

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

**Visit to
ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY**

**BOptom
7 – 9 November 2006**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Visitors wish to express their grateful thanks to Ms Leslie Dobree, Professor Adrian Moore, Dean of Faculty of Science and Technology, Dr John Siderov, Head of Department and Ms Rupal Lovell Patel, the pathway leader for the BOptom programme. The Visitors would like to thank the Departmental staff and students for giving generously of their time and knowledge and for the hospitality afforded to the Visitors during the course of the Visit.

The Visitors also wish to express their appreciation to Dr John Siderov and the staff of the Department for the comprehensive documentation provided in advance of the Visit. The Visitors recognise the considerable work involved in the preparation of this information, which was of great assistance to the Visitors in preparing for the Visit and during the conduct of it.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Anglia Ruskin University (formerly Anglia Polytechnic University) was granted University Status in 1992. The change of the name of the University was granted by Privy Council in 2005 and reflects the University's heritage and connection to John Ruskin, who opened the School of Art in Sidney St, Cambridge in 1858.

2. The University has 28,000 students and two main sites in Cambridge and Chelmsford. Twenty percent of Anglia Ruskin University's full time students are from overseas, 95% of students are from state run schools and the majority of students are mature learners.

3. There are five Faculties of Study within the University, led by an appointed Dean. Each faculty is divided into Departments, Divisions and/or Research Centres. The Department of Optometry and Ophthalmic Dispensing is located in the Faculty of Science and Technology. Professor Adrian Moore is the Dean of the Faculty and Dr John Siderov is the Head of the Department. The Department currently runs the following pathways:

- [a] BOptom Optometry
- [b] BSc Optical Management
- [c] BSc Ophthalmic Dispensing
- [d] FDSO Ophthalmic Dispensing
- [e] University Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing
- [f] Plus courses for Ophthalmic Dispensing Assistants

The GOC accredit [a] to [d] listed above.

4. Each Faculty has a Faculty Board, accountable for quality assurance and curriculum development across the regional University partnership. Senate is responsible for academic developments in research, scholarship and teaching. The University refers to all programmes or courses as 'pathways'.

5. The BOptom Programme is a three year full-time programme, leading to a Bachelor in Optometry with Honours (BOptom (Hons)). The standard offer is three A levels (ABB) from biology, chemistry, maths and physics and students are expected to have a minimum of five GCSE's. All modules are compulsory and students must pass all modules to meet the requirement of the programme and graduate with an optometry honours degree.

6. The third year of the programme is devoted almost exclusively to core clinical skills although on rare occasions a student may choose a non-clinical project/dissertation. Project/dissertation work accounts for 30 of 120 final year credits.

7. The last GOC Visit to Anglia Ruskin University took place in 2002.

8. Since the last Visit in 2002, the University has undergone a process of change. including:

- a change of name;
- a review of the student and academic services;
- a University wide change in the module credit system from a ten credit base to a 15 credit base per module (known as the 'new 15/30 curriculum')

- the introduction of new student regulations from September 2006
 - a redistribution of the academic activities from schools into faculties
- The University formally notified the General Optical Council (GOC) of the change of name in 2005.

9. The 15/30 curriculum introduced module credits in units of 15, 30, 45 or 60, rather than the smaller credit system of 10 or 20. The GOC was notified of the changes to the module credit system (15/30 curriculum) in May 2006, and after consideration and referral to the Council's Education Committee, it was agreed that the new system was robust and fit-for-purpose.

10. The University's introduction of a two phased process for the approval of the new academic provision was passed by Senate in April 2005. **Phase 1** considered modules for approval on a departmental basis, **Phase 2** considered pathways for approval on a departmental basis. The University set up '**Validation Panels**²' to aid the process and on the 15 June 2005, each department was given, from 2006/7 the responsibility for the delivery, management and quality assurance of all the pathways under its umbrella.

11. The University outlined that the changes to the curriculum structure were to improve the learning experience of students and remove some of the administrative burden from academic staff. The University believes that the new larger modular format, delivered across semesters, will allow students more opportunity and time to reflect and integrate their learning across related topics. In addition, the majority of student assessment such as examinations will occur at the end of the academic year.

1 CONCLUSIONS

12. Having considered the programme, the Visitors concluded that in general the BOptom Pathway was fit for purpose. However the failure to monitor formally some of the core competencies and the unsatisfactory patient numbers give rise to concern. These are stated in the Visitors' Recommendations and Conditions, and must be fully addressed by the University before approval can be granted for any period longer than one year.

13. The Visitors concluded that the design of the logbook should be reviewed by the University and that it should include an area that allows ample room for student reflection, as well as the opportunity for Clinical Supervisors to add comprehensive comments.

14. The Visitors noted that many students were not seeing the required number of patients, and suggest a more innovative approach to the 'recruitment' of patients and that consideration should be given to specialist clinics, rather than one general clinic.

15. The Visitors concluded that the Hospital placement experience that students received was very good, but must be lengthened in order to meet the minimum GOC requirements.

16. The Visitors noted that students appeared to be happy and well motivated, but that staff teaching on the programme clearly needed further direction in terms of career progression and that the University should ensure that a clear policy is available if they are to ensure staff retention and job satisfaction.

17. The Visitors note the concerns expressed by the External Examiners in their reports and agree that the University follows the GOC requirement by appointing a second External Examiner to the BOptom Pathway.

2 CONDITIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

18. The Visitors Recommend to the GOC that the University be granted approval, until a further Visit takes place on **4 December 2007**, subject to the following Recommendations and Conditions being satisfied:

19. That the University provides a report to the Visitors by **Friday 1 June 2007** explaining how they propose to meet the following Conditions and address the following Recommendations:

Conditions

1. That the University:
 - a. ensures that it can demonstrated that all students have achieved all the GOC core competencies;
 - b. increase patient numbers under all the categories listed in the GOC Handbook, with particular attention to dispensing;
 - c. increase the Ophthalmologist-supervised patient experience to match the requirements in the GOC Handbook;
 - d. ensures that all patient episodes are recorded in a detailed logbook, with provision for the recording of student reflection of the learning experience. To be implemented at the beginning of the next semester;
 - e. appoint an additional external examiner to the BOptom Programme;
 - f. ensures that the supervision of all clinics follows the GOC requirements in terms of the ratio between students and GOC registered staff.
2. That the future intake to the programme does not exceed 40 (+/- 10%), as outlined by the GOC standing conditions (etc).

Recommendations

1. that consideration is given to the introduction of specialist clinics, in addition to the General Clinic;
2. that more secure arrangements are implemented for patient care during vacations;
3. that the University addresses the external examiners comments regarding their difficulty in making comparisons with cohorts of students from other institutions;
4. that there is a clear University policy on career progression for academic staff.