and in line with the GOC's <i>Effective Conditions Management process</i> , the programme was made the subject of the serious concern review process in July 2021.
Recommendations & Outcomes	The panel recommends that the programme is no longer subject to a serious concerns review.
Rationale	<p>The serious concerns that were previously held have now been alleviated as evidenced by the closure of conditions 1 and 3-8 (April 2021) at various points over the past year.</p> <p>The panel acknowledges that it has recommended that further information is required in relation to conditions 2 & 9 but considers that the level of risk does not indicate the need for the programme to remain subject to the serious concerns review process.</p> <p>The panel considers that if concerns arise in relation to conditions 2 & 9 the serious concerns review process can be reinstated as appropriate, and any concerns can be worded to reflect contemporary risks/concerns.</p>

4.3 Approval status	
Recommendations & Outcomes	The panel recommends that the BSc (Hons) Optometry programme delivered by the University of Huddersfield is awarded full approval
Rationale	<p>The panel considered that there is sufficient evidence for the programme to be awarded full approval as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new unmet requirements, as listed in the handbook and list of requirements, were identified during this visit. • The levels of staff have increased with the admittance of additional, and larger, cohorts and are sufficient to meet to the needs of the programme. • Most of the outstanding conditions set in April, June and September 2021 have been met. • The clinic area and equipment are of a good standard. • The University has shown that it is able to deliver the whole programme to all three years, and years one and two of the programme to a larger cohort. • The University has provided sufficient assurance on how the larger cohort of year three students will gain the appropriate levels of clinical and patient experience if University Valli Opticians is not operational by September 2022.