

<b>College of Optometrists</b>
<b>GOC TARGETED QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT</b>
<b>Therapeutics Common Final Assessment in Independent Prescribing</b>
<b>12 September 2023</b>

<b>Report confirmed by GOC</b>	<b>18 October 2023</b>
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## PART 1 – VISIT DETAILS

1.2 Programme details	
Programme title	Therapeutics Common Final Assessment in Independent Prescribing
Programme description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Therapeutics Common Final Assessment (TCFA) in Independent Prescribing is the final element of the route to registration in Independent Prescribing and delivered by the College of Optometrists.</li> <li>To undertake their TCFA, candidates must have passed the theoretical component of the route to registration and completed both a clinical placement and clinical logbook.</li> <li>There are three TCFA exam sittings in each calendar year (Spring, Summer &amp; Autumn).</li> <li>The TCFAs are conducted virtually.</li> </ul>
Current approval status	Fully approved (FA)
Approved student numbers	N/A

1.3 GOC Education Visitor Panel (EVP)	
Chair	Carl Stychin – Lay Chair member
Visitors	Vincent McKay – Lay member Pam McClean – Independent Prescribing/Optomertist member John Siderov – Optometrist member
GOC representative	Georgina Carter – Education Operations Officer
Observers	Lisa Venables – Education Development Manager

1.4 Purpose of the visit	
Visit type	TARGETED QUALITY ASSURANCE VISIT
<p>The purpose of this targeted quality assurance visit was to review the College of Optometrists (the provider) Therapeutic Common Final Assessment (TCFA)(programme) to ensure it meets the requirements as listed in the <i>GOC's Accreditation Handbook for Optometry Specialist Registration in Prescribing (2008)</i> (handbook) and the <i>GOC Education A&amp;QA-Supplementary Document-List of Requirements</i> (list of requirements).</p> <p>The requirements being assessed were: IP1.10, IP2.3, IP4.1, IP4.4, IP4.8 &amp; IP5.1.</p> <p>This visit took place remotely.</p>	

1.5 Programme history		
Date	Event type	Overview
05/12/2019	Visit	A full approval quality assurance visit was carried out to consider the TCFAs. The provider was set two conditions and offered one recommendation. The panel recommended that the next visit should take place in November 2024.
27/05/2020	Change	The GOC noted a permanent change to run the TCFAs remotely.

26/04/2021	Change	The GOC noted that the provider would be permitting candidates to complete the clinical placement remotely/online.
21/07/2021	Change	The GOC noted that the provider would be allowing IP-qualified Ophthalmic practitioners to supervise clinical placements under the overall supervision of a designated Ophthalmologist member.
06/09/2021	Change	The GOC noted that the provider would be allowing IP candidates with more than two years between their completion of the theory element of the route to registration and their starting of the clinical placement. Candidates will have to have completed minimum CET/CPD to demonstrate continued relevant knowledge.
10/03/2023	Event	The GOC was informed of candidate concerns surrounding the delivery, content and conduct of the TCFAs conducted in March 2023.
17/08/2023	Administration	A targeted quality assurance visit was scheduled for Tuesday 12 September 2023.

## PART 2 – VISIT SUMMARY

2.1 Visit outcomes	
The panel set four new conditions, with three requirements deemed unmet, and offered no recommendations.	
Summary of recommendations to the GOC	
<b>Previous conditions</b>	<b>Two</b> previous conditions were deemed <b>MET</b> by the executive prior to this visit.
<b>New conditions</b>	<b>Three</b> requirements are deemed <b>UNMET</b> and <b>four</b> conditions are set. Details regarding the conditions are set out in Part 3.
<b>New recommendations</b>	<b>No</b> recommendations are offered.
<b>Commendations</b>	<b>No</b> commendations are offered.
<b>Actual student numbers</b>	Candidates who sat the TCFAs between 01/09/2021 & 31/8/2022: <b>269</b>  Candidates who sat the TCFAs between 01/09/2022 & 31/8/2023: <b>379</b>
<b>Next visit</b>	By December 2024
<b>Factors to consider when scheduling next visit</b>	The TFCAs take place three times a year (Spring, Summer & Autumn).

2.2 Previous conditions		
The conditions listed below are extracted from the report of 11 November 2022		
Requirement number	Condition number and description	Status
<b>CON/COO/IP/19/C001</b>	The clinical logbook must be revised to incorporate opportunities for students to evidence self-reflection and record achievement of learning outcomes	This condition was deemed <b>MET</b> by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.
<b>CON/COO/IP/19/C001</b>	This revision of the clinical logbook must enable inclusion of a record of relevant evidence-based reading	This condition was deemed <b>MET</b> by the executive prior to this visit taking place and was not reviewed by the panel at this visit.

2.3 Previous recommendations	
The recommendations listed below are extracted from the report of 11 November 2022	
Description	Comments
The COO to take ownership of the quality assurance of the clinical learning experience on placement as a key component of the pathway to registration.	These recommendations were not looked at as part of this targeted quality assurance visit. This will be reviewed at the next full quality assurance visit.
The COO to continue with, and further develop, engagement with training providers.	These recommendations were not looked at as part of this targeted quality assurance visit. This will be reviewed at the next full quality assurance visit.

2.4 Non-applicable requirements
As this was a targeted visit, only the aforementioned requirements were considered.

## PART 3 – CONDITIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENDATIONS

**Conditions** are applied to training and assessment providers if there is evidence that the GOC requirements are not met.

**Recommendations** indicate enhancements that can be made to a programme, these may not be directly linked to compliance with GOC requirements.

### 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.

<b>IP5.1</b>	Providers must have quality assurance information/handbooks which indicate the QA arrangements to audit the appropriateness of the learning/assessment environments and provide guidance to achieve the requirements of this handbook.
<b>Condition 1</b>	The provider must submit evidence to demonstrate that they will be implementing a plan to improve their existing quality assurance oversight of the remote invigilation service provided by Test Reach.
<b>Date due</b>	Monday 15 January 2024
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>During the visit, the panel heard that the provider was in conversation with their invigilation provider, Test Reach, to discuss the current quality assurance oversight of the service that Test Reach provide. It was highlighted that more robust quality assurance was required, and indeed the panel heard that the provider was currently exploring avenues to develop this, including receipt of invigilation recordings from Test Reach.</p> <p>The panel concluded that the provider needs to ensure that improvements like these are implemented into their quality assurance oversight of Test Reach, to meet this requirement. The panel requires that the provider submits evidence to demonstrate this.</p>
<b>Condition 2</b>	The provider is required to develop mechanisms to gain regular feedback from examination candidates.
<b>Date due</b>	Wednesday 1 November 2023
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Whilst the panel recognised that candidates can submit feedback or raise concerns through emails and/or the appeals and complaints process, conversations during the visit highlighted that there were no alternative feedback mechanisms in place.</p> <p>The panel was of the view that a formal feedback mechanism should be separate from any appeals/complaints process. Therefore, the panel concluded that the provider needs to introduce a formal feedback mechanism to ensure effective monitoring of the TFCA process, and use of Test Reach, by those directly experiencing it. With the next set of TFCAs due to take place in November 2023, the panel requires that the provider submits evidence highlighting their plans to introduce these processes.</p>

<b>IP1.10</b>	Learning strategies and assessment methods must be appropriate for the material being taught and the learning outcome that is being tested.
<b>IP4.8</b>	Assessment mechanisms must be suitable for the understanding, knowledge, skills and competencies they are designed to test.
<b>Condition 3</b>	The provider is required to develop a systematic approach by which questions in the question bank are regularly reviewed for their validity in relation to the most current Clinical Management Guidelines.
<b>Date due</b>	Monday 15 January 2024
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Concerns highlighted by candidates in March 2023, investigated by the GOC, and discussed during this visit, highlighted that human error by two external examiners and the IP Panel chair had allowed questions not in line with current Clinical Management Guidelines (CMGs) and practice to be asked in the March 2023 TFCAs. The post examination standard setting process at the Independent Prescribing Panel ensured that the TCFA candidates' attainment was not disadvantaged by this oversight.</p> <p>With regards to the CMG updating process, the provider explained that the coordination of CMG changes and examinations are considered; the CMGs are 'frozen' three weeks before the examination.</p> <p>However, to meet the GOC requirements, the panel requires that the provider submits evidence to demonstrate that a systematic approach to review the question bank has been implemented and will be used going forward, to improve upon mechanisms already in place. The rationale is to ensure that such errors do not occur again.</p>
<b>Condition 4</b>	The provider is expected to undertake a more comprehensive review of the questions at every sitting of the TFCAs and is required to specifically evidence that it has completed a thorough review of the questions for the November TFCAs to ensure alignment with the appropriate CMGs and current practice.
<b>Date due</b>	Wednesday 1 November 2023
<b>Rationale</b>	<p>Concerns highlighted by candidates in March 2023, investigated by the GOC, and discussed during this visit, highlighted that human error by two external examiners and the IP Panel chair had allowed questions not in line with current Clinical Management Guidelines (CMGs) and practice to be asked in the March 2023 TFCAs. The post examination standard setting process at the Independent Prescribing Panel ensured that the TCFA candidates' attainment was not disadvantaged by this oversight.</p> <p>Given the time required to develop the systematic approach associated with Condition 3, the panel requests that the provider submits evidence to demonstrate that the questions included in the November 2023 TFCAs have been reviewed to ensure that such errors do not occur for these examinations. The panel expects a review process to become a regular element of the quality assurance process in future.</p>

### 3.2 Recommendations offered at this visit

The EVP offers the following recommendations to the provider.

**No recommendations were set at this visit.**

### 3.3 Commendations made at this visit

**No commendations were set at this visit.**