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**GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL
Visit to
City University
BSc Optometry Programme**

MARCH 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Visitors wish to express their grateful thanks to Professor David Thomson, Head of Department, the Professors and Academic Staff and Ms Tina Romany, the Clinic Director for giving up their valuable time to the Visitors.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. A General Optical Council (GOC) Panel Visit was carried out in March 2006 to City University's BSc Optometry Programme.
2. The March 2006 Visit Report highlighted two major concerns raised by the Visitors, the first was related to the students lack of clinical and hospital experience, and the second was the failure of the Department to assess systematically students' achievement the GOC Stage 1 Core Competencies.
3. The Visitors requested that City University submit to them an action plan to address how the University would address the issues raised by the Visitors. The Visitors received a comprehensive action plan from the University on the 14 August 2006. The Visitors agreed a return Visit to the BSc Optometry Programme on the **7 December 2006**, in order to consider the changes to the programme, as outlined in the University's response.

THE DECEMBER 2006 VISIT

4. This Report is of the return Visit by the GOC to City University's BSc Optometry Programme. The Visit took place on Thursday 7 December 2006, and the Visitors met with senior academic staff and students to discuss the changes that had been implemented since the March 2006 Visit.
5. The Visitors on this occasion were:
 - [a] Mrs A Bishop (Optometrist)
 - [b] Mrs C Harm (Dispensing Optician)
 - [c] Dr G Harris (Layperson & Chair)
 - [d] Dr A Jennings (Educationalist)
 - [e] Dr P Kyle (Ophthalmologist)
 - [f] Ms L Oakley – (accompanying GOC Officer)

CONCLUSIONS

6. The Visitors were impressed with the Department's response and overall approach to the March 2006 Visit Report. The Visitors commended the Department for their positive response, constructive engagement and commitment to improvement.
7. The Visitors concluded that the Department had met all the Conditions and Recommendations of the March 2006 Visit Report; and had shown a high level of innovation in the methods adopted to improve the quality of the programme, and the learning experience for students.
8. The Visitors agreed that overall the Departments efforts were exemplary. However the Visitors agreed that it would be important and prudent to review the number of patient episodes achieved for the current third year students in response to the measures implemented.
9. The Visitors agreed to highlight to the GOC the difficulties of achieving the current GOC minimum patient episodes and to outline the need for a formal review of the Handbook requirements in the autumn of 2007.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The Visitors recommend to the GOC

- [a] that approval be granted to City University's BSc Optometry Programme under Section 12(1) of the Opticians Act 1989 (and Amendments) for five years from the date of this Report; and
- [b] that the Department submit to the Visitors a brief, evaluative report by **Thursday 5 April 2007**, outlining the progress made since the Visit and for this to include
 - confirmation of and evidence that the changes made to students visiting Moorfield's Hospital are proving effective in enhancing students' learning experience; and
 - confirmation of and evidence that the number of patient episodes experienced by each third year student, including those attained through visits to the Institute of Optometry, is now in line with the GOC criteria for the minimum numbers of real patient contacts.

Conditions and Recommendations of the March 2006

Visit Conclusions

- a. In view of concerns about students' clinical and hospital experience and the assessment of core competencies, the Visitors Recommend to the GOC the conditional approval of City University in respect of the BSc Optometry Programme under section 12(1) of the Opticians Act 1989 (and Amendments) until the Conditions and Recommendations set out below are satisfactorily met.
- b. An action plan is to be submitted to the GOC by the Department within five weeks of receiving the final Visit Report to include:

CONDITIONS:

- i) the development and implementation of a robust and efficient audit trail to monitor students' achievement of core competencies across the programme; and
- ii) a review of the number of optometric examinations performed by each final year student and a strategy to increase the number of supervised 1:1 clinical examinations of unselected "real patients" in primary care and dispensing to meet the GOC's criteria.
- iii) a review of the Department's arrangements for ensuring that students receive adequate exposure to abnormal ocular conditions, including particularly its arrangements with Moorfields Hospital ; and

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i) That the Department include an earlier review of students' achievement of core competencies at the end of the first semester in the third year, to ensure that, where necessary, remedial action can be taken in a timely fashion and a subsequent reassessment made.
 - ii) That the Department review the weighting accorded to each year in determining the final degree classification with a view to bringing this into line with the GOC's criterion that 60% weighting should be given to the final year of study.
- c. Having received the Action Plan from the University, the Visitors will wish to re-visit the programme on **Thursday 7 December 2006**, to consider how the action plan has been implemented. The results from that visit will help determine the period of approval for the BSc Optometry Programme.