

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

**Report of the Visits to
Glasgow Caledonian University
BSc Optometry Programme**

11-13 December 2007

and

18 June 2008

1a Acknowledgements

The Visitors wish to express their grateful thanks to Professor Alan Tomlinson, Head of Department, Professor Kevan Gartland, Dean of the School of Life Sciences, Dr Niall Strang, Director of Undergraduate Programme and the Vice Chancellor.

The Visitors also wish to express their appreciation to the staff and students who gave up their time to spend with the Visitors.

1b Background Information

1. Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) was officially formed in 1993 with the merger of Glasgow Polytechnic and The Queen's College, Glasgow.
2. The campus is situated in the heart of Glasgow city centre and has approximately 15,000 students across all undergraduate, postgraduate and part-time programmes.
3. In total there are seven academic schools:
 - a. The School of Built & Natural Environment
 - b. The Business School
 - c. School of Engineering and Computing
 - d. School of Health and Social Care
 - e. School of Life Sciences
 - f. School of Law and Social Sciences
 - g. School of Nursing, Midwifery and Community Health
4. In addition to the above there are 50 research centres and units across the University.
5. The School of Life Sciences is made up of three academic departments:
 - a. Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences
 - b. Department of Psychology
 - c. Department of Vision Science
6. The School of Life Science is directed by Professor Kevan Gartland, based in the Charles Oakley Building. The Department of Vision Sciences, is led by Professor Alan Tomlinson, with a team of 19 full and part time academic staff.

1c Introduction

1. The Optometry Department ('the Department') is the only vision science teaching establishment in Scotland and offers a BSc (Hons) Optometry programme.
2. This Report is of the Visit by the General Optical Council to Glasgow Caledonian BSc (Hons) Optometry Programme. The Visit took place over three days, from **11 to 13 December 2007**.
3. The Visitors were:
 - a. Dr Adrian Jennings – Optometrist and Chair
 - b. Professor David Whitaker – Educationalist
 - c. Mrs Sally Powell – Lay Person
 - d. Mrs Annette Latham-Jackson – Dispensing Optician
 - e. Mr Paul Baines – Ophthalmologist
 - f. Miss Angela Whitaker - Optometrist
4. The Visitors were accompanied by two GOC Officers.
5. The GOC is required to undertake such Visits in order to obtain assurance that the standards of teaching and clinical practice within the programme are compliant with the GOC's competences and standards, and that the course can continue to be recognised by the GOC for the entry of successful students into the pre-registration period of supervised practice.
6. During the Visit the GOC Handbook, 'Guidelines for the approval of Training Institutions' ('the Handbook') was used by the visitors. The Visitors conducted their assessments during the Visit applying the criteria and requirements as set out in the Handbook. A copy of the Aide Mémoire used by the Visitors is available on request to the GOC.
7. The BSc (Hons) Optometry Programmes entry requirements for the programme are (essential) English (S); Maths (S); Physics(S) or dual award science (recommended) Maths (H); Physics (H); Chemistry (H); Biology (H). Grades for entry with highers are BBBB, while A level requirements are ABB.
8. Prior to the Visit, the GOC received comprehensive pre-visit information from the University based on the GOC's Handbook 'Guidelines for the approval of Training Institutions – degrees in optometry' (the Handbook).
9. The Visitors were impressed with the quality of the pre-visit information received from the Department and the mapping of this information to the Visit Handbook. As highlighted in the Acknowledgements, the Visitors commend the University for the quality and comprehensive presentation of the information provided.

2 Conclusions

10. Following the visit in December 2007 approval was given for September 2008 entry to the course but a further visit was required before a formal period of approval could be determined.
11. As a result of the visit in December 2007 the Panel had serious concerns in the following areas:
 1. A system needs to be developed to accurately track patient episodes based on the student logbooks.
 2. This system should be implemented by the end of May 2008 and that a further one day visit take place on Wednesday 18th June 2008, to verify the patient episodes for students graduating in 2008.
 3. Consideration should be given to moving the module Optometric Professional Study from the first year to either the third or fourth year of the programme.
 4. The Department should implement principles of best practice for clinical governance.
 5. Student logbooks should be revised to include categories of patient episodes.

3 Follow up Visit

12. On the 18th June 2008 a small team of visitors consisting of Professor Mike Salmon (Chair), Professor Adrian Jennings (Optometrist), Dr Paul Baines (Ophthalmologist) and Linda Kennaugh (GOC Officer) met with Professor Alan Tomlinson (Head of Department), Dr Niall Strang (Director of Undergraduate Programme) and Mr Norman Button to further consider the issues of concern that arose from the December 2007 visit.

4a Conclusions

13. Overall, the Visitors were greatly encouraged with the efforts and improvements made since the last visit and with the plans for the next year. (See **Appendix B** - List of changes implemented since December 2007 visit and intended changes for 2008/9)
14. Following a positive visit to the university on 18th June 2008 the Visitors were satisfied that the areas of concern identified in the December 2007 visit had been suitably addressed. **The Visitors therefore recommend that the course be approved for a further five years until June 2013 subject to the following conditions:**

4b Conditions

- In future records of patient experiences must distinguish between full refractions and supplementary experiences and the record should clearly differentiate to show how many of the full refractions were completed in the third year and how many in the fourth year.

- Satisfactory annual monitoring reports are provided in interim years between visits.
- Additional top up sessions be introduced in to the final year of the programme to ensure students receive the most up to date information to enable the Professional Studies module to remain in the first year of the programme.

4c Recommendations

15. In addition to the conditions of approval the Visitors also made the following recommendations which they felt would assist continued improvements to the programme:

- The Visitors appreciate the difficulties in Scotland in providing 18 full refractions in the final year and support the argument put forward to allow full refractions undertaken in the third year to count towards the 18 required. As this would be a deviation from the requirement as laid out in the handbook the Panel will need to inform the GOC Education Committee that allowance has been made in Scotland to enable the University to count full refractions from experiences in both the 3rd and 4th years. This recommendation is subject to the stipulation that 70% of the required 18 full refractions must be done in the final year and the remaining 30% can be done in the final semester of the third year.
- A more effective management system for support staff should be developed in consultation with the school management team.
- More guidance and feedback for clinical supervisors to ensure greater consistency in clinical assessments.
- Consideration be given to moving the 3rd year contact lens tuition in to the 2nd semester to allow a more effective transition in to the 4th year.