

PART 1

1 Acknowledgements

The Panel 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 Panel also wished to thank those who took the time to meet with the Panel throughout the visit.

2 Introduction

This report is in relation to a quality assurance visit to the University of Plymouth, BSc (Hons) Optometry which took place on 29-30 January 2019.

The Visitor Panel:

- Sheila Needham, Lay Chair
- Richard Allen, Optometrist
- Paul Baines, Ophthalmologist
- Paula Baines, Dispensing Optician
- Navneet Gupta, Optometrist
- Markham May, Lay Educationalist

The visitors were accompanied by Richard Calver, GOC Approval and Quality Assurance Officer.

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: 'Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to Registration in Optometry' (2015).

2.1 Background

The BSc (Hons) Optometry programme at the University of Plymouth was granted provisional approval to admit an initial intake of 36 students in September 2011. The Programme is delivered by the School of Health Professions (the 'School') which is part of the Faculty of Health and Human Sciences (the 'Faculty'). Annual visits took place from 2011 to 2016.

Following the visit in November 2016, the programme was granted full approval with the next visit scheduled for 2019. It imposed no conditions, but made the recommendations listed in Section 3.2, below. Following this visit, however, the university notified the GOC of substantial structural changes to the programme, including merging modules and increasing the emphasis on critical analysis of patient management. These changes were approved by the GOC's Education Committee in February 2017.

The current visit was the first full quality assurance visit since full approval was granted to the programme, and the first since the structural changes mentioned above were implemented.

2.2 Documentation

Prior to the visit, the GOC received pre-visit information from the provider based on the requirements outlined in the GOC Handbook. An agenda was also approved before the visit.

The visit included meetings with the programme team, academic staff, faculty senior management team, clinic management team, clinical tutors, students, and hospital placement providers. A telephone meeting was held with the programme's external examiners.

3 Visit outcomes

The Panel recommend that:

- the three previous recommendations have been actioned
- one condition should be set
- five recommendations are made
- approval should continue, with the next Quality Assurance visit taking place in Spring 2022.

3.1 Previous Conditions

The Conditions listed below are extracted from the November 2016 report

Ref.	Description	Due by	Met/Not met?
No Conditions were set			

3.2 Previous Recommendations

The Recommendations listed below are extracted from the November 2016 report

Description		
1.	The Panel welcomed the additional space secured at the Wellbeing Centre and recommend that the rooms be fully equipped in readiness for the planned clinical and teaching activities.	Actioned
2.	The Panel recommend that continued encouragement and support be provided to staff in their engagement with teaching and learning skills development.	Actioned
3.	The Panel encourage the programme team to consider further the external examiners advice and suggestions with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the provision of collated information regarding individual student performance; i. scrutiny of learning outcomes and how they are assessed; ii. amending and clarifying assessment design. 	Actioned

3.3 Conditions

Conditions are applied to training and assessment providers if there is evidence that the GOC requirements are not met. In order to ensure that the programme meets the GOC requirements, the Panel propose the following condition(s):

Ref.	Description	Due by
1	The University must provide data on student progression rates for all years of the Programme.	13 September 2019

3.4 Recommendations

The Panel offers the following recommendation 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	Plans for the relocation of the School of Health Professions should be finalised, and all stakeholders kept informed, including submission to the GOC in a timely manner.
2	The team should encourage students to make better use of the opportunities provided to reflect on their learning and practice experience.
3	Dispensing rubrics should be incorporated into PebblePad.
4	The programme team should consider the differing learning needs of all students, who are from a variety of educational backgrounds.
5	The programme team should review their student recruitment processes.

