



**The European Council of Optometry and Optics**

**Guidelines for the accreditation of  
qualifications which meet the  
standards of the European Diploma  
in Optometry**

**Part IV:**

**The Accreditation Visit**

# Introduction

Having completed the accreditation self-assessment document and obtained a provisional opinion as to possible exemptions from parts of the European Diploma training institutions may apply for the exemptions to be approved formally. Formal approval will require a visit by a group of ECOO nominated Opticians, Optometrists and Educationalists to assess the quality of the teaching programmes, the clinical facilities and the staffing arrangements.

The Visit is ideally arranged towards the end of the academic year when all years of the course are in attendance with clinical teaching and public clinics functioning. The academic and clinical supervisory staff should be available. Final Year students should be close to completing their training and have achieved all or most of the European Diploma competencies. If the programme design is such that the Portfolio of Clinical Experience is not completed within the academic year, provision can be made to assess the Portfolios at a later date.

The Institution is required to submit all documentation several weeks before the Visit. An Example visit Timetable is included in Appendix 1 of this document, and consists of the visit consists of tightly scheduled observations and meetings with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible.

The language of the visit is English, but a translator may be arranged as required.

## **This Document is in two parts:**

- 1. Expectations of the course design and content and**
- 2. the format of the Visit.**

This information 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.

Section 1.0 indicates 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 European Diploma.

# **1.0 Expectations of course design and content**

## **1.1 Optometry/Optics Programme Construction**

### **1.1.1 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 clinical experience.

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

### **1.1.2 European Competencies and Learning Outcomes**

The Visitors will collect evidence to confirm that the European Diploma/Qualification 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 specification (with reference to the European Diploma in Optometry syllabus), 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 European Diploma Competencies for which exemption is claimed in Part II, the Self-Assessment document.
- precisely where the various elements of the Competencies are covered in its programme
- that each and every student achieves all of these European Diploma competencies.

### **1.1.3 Clinical Work**

Each student should personally maintain an accredited record (a logbook or portfolio) of all their clinical experience. This record should provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and include guidance and feedback from clinical supervisors.

The Training Institution should keep a central database of all the students' experience with patients. In this database a distinction should be made between "real clinical" patients, i.e. members of the general public attending the clinic for optometric/optical care, and "pre-clinical" patients, i.e. volunteers or fellow students who assist in the training by acting as patients in student clinics.

#### **1.1.4 Clinical Governance**

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

The training institution should have a clinical policy document defining adequate supervision during clinical 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.

### **1.2 Teaching Learning and Assessment**

#### **1.2.1 Teaching and Learning Techniques**

It is expected that both clinical and non-clinical teaching and learning should incorporate a range of contemporary practices that are relevant to the needs of the discipline of optometry/optics, the present needs of the students and to the likely future demands of primary and secondary 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, including simulations and patient scenarios
- clinical sessions and external placement visits
- the development of students' ability to independently manage clinical situations
- ways to develop students' skills of independent self-learning, team working and peer assessment

#### **1.2.2 Assessment Structures and Procedures**

It is expected that assessment structures and procedures should:

- Include 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 clinical optometric/optics environments through the formal assessment of competence in clinical 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.

## **1.3 Student Progression and Achievement**

**1.3.1** The institution should provide the following information for the past three cohorts of students:

- entry requirements and entry grades
- numbers of applicants for programme and selection criteria
- Student numbers, progression and graduate rates
- Qualification(s) awarded on graduation
- Graduate employment

**1.3.2** If applicable, the Institution should provide data on:

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

## **1.4 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 (or equivalent) 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.

## **1.5 Staffing**

### **1.5.1 Management and Leadership of the Programme**

The academic unit responsible for the optometry/optics 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.

### **1.5.2 Teaching Staff Information**

The staff/student ratio for the programme. Regardless of the number of students, a minimum of four, full-time, professionally qualified staff are usually necessary for satisfactorily running an optometry/optics programme. It is expected that teacher-practitioners and visiting lecturers from community or hospital optometry/optics practices, 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 optometry/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,
- and an indication of any impending changes to staffing, facilities or student numbers.

### **1.5.3 Support Staff**

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

### **1.5.4 Staff Development**

The institution should provide evidence of staff development programmes for staff employed in optometry/optics programmes.

## **1.6 Resources and Facilities**

### **1.6.1 Physical Space**

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

Specifically, the following information should be provided:

- a detailed list of all the physical space occupied by the optometry/optics programme, showing the area in square metres for all dedicated space including laboratories, pre-clinics and main clinical facilities
- the aggregate space under each category of lecture/tutorial rooms, teaching laboratories, research laboratories, pre-clinic space and clinic space
- a detailed description of the clinic facility including the number of consulting rooms available, the associated clinical investigation space, the size and disposition of the dispensing area, the provision of workshop facilities and the size of the reception and front office facilities.

### **1.6.2 Clinic Equipment**

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

### **1.6.3 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.

## **2.0 The Visit**

### **2.1 The visiting Panel**

The visiting panel will typically comprise of the following:

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

### **2.2 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 optometry/optics programme.
- The clinic manager
- The staff teaching on the programme
- Support staff
- Staff from relevant institutional services (e.g. Library, IT)
- Representatives of students from each year (randomly selected)
- A sample of recently qualified graduates
- A sample of employers of graduates

The panel will wish to observe the following

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

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

### 3. 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 clinical 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.

**The European Council of Optometry and Optics reserves the right to give full or partial accreditation for a period of less than five years, to specify the requirements for continuing accreditation and to make further visits to ensure that the accredited standard is being maintained.**

***Please note:***

***In completing the information required by ECOO it is recognised that the guidelines are written to cover all the competencies of the European Diploma, underpinned by the European Diploma syllabus, and that that many programmes will not cover all aspects of the European Diploma. In the self-evaluation the Institution should clearly indicate which of the European Diploma Competencies they consider are achieved by graduates of the Optometry/Optics programme.***

**END**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Draft timetable for the ECOO Accreditation Visit to the Optometry Programme, [Details of Training Institution, Country]**

#### **Visitor Meeting, XX XXXX 20XX**

18.00 Private meeting of the Visitors at the hotel.

#### **Day ONE, XX XXXX 20XX**

Visitors' private discussion in the hotel.

08.30 Arrive at Department. Meet with Head of Department (HoD) (and Dean or equivalent senior staff if available).

09.00 Tour of facilities.

09.15 Private discussion.

09.30 Observation of lectures, tutorials, practicals, clinics.

10.30 Coffee and private discussion

11.00 Meeting with First Year students (6)

11.30 Meeting with teaching staff Part-time and Full-time.

12.15 Private lunch and discussion.

13.00 Observation of lectures, tutorials, practicals, clinics.

14.00 Meeting with Second Year students (6)

14.30 Meeting with Clinic Manager and external placement organiser.

15.00 Coffee and private discussion

15.30 Meet with recent graduates (4)

16.00 Coffee and private discussion.

16.30 Inspection of Completed Portfolios.

17.00 Visitors return to hotel for private discussion and dinner.

#### **Day TWO, XX XXXX 20XX**

Visitors' private discussion in the hotel.

08.30 Arrive at the Department.

Review any new information.

08.45 Private informal discussion with HoD to discuss progress and to seek guidance on any areas of confusion.

- 09.00 Coffee and private discussion
- 09.30 Observation of lecture, tutorial, practical, clinic.
- 12.00 Lunch and private discussion.
- 13.00 Meeting with Ophthalmologist with input into the programme.
- 13.30 Private discussion
- 13.45 Meeting with Third Year students (6)
- 14.15 Meeting with Fourth Year students (6)
- 14.45 Private discussion.
- 15.00 Meeting with current students' external placement supervisors  
(4)
- 15.30 Discussion of accreditation of Ocular Abnormality (Euro Dip Part  
C3)
- 16.00 Meeting with employers of recent graduates (4)
- 16.30 Private discussion.
- 17.00 Visitors return to hotel for private discussion and dinner.

### **Day THREE, XX XXXX 20XX**

Visitors' private discussion in the hotel.

- 09.00 Arrive at the Department.
- 09.15 Private informal discussion with HoD to discuss progress and to  
seek guidance on any area of confusion.
- 09.30 Coffee and private discussion.
- 10.15 Statement to Departmental staff.  
Summary of Visitor's Recommendations for exemption of  
XXXXXXX graduates from the examinations and portfolio of the  
European Diploma. Details of the process of formal approval of  
ECOO Accreditation.
- 11.00 Visitors leave.

**END**