

City, University of London
Re-accreditation visit
Therapeutic Prescribing Programme
13-14 November 2017

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PART 1

1 Acknowledgements

The Visitor Panel (the Panel) would like to thank the Programme Team for their hospitality and wished to thank those who took the time to meet and speak with the Panel throughout the visit.

2 Introduction

This report relates to a reaccreditation visit to City, University of London, Therapeutic Prescribing Programme, which was undertaken on 13-14 November 2017. The Therapeutic Prescribing Programme consists of training in Additional Supply (AS) or Independent Prescribing (IP). This report should be read in conjunction with the report relating to the visit undertaken on 15-16 April 2009.

The Visitor Panel comprised of:

- Barry Mitchell – (Chair)
- Sheila Needham – (Lay Member)
- Richard Allen – (Optometrist IP)
- Navneet Gupta – (Optometrist IP)
- Nicholas Wilson – Holt – (Ophthalmologist)

The Panel was accompanied by Christopher McKendrick, GOC Accreditation and Quality Assurance Officer.

The visit was undertaken in accordance with the GOC Handbook for Optometry Specialist Registration in Therapeutic Prescribing 2008, hereby referred to as the 'the Handbook'.

The GOC is required to undertake such visits in order to obtain assurance that the standards of teaching and practice within the Programme are compliant with the GOC's core competencies and standards as listed in the Handbook.

2.1 Background

City, University of London, is a public research university located in London. The Therapeutic Prescribing Programme, aims to develop and consolidate skills in the assessment, diagnosis and management of common ophthalmic conditions; and the ability to recognise and appropriately manage sight-threatening disease.

The modules of the Programme consist of OVM050 'Principles of Therapeutics' (module 1), OVM051 'Principles of Prescribing' (module 2) and OVM053 'Independent Prescribing' (module 3).

In order to gain a qualification in Additional Supply (AS), modules OVM050 and OVM051 must be completed. In order to gain a qualification in Independent Prescribing (IP), modules OVM050, OVM051 and OVM053 must be completed.

To successfully complete the IP qualification, students must be in the process of completing, or have completed, OVM050. Students can then complete OVM051 or OVM053. All three modules have to be passed successfully prior to advancing to the clinical placement.

After successful completion of either the AS or IP Programme, students are required to register with the College of Optometrists, complete a practical 'clinical' placement, then submit a logbook and complete a final exam.

The University delivers the training element of the route to registration. The Therapeutic Prescribing Programme at City is a distance learning Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert) on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Each module constitutes 15, level 7, academic credits and can be integrated into the MSc in Clinical Optometry offered by the university.

Although the AS qualification is offered by City University, an overwhelming majority of students undertake the IP qualification. As a result, this report primarily focuses on the IP Programme structure, and therefore the term '**the Programme**' relates to the IP qualification, unless otherwise stated.

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.

	Document
1.	Student Handbook
2.	Evidence of adequate supervision/procedure for checking students are registered
3.	Staff:Student ratio
4.	Rationale for Staff:Student ratio for both academic and clinical environment
5.	Staff CVs or equivalent
6.	Student feedback (e.g. NSS scores)
7.	Equality & Diversity policy and procedures
8.	Student timetables
9.	Programme handbook/Module guides
10	Information describing the teaching and learning methods, learning tools, virtual learning environment and incorporation of evidence based practice
11	Assessment and marking criteria, mapping and timetable
12	Assessment strategy, academic regulations, appeals procedure
13	Student handbook
14	Staff handbook
15	Student feedback mechanisms
16	Quality Assurance policies and procedures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme and assessment regulation, minutes of internal review/development committees • external examiner information including job specification, term of office, recruitment, training, guidance etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of how the views of external stakeholders inform the programme design and content • agreements/contract with external placement providers
17	<p>Quality assurance documentation such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual monitoring reports • programme improvement plans • internal validation reports • external examiners reports, responses, action plans (for all years since the last visit) • responses to previous GOC and associated action plans • exam board meeting minutes • analysis of student feedback from relevant sources and associated action plans • evaluation of student progression and completion rates
18	Staff workload allocation model
19	Rationale for Staff:Student ratio
20	Staff CVs or equivalent
21	Management plans/reviews of facilities, accommodation, equipment and IT support etc.
22	Programme/competency mapping
23	Assessment marking criteria
24	Student progression statistics
25	Minutes from award board meetings

3 Visit Outcomes	
<p>The visit took place over two days whilst the Programme was in operation. The GOC Visitor Panel met with the Dean, the Associate Dean, the Head of Academic Services, the Divisional Lead for Optometry and Visual Sciences, the Programme Director and the teaching staff and students. The Visitor Panel conducted a phone call with one External Examiner and one alumnus.</p> <p>The Visitor Panel recommends to the Education Committee that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> previously set conditions 1 and 2 are met, previously set conditions 3, 4 and 5 are no longer applicable, one new condition is set, five new recommendations have been made, full accreditation continues for the Therapeutic Prescribing Programme; and the next re-accreditation of the programme is to be undertaken in Autumn 2022 	

3.1 Previous Conditions			
The Conditions listed below are extracted from the 12-13 April 2016.			
Ref.	Description	Due by	Met/Not met?
1	The Visitors wish to see evidence of how each module will be assessed to ensure that all the learning objectives have been achieved.	No date set	Met
2	All OSCE's to be reviewed by expert reviewers.	No date set	Met
3	That the Visitors are presented with further details of the marking structure and conduct for the final clinical examination.	No date set	No longer applicable
4	That City defines the clinical skills that the trainee would have to demonstrate before being allowed to start the clinical sessions and that this list be submitted to the GOC Visitors for substantiation.	No date set	No longer applicable

5	That the trainee will be required to pass the theory modules and demonstrate that they have the necessary clinical skills before commencing the clinical placement. However, the GOC would encourage trainees who wish to gain informal clinical experience prior to formal placement commencing, to do so.	No date set	No longer applicable
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3.2 Previous Recommendations

The Recommendations listed below are extracted from the 12-13 April 2016.

Description
None

3.3 Conditions arising from this visit

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 programme must assure that standard setting is adopted and the validity and reliability of the assessments is clearly documented (as per section 2.9 of the Handbook). Evidence of the standard setting policy must be provided to the GOC in documentary form.	15.01.18

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	To provide the IP Programme with a greater identity, through dedicated administration support, external examining arrangements and marketing.
2	To consider the sequencing of the IP modules so as not to disadvantage some cohorts in time or learning opportunities.
3	To clarify the Programme structure for applicants and current students on the Programme website and paper based related material.
4	To undertake a review in order to enhance student support mechanisms in communication, feedback and registration.
5	To undertake a review of the range of programme delivery methods in order to broaden and enrich multimedia learning opportunities.

PART 2

1 Entry Requirements / Design & Structure

- 1.1 The overall aim of the Programme is to prepare GOC registered Optometrists to practise as Independent Prescribers and to meet the standards required for entry onto the GOC specialist register.
- 1.2 The Programme sits within the MSc in Clinical Optometry operated by the Division of Optometry & Visual Sciences. The Programme is part of the Postgraduate (PG) section of the School of Health Sciences.
- 1.3 Students enrolling onto the Programme must have a minimum two years in practice following registration with the GOC before starting the clinical placement element of the Programme.
- 1.4 Students enrolling onto the Programme must supply evidence to the Programme Team of their prior experience in the diagnosis and management of eye conditions, for which they will be trained to prescribe.
- 1.5 Students enrolling onto the Programme apply mainly from Primary Care and / or Hospital backgrounds.
- 1.6 Students are required to complete the practical element of the Programme within two years of the completion of the University taught Programme, after which they take the College of Optometrists' Therapeutics Common Final Assessment (TCFA).
- 1.7 The Programme consists of three modules weighted at 15 academic credits each at Postgraduate level.
- 1.8 Students are allowed to RP(E)L the experiential learning obtained during the clinical placement and subsequent passing of the College of Optometrists learning outcomes towards a postgraduate qualification with the University. This is equivalent to 15 PG credits which entitles students to a PG Certificate (60 PG credits) or contribution of credits toward an MSc in Clinical Optometry.
- 1.9 Module OVM051 'Principles of Prescribing' is a blended learning module with a two-day face to face element and utilising Moodle. The module is assessed via a one hour short answer question (SAQ) paper and a one hour 'Objective structured clinical examination' (OSCE).
- 1.10 Module OVM053 'Independent Prescribing' is an intensive blended learning module with two days of face-to-face teaching. The module assessment is three hours in duration and consists of MCQs, Key Features (KFs) scenarios, short answer questions and patient management case scenarios. All exams in this module are computer based under exam conditions.
- 1.11 The shortest length of time a student can complete the Programme is 24 months, this is dependent on the entry point on to the Programme and can take longer.
- 1.12 A student must enrol onto, or have completed module OVM050, before enrolling onto module OVM051 or OVM053. The Programme design means that the OVM050 and OVM051 can be studied concurrently. Students cannot complete OVM053 without completing OVM050.
- 1.13 The Programme is delivered as a blended learning Programme and is taught through lectures, practical workshops and online webinars.

2 Teaching & Learning

- 2.1 The Programme is delivered using a variety of interactive case discussions, webinars, face to face sessions, lectures and clinical workshops.
- 2.2 The Programme utilises a VLE system called Moodle which allows students to study materials in their own time and as needed.
- 2.3 The Programme utilises Echo360 to record lectures and capture any PowerPoint slides being presented.
- 2.4 The Programme uses guest lectures during face to face contact days. These lecturers tend to be previous City IP graduates and reportedly have a good understanding of the Programme design and teaching methodology.
- 2.5 The Programme uses the updated Clinical Management Guidelines on the diagnosis and management of a range of conditions from the College of Optometrists.
- 2.6 The Programme team reported to the Panel that students undertaking the Programme have access to third year Optometry modules via Moodle. This is to assist students with taught theory as a refresher as some students may have graduated from their Optometry degree programme some time ago.
- 2.7 Currently the module OVM053 (the Independent Prescribing module) of the Programme is run on alternative years. Students reported to the Panel that this had caused problems in relation to their understanding of the potential completion date of the programme.
- 2.8 Students have requested more face-to-face contact as part of their Programme feedback. This has resulted in the Programme offering more contact days during module OVM050.
- 2.9 Some students raised concerns around the administrative support offered by the Programme. An example was cited whereby a student wasn't aware of their enrolment status until the day of the module starting, despite sending chasing emails to the administrative support and the Programme Lead.
- 2.10 Students reported to the Panel that they are able to fit the Programme modules in and around their work and social commitments and find Moodle a very good tool to access learning materials.
- 2.11 Students commented to the Panel that the module material appears to be up to date, relevant to both hospital and community practice, and at an appropriate level for Postgraduate study.
- 2.12 The Panel noted lecturer led sessions are used to communicate core material and provide a foundation for further reading.
- 2.13 Students reported to the Panel that case discussions enable discussions surrounding theoretical clinical practice issues, these generally take place in a peer lead small group session.
- 2.14 The Panel noted that Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) listed student satisfaction around "quality of learning materials" in 2016 was 4.4 out of 5.

2.15 The Panel notes that although the PTES scores and was generally reflective of the IP students views during the visit, the PTES information is in relation to the MSc Programme overall, of which the IP Programme forms a small part.

3 Assessment Policy & Procedures

- 3.1 Students are examined via formative and summative assessments. All summative assessments require attendance at the University including the PC-based OVM053 exam.
- 3.2 The Programme has a 'bank' of MCQs and case scenarios that is used when creating exam questions or case scenarios.
- 3.3 Students on the Programme have access to a database of past papers which allows them to see the format of the exams and help their revision.
- 3.4 The pass mark for each module of the Programme is 50%. Students failing to achieve this will have the opportunity to re-sit the assessment.
- 3.5 Students will normally be offered one re-sit attempt. If a student is successful in the re-sit, they shall be awarded the credit for that module (mark is capped at 50%).
- 3.6 If students do not attempt their re-sit by the date specified they will not progress and the Assessment Board shall require that they are withdrawn from the Programme.
- 3.7 The Panel noted that of the Programme modules running in 2015/16, 27 students sat the Principles of Therapeutics exam with a pass rate of 96.3%; the average mark was 65.5%. For the Independent Prescribing module, 36 students sat the exam with a pass rate of 100%; the average mark was 67.8%.
- 3.8 The Panel noted that of the Programme modules running in 2016/17, 17 students sat the Principles of Therapeutics exam with a pass rate of 94.1%; the average mark was 65.9%. For the Principles of Prescribing module, 24 students sat the exam with a pass rate of 93.8%; the average mark was 62.5%.
- 3.9 The Panel was informed that Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCEs) are used as a means of assessment. Students are required to undertake six stations during ten minute intervals. Paid actors are used as simulated patients for the OSCEs.
- 3.10 The final assessment is undertaken in such a way to mirror the College of Optometrists final exam.
- 3.11 A student informed the Panel that during an OSCE exam (history and symptoms station), an examiner had asked questions not relevant to the station. The Panel sought reassurances from the Programme team that the OSCE sheets were checked for consistency and that no student had been disadvantaged; this was confirmed by the Programme team. The Programme team reported to the Panel that the examiner in question will not be used for future assessments.
- 3.12 The Module Leads are responsible for producing appropriate case scenarios and OSCE examination sheets. These are reviewed by the Programme Team and the External Examiner. Amendments are then made to the assessment following feedback if required.

- 3.13 Assessment feedback will normally be provided within four weeks of the submission deadline or assessment date.
- 3.14 Students reported to the Panel that the written assignment feedback could be improved and contain more detail. The Panel noted that this was reflected in the recent PTES, which revealed that only 38% of the students who responded felt that the feedback (written or oral) had been useful.
- 3.15 The Panel noted that there appears to be a lack of detail in some of the module content. The indicative module content is not clearly mapped to the required GOC educational standards.
- 3.16 All exams relating to the Programme are invigilated and conducted on university premises.

4 APEL/APL arrangements

- 4.1 The Programme will consider candidates who have prior experience or qualifications in the optometric field using Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) procedures.
- 4.2 Students wishing to enter the Programme via this method are required to submit documentary evidence to support an application. Evidence can include records of achievement, documents, portfolios and clinical records.
- 4.3 No student that was enrolled onto the Programme in 2016/17 used the APEL or APL exemption policy.

5 Management & Leadership of the Programme

- 5.1 Dr Michelle Hennelly is the MSc Clinical Optometry Programme Director with overall responsibility for the Programme.
- 5.2 Dr Hennelly is employed on a 0.4FTE contract. The Panel queried whether the current contract allowed enough time to fulfil the role of MSc Clinical Optometry Programme Director and be the lead for the Therapeutic Prescribing Programme.
- 5.3 Dr Hennelly explained that Professor John Lawrenson is the co-lead to the Programme (as joint module leader for all three prescribing modules), and that the Programme receives a considerable amount of support from other staff on the Optometry Programme too.

6 Recruitment & Staff Resource

- 6.1 The Panel, based on meetings with staff and the examination of CVs, was satisfied that staff, including guest lectures, are appropriately qualified and experienced for their roles on the Programme.
- 6.2 Staff are recruited to the Programme based on their qualifications and experience of teaching.
- 6.3 Guest lecturers are provided with a full induction and are fully briefed by the Module Leads/Programme Lead. Guest lecturers are then provided with a copy of the relevant module specifications in order to tailor and integrate the content covered.
- 6.4 The Panel noted that there are currently 13 guest lecturers employed on a casual basis. The Programme Team informed the Panel that guest lecturers are well-known in their clinical field and have significant experience in their roles as clinicians and / or researchers.
- 6.5 The Programme Lead informed the Panel that the Programme encourages City students who successfully complete the Programme to come back and teach.
- 6.6 The Panel noted that no additional appointments to the teaching staff are planned for the coming academic year commencing in 2017.
- 6.7 The Panel noted that the maximum capacity for the face-to-face modules is up to 40 to ensure appropriate staff:student teaching ratios. The case discussion workshops operate with a maximum ratio of 1:10.
- 6.8 The School uses 'personal workload records' to enable academic and research staff to capture the core activities they undertake in relation to teaching, research, practice support and wider administrative tasks.
- 6.9 This record is a descriptive account, and staff are not asked to quantify the time they spend on each of the activities listed.
- 6.10 Personal workload records are completed on an annual basis, and are reviewed by the Divisional Lead. Staff can request 1:1 meetings with their Divisional Lead to discuss workload if required.
- 6.11 Staff commented to that Panel that although the Programme workload is manageable, the administrative and "back office support" is ineffective. Staff would like to see committed administration resources dedicated to the Programme for timetabling, enrolment activity and student advice.

7 Student Information

- 7.1 As per the admissions policy to the Programme, students are required to hold a relevant optometric qualification and have a minimum of two years' experience in practice following registration as an Optometrist before commencing the clinical placement.
- 7.2 The students on the Programme come from a variety of practice backgrounds, ranging from high street practices to hospitals. Some students reported to be self-funding, however, the majority reported being funded by their employer.

- 7.3 A Student Handbook is provided to all students at the beginning of the Programme, students are also allocated a Personal Tutor. Students reported that contacting their personal and module tutors can be an issue, and emails are often not responded to within the 48 hours timeframe specified in the Student Handbook. On some occasions, students reported that email queries went unanswered.
- 7.4 All students are invited to attend an induction to the Programme and are provided with an electronic list of the resources available at the University.
- 7.5 The Panel examined a number of module feedback responses. Overall, feedback consisted of positive experiences, as well as areas for development. The lowest scoring area appeared to be around facilitation of participation, administration and communication. The Programme Lead is aware of the areas for development and those are being factored into the Programme development going forward.
- 7.6 Students have access to online learning materials via Moodle 2 a minimum of 17 weeks prior to the summative exam.
- 7.7 The Programme has a self-nominated (but peer-backed) student representative, who feeds into the Staff-Student Liaison Committee for the MSc programme. Given the blended learning nature of the Programme, student representatives have never previously been formally needed.
- 7.8 The Panel noted that students expressed frustration at the application process to the Programme. Each module requires payment prior to enrolment, but the current system makes it hard for students to enrol efficiently as payment needed to be made over the phone or by cheque and the Programme administrative support are slow to respond to such requests.
- 7.9 The Panel was assured by the Programme Lead that a new system is being implemented whereby upon application to the module and successful online payment, the student will get almost immediate access to the module material on Moodle.

8 Quality Assurance

- 8.1 The Panel was informed that City, University of London's, has a policy for appointing one External Examiner for each postgraduate programme, to offer informed, independent and comparative views of academic standards, of assessment processes and programme structures, and of good practice.
- 8.2 The University Senate appoints new External Examiners on the recommendation of the Independent Prescribing Committee via the Board of Studies responsible for the module.
- 8.3 There is currently one External Examiner linked to the MSc Programme who as part of their role, reviews and moderates exam papers, evaluates student performance and provides feedback including all of the content relating to the IP programme.
- 8.4 During the visit the Panel undertook a telephone discussion with the External Examiner who confirmed that they had just finished their contract and that a new External Examiner had recently taken-up the post for the 2017/18 academic year, on a four-year contract.

- 8.5 The External Examiner reported that they received an induction to the Programme and were provided with a detailed induction pack.
- 8.6 The External Examiner identified no issues or concerns with the Programme, although suggested that the Programme may in the future benefit from having a dedicated External Examiner for the IP programme alone.
- 8.7 The External Examiner commented that the IP Programme content is good, the provision is comparable to other Programmes in operation, pass rates are high, and students appear to be motivated and capable.
- 8.8 The External Examiner attends the Exam Board in relation to the MSc and the Programme, and is satisfied with the marking and feedback received to the External Examiner reports.
- 8.9 The External Examiner has access to Moodle 2 and is able to see individual students' progress rates as well as the Programme material.
- 8.10 The External Examiner commented to the Panel that the Programme Lead is responsive to the feedback provided.
- 8.11 The Panel noted from a previous External Examiner report that the 'breadth of assessments and the timing of face-to-face lectures are excellent ways of engaging optometrists in practice while minimising disruption'.
- 8.12 The Panel noted that the Programme ensures quality assurance in many ways. Methods include; student feedback, module leader feedback, Programme Lead feedback, External Examiner reports, Assessment Board, Programme Committee, Annual Programme Evaluation, Internal Validation and Periodic Review.
- 8.13 Since 2009, a total of 154 City candidates have proceeded on to complete the College of Optometrists Common final assessment in Independent Prescribing. The overall first time pass rate for City candidates during this period was 85.1%.
- 8.14 The Panel was satisfied, based on a mixture of written and verbal evidence, that robust quality assurance measures are in place to monitor and evaluate the Programme.

9 Resources and Facilities

- 9.1 The Panel toured the facilities available to the Programme and found them to be suitable for the needs of the students.
- 9.2 Students have access to the University library which provides students with a broad range of materials including online textbooks and journals.
- 9.3 Library staff are able to provide access to resources. The Panel noted that students at the University have a number of support services in place such as; the Student Centre, Funding and Finance, International Student Support, Learning Support, Occupational Health and Mental Health Services, Students' Union, Library services and IT services.

- 9.4 Webinars, discussion boards, online lectures and online articles are the core blended learning elements used by the Programme and, therefore, there is heavy reliance on Moodle.
- 9.5 The University as a whole is committed to ensuring that students can access materials online via Moodle.
- 9.6 Moodle hosts all of the University's undergraduate and postgraduate Programme modules. For Postgraduate Optometry, this platform allows the students to engage effectively online, providing them with access to a range of digital materials and resources.
- 9.7 Moodle contains the outlines of the Programme content, assessment information and the module schedule. These key components ensure that students are fully aware of how the module will be structured over the course of the semester, what is expected of them with regards to assessment, how they will be assessed, and mandatory activities students are required to engage with.

10 Strategic Development & Resource Planning

- 10.1 The School of Health Sciences has undertaken a review and evaluation of its postgraduate provision. The review was undertaken to meet the increasingly challenging and complex UK and global healthcare landscape.
- 10.2 This review has had no direct impact on the provision or future sustainability of the IP Programme, although staff commented they would like to see the Optometry provision at the University expand.

11 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document, the following terms used throughout this report are defined as follows:

GOC: General Optical Council

The Panel: All members of the visiting Panel representing the General Optical Council.

Programme(s): Unless otherwise specified this refers to the Independent Prescribing Programme.

Programme Team / SMT: Senior members of staff such as Programme leads, heads of department, decision makers and budget holders who are responsible for managing the Programme(s).

Programme Staff: Staff involved in the delivery of the Programme that were interviewed by the Panel.

Supervisors/Employers: Qualified/Registered Dispensing Opticians, Contact Lens Opticians and Optometrists who supervise students whilst they are working in practice.

External Examiner/Examiner: Examiner(s) contracted by the College/University for the purposes of ensuring quality control of Programme content.