European Council of Optometry and Optics

Guidelines for the accreditation of optician qualifications for the award of the

European Qualification in Optics (EQO)

Part III

The EQO Accreditation Visit

October 2018

Part III: The Accreditation Visit

1.0 Introduction

Having completed the accreditation questionnaire and obtained a provisional opinion as to possible exemptions from parts of the EQO, training institutions may apply for the exemptions to be approved formally. Formal approval will require a visit by a group of four ECOO nominated Opticians, Optometrists and Educationalists to assess the quality of the teaching programmes, the practical facilities and the staffing arrangements. The Visitors will then formulate a report which is considered by the Board of Management of the ECOO.

Part III offers guidance to:

- Training establishments about the expectations of the ECOO visitors in specific areas of student education and training

- The ECOO visitors in their audit of the optical and optometric training programmes. The visitors will consider evidence of the level of education and training and come to an overall judgement based on these guidelines.

Sections 2-7 of Part III indicate the nature of the information that the ECOO visitors will require for consideration before the visit and in the course of the visit. The visitors will use these sections as the basis for their audit of the education and training that the institutions are providing. The sections describe, in general terms, what ECOO expects training programmes to demonstrate in order to obtain accreditation and exemption from all or part of the EQO.

N.B. These guidelines are written to cover all the competencies of the EQO. The self-assessment document indicates which ECOO competencies are covered in the particular training programme being considered.

2.0 Optics Programme Construction

2.1 Design and Structure

While not wishing to be prescriptive about the detailed structure of the programme, the Visitors will expect the programme to be well structured. The theoretical teaching should be supported by, and integrated with, appropriate supervised practical experience.

At least 30% of the programme should involve practical applications in professional (shops) settings. The latter stages of the programme, when the students develop higher levels of knowledge and practical skills, should comprise a significant part (60%) of the assessment for the final classification of the qualification.

2.2 European Competencies and Learning Outcomes

The Visitors will collect evidence to confirm that the EQO Competencies and Learning Outcomes claimed in the Self-Assessment document are achieved by each and every student who successfully completes the programme.

Evidence will be sought from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, the curriculum/programme specification, examination results, external examiners' reports, institutional and national quality reviews, the national professional association, representatives of employers of graduates, teaching staff, recent graduates and current students.

The training institution should demonstrate:

- how the programme matches those ECOO EQO Competencies for which exemption is claimed in Part II, the self-assessment.
- precisely where the various elements of the Competencies are covered in its programme
- that each and every student achieves all of these EQO competencies.

2.3 Practical Work

Each student should personally maintain a record (a logbook or portfolio) of all their practical experience. This record should provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and include guidance and feedback from supervisors. The Training Institution should keep a central database of all the students' experience in practical workshops and with clients. In this database a distinction should be made between "real life" clients, i.e. members of the general public attending the office (shop) for optical care, and "pre-practice" clients, i.e. volunteers or fellow students who assist in the training by acting as clients in student seminars or workshops.

2.4 Practical Governance

Visitors will expect to meet with the member of staff responsible for practical and governance issues.

The training institution should have a practical policy document defining adequate supervision during practical experience and the amount and range of practical experience that is necessary for the students to achieve the claimed competencies. The Visitors will expect there to be a robust system in place to ensure that these defined minima are met by all students.

3.0 Teaching Learning and Assessment

3.1 Teaching and Learning Techniques

It is expected that both practical and non-practical teaching and learning should incorporate a range of contemporary practices that are relevant to the needs of the discipline of optics, the present needs of the students and to the likely future demands of primary health care.

The Visitors will welcome a variety of approaches to teaching and the assessment of learning as appropriate to the particular topics, including:

- lectures
- practical classes
- seminars
- workshops
- tutorials
- computer-aided learning
- practical sessions and visits
- the development of students' ability to independently manage real life situations
- ways to develop students' skills of independent self-learning, self- management, team working and peer assessment
- opportunities to participate in vision/optics practical work

3.2 Assessment Structures and Procedures

It is expected that assessment structures and procedures should:

- innclude formative and summative assessments to promote scholarship and knowledge, for example, examinations (MCQs, short answers or essays), projects, dissertations and other assignments.
- equip students appropriately for prospective first entry into a variety of practical optics environments through the formal assessment of competence in practical subjects either by a series of tests taken under examination conditions over the programme or by a final examination at the end of the programme.
- provide sufficient feedback to students to enable maximum learning and achievement.

4.0 Student Progression and Achievement

4.1 The institution should provide the following information for the past three cohorts of students

- entry requirements and entry grades
- numbers applying and accepted for each of the last three years
- qualifications awarded
- employment gained

4.2 If applicable, the Institution should provide data on:

- the number and percentage of students who, following graduation from the institution, passed examinations in optics recognised by the national "competent authority".

5.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

ECOO expects the institution to indicate that it has a commitment to continuing quality enhancement and has in place quality enhancement procedures.

The institution should demonstrate that the following procedures are in place, that the procedures are effective and that satisfactory records are kept:

- a system of regular input from academic and professional experts external to the training institution whose advice is sought on the content, standard and contemporary relevance of the programme. The visitors would expect to see records of these discussions for the previous five years.
- a Board of Examiners with appropriate Programme and Assessment Regulations,
- appropriate mechanisms for receiving and responding to feedback from staff and students,
- arrangements for programme management and consultation (e.g. a Programme Board of Studies, Staff-Student Consultative Committee),
- an annual monitoring process, correlating the minutes of programme meetings, to include due discussion of programme data and statistics,
- a system of periodic national accreditation.

6.0 Staffing

6.1 Management and Leadership of the Programme

The academic unit responsible for the programme should have a senior, professionally qualified academic in a leadership position, who would normally chair the Programme Committee or Board. This person should have appropriate technical and administrative support.

6.2 Teaching Staff Information

It is expected that teacher-practitioners and visiting lecturers from community practices or industry-, and appropriate persons from other health care professions, should be involved in the teaching programme.

The following information is required:

- the names of all staff teaching the programme along with their roles and their qualifications,
- the teaching hours to the optics programme of each named staff member,
- the total teaching hours for each person named on the above staffing list including contributions to other programmes within the Institution,
- an indication of any impending changes to staffing, facilities or student numbers.

6.3 Support Staff

The number of staff supporting the programme and any practical workshops and clinic should be listed. These should include administrative assistants, secretaries, receptionists, practical administrators and technical support staff.

6.4 Staff Development

The institution should provide evidence of staff development programmes for staff employed in the programmes.

7.0 Resources and Facilities

7.1 Physical Space

The institution should provide appropriate equipment for the practical training within the programme.

Specifically, the following information should be provided:

- a detailed list of all the physical space occupied by the programme, showing the area in square metres for all dedicated space including laboratories and facilities.
- the aggregate space under each category of lecture/tutorial rooms, teaching laboratories and practical space.
- a detailed description of the practical facility including the size and disposition of the dispensing area, the provision of workshop facilities and the size of the reception and front office facilities.

7.2 Laboratory Equipment

The institution should provide a list of specialist equipment provided for the programme.

7.3 Learning Resource Strategy

The institution should provide its policy statement on the utilisation of traditional and modern learning resources.

The range of Library and Information Technology facilities e.g. library books and journals, electronic information systems and information technology equipment systems should be listed.

8.0 The Visit Format

8.1 Panel

The visiting panel will comprise of the following:

- One optician who is involved in optical education
- One optician or optometrist who is involved in professional practice
- One educationalist, not necessarily an optician.
- The chairman will be a member of the panel

8.2 Schedule of Meetings

The Visit will last no longer than three days.

The panel will wish to meet the following persons:

- The head of the institution.
- The head of the programme.
- The laboratory/workshop/office (shop) manager
- The staff teaching on the programme
- Support staff
- Staff from relevant institutional services (e.g. Library, IT)
- Representatives of students from each year
- A sample of recently qualified graduates
- A sample of employers of graduates
-

The panel will wish to observe the following

- Teaching sessions.
- Practical and professional sessions.
- The equipment and facilities.

During the visit the panel will wish to see examples of assessed student course work, examination papers, student logbooks of client experience.

9.0 Timescale of the Accreditation process.

Week 1

- An agreement to start the process between ECOO and the Institution.
- The issuing of the Guidelines and a request for the preliminary documentation.
- The selection and briefing of the Visitors

Week 8

- Receipt of documentation from Institution

Week 12

- Draft agenda and visit timetable for agreement with the Institution.
- Request any further documentation required by the Visitors.

Week 20

The visit to the institution takes place.

Week 24

- The first draft of the written report considered and agreed by the Visitors.

Week 28

- The agreed report is sent to the institution for factual correction.

Week 30

- The Final version of the report is sent to the Institution and the ECOO Diploma Board of Management.

Week 34

- Approval of the report by the ECOO Diploma Board of Management and Executive Committee and the formal award of exemptions.

These timelines are dependent on responses being received in a timely manner.

10.0 The Written Report

The written report will take the following format:

- A brief description of the Institution.
- A description of the programme structure and organisation.
- A systematic comparison of the learning outcomes and practical training of the programme with the European Diploma Competencies.
- A recommendation of the extent of accreditation to be granted.
- The period of accreditation and the date for re-accreditation.
- Minutes of the meetings.

11.0 Preliminary Information from the Training Institution.

Particulars of the Institution and the Programme.

- Name and address of the institution.
- Details of the nature, size and organisation of the establishment.
- Number of departments or equivalent units.
- Total number of students in the Institution.
- Name of department, or equivalent, teaching Optics.
- Number of students studying Optics.
- Level of the qualification awarded in Optics.
- Number of years study in the Optics programme.
- Full-time or part-time study.
- Number of weeks in the academic year, including exams.
- Name(s) of Optics programme(s)
- Name and qualifications of the Head of the programme.

The institution is asked:

- to complete Part II, the competency Self-assessment document.
- to demonstrate how the statements in Part III Sections (this document) 2-7 are satisfied.
  (This can be best achieved by addressing the specific issues raised in each of the sections 2-7 in order.)

- to provide written evidence supporting each section or to indicate where the evidence is located in existing institutional documents. e.g. internal or external programme reviews, the programme specification, the examination regulations, student handbook, practical/professional handbook, etc.

Please note:

In completing the information required by ECOO it is recognised that the guidelines are written to cover all the competencies of the EQO and that that some programmes will not cover all aspects of the EQO.

In the Self-assessment the Institution should clearly indicate which of the Competencies they consider have been achieved by graduates of the programme.

END of Part III