

COUNCIL

Accreditation and Quality Assurance: University of West of England

Meeting: 9 May 2018

Status: For decision

Lead responsibility: Safia Iman (Director of Transformation)

Paper author: Anita Phillips (Education Manager)

Purpose

1. For Council to consider and approve the Education committee's recommendations in relation to the accreditation of programmes at the University of West of England.

Recommendation

2. Council is asked to **consider and approve** the recommendations of the Education committee, namely to **grant provisional approval** to the BSc (Hons) Optometry programme (subject to conditions being met) to commence in September 2018 noting:
 - 2.1 a maximum cohort of 60 students;
 - 2.2 16 conditions are imposed;
 - 2.3 3 recommendations are made; and
 - 2.4 the Education Visitor Panel (EVP) will visit the provider before the start of the programme in 2018.

Role and remit of Council and Education committee

3. Section 12(7) of the Opticians Act 1989 ("the Act") empowers Council to approve establishments and/or qualifications for training as an optometrist or dispensing optician. Sections 12(1) and 12(6) require Council to establish minimum competencies and educational content, and to notify these requirements to approved establishments. Section 13 makes provision for ongoing supervision and potential withdrawal of approval.
4. Section 2(1) requires Council to establish an Education committee for the purpose of giving advice and assistance on matters relating to optical training, education and assessment.
5. Education committee's powers are mainly to be found in Section 12 of the Act and in the GOC's Scheme of Delegation. Education committee has the power to approve quality assurance reports, conditions and recommendations from the EVP, and make recommendations to Council on whether provisional approval or full accreditation should be given to programmes.

6. It is Council's role to make decisions on granting/withdrawing full accreditation or provisional approval to/from an educational establishment or qualification. Education committee's role is to make recommendations and advise Council in the exercise of these powers.

Strategic objective

7. The paper relates to the General Optical Council (GOC) strategic objective on higher standards – promoting higher standards across the optical professions.
8. Through the process of accrediting and quality-assuring optical education, training and qualifications, we will seek to ensure that registrants joining the register are fit to practise.

Risks

9. The main strategic risks associated with the accreditation and quality assurance functions are Risk ED4: the operational risk of the GOC being unable to deliver statutory function of Accreditation and Quality Assurance satisfactorily could expose the GOC to legal and reputational risks, and could negatively impact public safety.
10. The Education committee discussed their concern that the maximum student numbers for this application, including the recommendation of a maximum student cohort of 60. The provider and the placement providers recognised that the first cohort numbers are likely to be significantly lower. It is anticipated that the first cohort to the Programme will attract up to 30 students. The Panel believe that adequate and timely completion of the conditions would mitigate the risk in this area.
11. With regards to staffing, the EVP was satisfied that there will be an appropriate staff resourcing level to manage the first cohort planned to be enrolled on the Programme, based on the information available.

Background

12. The University of West of England is a training provider that is wishing to deliver an optometry route to registration. The University is proposing to deliver the training element of the route. After which, students may progress to the College of Optometrists who will deliver the practice-based learning and qualifying examination elements of the route.
13. The University aim to begin delivery of the programme in **September 2018** (subject to Provisional Approval being awarded by Education committee and Council) with an initial intake of **60** students for the first cohort.

14. The University will work closely with Bristol Eye Hospital to provide a programme that would meet the evolving requirements within the Optometry field. This will be in addition to its current partnerships with multiple independent and voluntary agencies which would facilitate practice placements opportunities for students on the programme.
15. At the **October 2017** Education committee, the University's application to establish a new programme was considered. The Committee agreed for an Accreditation and Quality Assurance Officer and a member of the EVP to attend the University's internal validation event on **26 October 2017**, and for an accreditation visit to be conducted by an EVP on **10 and 11 January 2018** to consider the proposed programme.

Analysis

16. The findings of the GOC representatives from the University's internal validation event on **26 October 2017** is that the Validation documentation, commitment of the Programme Leader, and support of the senior university team appear positive, as do the general learning resources available. There were a number of areas that lacked concrete evidence and this was explored further at the **January 2018** accreditation visit. The case for admitting 60 students to the first intake, and the rationale for training a significant number of new optometrists was discussed. Additional visits will be required to visit the hospital placements and the clinical learning facility. Fully prepared module teaching plans will require scrutiny once prepared. It will be helpful to meet new teaching staff when they are appointed.
17. The University Special Curriculum Approval Panel approved the BSc (Hons) Optometry for delivery from **September 2018** with **2** conditions and **4** recommendations. There were also **4** commendations.
18. The EVP conducted a visit on **10-11 January 2018** to inspect the programme against the GOC standards. The visit report is provided in **annex one**.
19. The EVP was impressed by the extensive stakeholder engagement in the development of the new programme.
20. The EVP explored the development of the new programme and conducted a series of meetings with the staff involved in establishing the new programme including; the Vice-Chancellor and members of the senior team, senior Faculty staff, the Programme Lead and contributing academic staff, professional student administration and learning resource staff and internal quality assurance staff.

21. The EVP also met with representatives from a range of placements, including the NHS (Bristol Eye Hospital) and both multiple and independent practices, and LOC representatives.
22. The EVP identified a number of areas where further detail is required from the University and their programme partner(s). The EVP takes the view that timely fulfilment of the conditions is required to meet the terms of Provisional Approval. The University is encouraged to keep an open dialogue with the GOC regarding progress and should clearly state where they consider adjustment of due dates is likely to be required.
23. Based on the findings of the visit and on recommendation of the EVP, the **April 2018** Education committee recommend to Council that the BSc (Hons) in Optometry is given 'provisional approval' to commence in **September 2018**.

Impact assessment

24. The following implications have been identified:
 - 24.1 GOC's reserves – none;
 - 24.2 GOC budget – planned visits within Education budget;
 - 24.3 Legislation – none;
 - 24.4 Resources – none;
 - 24.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – none;
 - 24.6 Human Rights Act – none;
 - 24.7 Sustainability – none;
 - 24.8 Devolved nations – the GOC carries out its accreditation and quality assurance function in relation to education providers throughout the UK.

Communications

25. The outcomes of all accreditation and quality assurance reviews should be communicated to training providers within a reasonable period and accreditation reports from the GOC visitors and decisions by the Education committee and Council should be clearly published on our website. The GOC policy is currently not to publish reports on provisional approval.

Attachments

Annex one – GOC Visit report for the University of West of England – Jan 2018



University of West of England (UWE), Bristol
GOC – Provisional Approval Accreditation Visit
Proposed BSc (Hons) Optometry Programme
Dates of Visit: 10-11 January 2018

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Appendix 1 - GOC Visit Agenda..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

PART 1**1 Acknowledgements**

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

2 Introduction

This report relates to an initial provisional approval visit to the proposed BSc (Hons) Optometry Programme which took place on 10-11 January 2018.

The Visitor Panel consisted of:

Mrs Sally Powell – Chair

Mr Barry Mitchell – Lay Member

Mr Richard Allen – Optometrist

Dr Julie-Anne Little – Optometrist

Ms Paula Baines – Dispensing Optician / Contact Lens Optician

Mr Nicholas Wilson-Holt – Ophthalmologist

The Panel was also accompanied by Mr Christopher McKendrick, Accreditation and Quality Assurance Officer for the GOC.

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 Core Competencies and requirements.

During the visit, the 2015 GOC Handbook 'Accreditation and Quality Assurance Handbook: Routes to Registration in Optometry' (the Handbook) was used by the Visitor Panel. The Panel conducted their assessments during the visit, applying the criteria and requirements as set out in the Handbook.

2.1 Background

The University of the West of England (UWE) is currently expanding its Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences. The Faculty includes the following departments: Allied Health Professions, Applied Sciences, Health and Social Science, and Nursing and Midwifery. Within the Faculty, the Department of Allied Health Professions seeks to address the potential healthcare needs of expanded eye care services. They have a history of providing both undergraduate and postgraduate education to a large range of professions including Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Paramedic Science, Diagnostic Imaging, Physician Associates and others. They have experience of working with multiple Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), and work closely with NHS and Voluntary, Independent and Private (VIP) partner agencies to provide professional placement opportunities.

The proposed Optometry programme would sit within the Department of Allied Health Professions, which also includes Diagnostic Imaging, Radiotherapy and Oncology, Occupational Therapy, Paramedic Science, Physiotherapy, Physician Associates and Sports Rehabilitation.

The University is seeking GOC approval to deliver a new full time BSc (Hons) Optometry programme.

The GOC received the University's application in May 2016, with the University's aim to begin delivery of this programme in September 2018. They aim to have an intake of 60 students however they have indicated that they plan to take a reduced number of students in the first year of the programme.

11 October 2017 - The Education Committee considered the University's application and supporting documentation and agreed that an accreditation visit should be conducted by a Visitor Panel on 10 and 11 January 2018 to consider the proposed programme, subject to internal validation being granted on 26 October 2017.

26 October 2017 - The University granted the programme approval at its internal validation meeting (Minutes available separately). This event was attended by Sally Powell (Lay Chair) and Kabir Kareem (Accreditation and Quality Assurance Officer) who attended as observers on behalf of the GOC. The Validation Panel imposed two conditions, four commendations and four recommendations. These were:

Conditions:

1. Resubmission of documentation, incorporating the revised learning outcomes for Level 3 modules as discussed at the event; minor corrections identified by the panel and a revised assessment calendar as discussed at the event.
2. Recognising the protected title for Optometrists, the programme team to seek advice from the General Optical Council on whether a default award title is required for graduates who do not obtain 2:2 classification or above.

Recommendations:

1. To consider ways to include an assessed element to the clinical skills assessment.
2. In terms of the assessment strategy, to articulate how research skills are developed and supported leading up to the Dissertation.
3. To consider the assessment strategy in terms of inclusivity and the impact of a dependence on written examinations.
4. To consider and reflect upon the status, content and assessment of the two Level 3 option modules.

Commendations:

The programme team was commended for:

1. Engagement with the Optometry profession through the integration of the Professional, Occupational and Business Studies module.
2. Engagement with stakeholders and the ethos of partnership in the development of the programme, particularly with Optometry providers and the Bristol Eye Hospital.

3. The investment in facilities, resources and community engagement.
4. The drive and enthusiasm to prepare graduates for enhanced services roles through the level 3 option modules.

2.2 Documentation

4.1 Public Protection

1. Student handbook
2. Clinic Handbook
3. Clinical Supervisor information (e.g. job specification, recruitment, training etc.)
4. Clinical Supervisor handbook/guidance
5. Planned procedure for checking students are registered with the GOC
6. Staff: Student ratio
7. Contractual agreements for external placements (e.g. Hospitals)*
8. Clinical governance documents including Health & Safety policy*

4.2 Student Experience

9. Rationale for Staff: Student ratio for both academic and clinical environment
10. Staff CVs or equivalent
11. Equality & Diversity policy and procedures
12. Student timetables
13. Programme handbook/Module guides
14. Information describing the teaching and learning methods, learning tools, virtual learning environment and incorporation of evidence based practice

4.3 Student Assessment

15. Assessment and marking criteria, mapping and timetable
16. Assessment strategy, academic regulations, appeals procedure
17. Student handbook [4.1]
18. Staff handbook
19. Student feedback mechanisms [4.2]

4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

20. Quality Assurance policies and procedures such as:
 - programme and assessment regulation, minutes of internal review/development committees
 - external examiner information including job specification, term of office, recruitment, training, guidance etc.
 - details of how the views of external stakeholders inform the programme design and content
 - agreements/contract with external placement providers [4.1]

4.5 Facilities and Resources

21. Staff workload allocation model
22. Rationale for Staff: Student ratio [4.1/4.2]
23. Staff CVs or equivalent [4.2]
24. Staff development policy and processes (received during the visit)
25. Management plans/reviews of facilities, accommodation, equipment and IT support etc.
26. Full equipment list- that will be purchased
27. Safety policies/procedures for clinical equipment [4.1]

4.6.1 Patient experience

28. Patient Logbooks/portfolios template

4.6.2 Core Competencies

29. Programme/competency mapping
30. Template for tracking competency assessment and achievement
31. Assessment marking criteria

3 Visit Outcomes

The Panel wishes to thank the University for its hospitality and helpfulness throughout the visit.

The Panel was impressed by the extensive stakeholder engagement in the development of the new Programme.

During the visit, the Panel explored the development of the new Programme and considered whether provisional approval could be recommended. The Panel conducted a series of meetings with the staff involved in establishing the new programme including; the Vice-Chancellor and members of the senior team, senior Faculty staff, the Programme Lead and contributing academic staff, professional student administration and learning resource staff and internal quality assurance staff.

The Panel also met with representatives from a range of placements, including the NHS (Bristol Eye Hospital) and both multiple and independent practices, and LOC representatives.

The Panel formed the following conclusions based on the evidence from the documentation and from the meetings conducted.

The Visitor Panel makes the following recommendations to the Education Committee:

1. Provisional approval of the BSc (Hons) Optometry programme at the University of West of England should be granted,
2. approval granted for a yearly intake of 60 students maximum,
3. 16 conditions are imposed,
4. 3 recommendations are made,
5. A GOC panel re-visit takes place before start of the programme in 2018.

The Panel identified a number of areas where further detail is required from the University and their programme partner(s). The Panel takes the view that timely fulfilment of the conditions is required to meet the terms of Provisional Approval. The University is encouraged to keep an open dialogue with the GOC regarding progress and should clearly state where they consider adjustment of due dates is likely to be required.

3.1 Previous Conditions

The Conditions listed below are extracted from the 6 – 7 November 2013

Ref.	Description	Due by	Met/Not met?
	None		

3.2 Previous Recommendations

The Recommendations listed below are extracted from the 7-8 June 2016

Description	Action taken
None	

3.3 Conditions

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.	Condition	Due by
1	As per Appendix E of the GOC Handbook, the University must have appointed a minimum of four full time GOC registered optometrists prior to the enrolment of students onto the programme. Written evidence of the fulfilment of this condition is to be sent to the GOC.	29 June 2018
2	As per section 4.5 of the GOC Handbook, the GOC must be kept regularly updated on the progress of the Old Laundry clinic development. This is to be in the form of a monthly written report to the GOC.	Ongoing
3	As per section 4.5 of the GOC Handbook, the GOC requires a comprehensive written contingency plan with regard to any possible delay to completion of the Old Laundry clinic development.	30 March 2018
4	As per sections 4.1 and 4.5 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with documentary plans for facilities and staffing of the Blackberry Centre clinic development, including evidence of consultation with Bristol Eye Hospital.	1 October 2018
5	As per section 4.1 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with a Memorandum of Understanding (or equivalent) regarding the development of Bristol Eye Hospital satellite clinics at the Blackberry Centre.	31 August 2018

6	As per sections 4.2, 4.6.1 and 4.6.2 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with written evidence of formal agreements with clinical provider(s) of 'abnormal eye conditions' experience for students.	31 August 2018
7	As per section 4.3 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with a single mapping document referencing where all competencies are taught and assessed.	31 May 2018
8	As per section 4.6.2 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with written evidence of clear descriptors for Core Competency achievement indicators and criteria for 'pass / fail' for the first year of the programme.	24 July 2018
9	As per section 4.6.2 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with written evidence of where Ophthalmic Dispensing Core Competencies are taught and assessed.	31 May 2018
10	As per sections 4.1, 4.6.1 and Appendix I of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with written confirmation of the named staff member(s) responsible for Core Competency assessment and associated sign off.	29 June 2018
11	As per section 4.3 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with all the following teaching and assessment materials: Clinical skills one; Anatomy and Physiology; Investigative Techniques; and Vision and Optics (up to teaching week 30 (12 February 2019)).	24 July 2018
12	As per section 4.3 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with all the following teaching and assessment materials: Clinical Skills One (teaching weeks 31 - 46); Anatomy and Physiology - (teaching weeks 31-46); Anterior Eye and Contact Lenses One - (teaching weeks 27- 46); Vision and Optics - (teaching weeks 30 - 40); and Investigative Techniques - (teaching weeks 31 - 35).	30 November 2018
13	As per section 4.4 of the GOC Handbook, the University must confirm in writing to the GOC the appointment of two External Examiners. (see section 7, paragraphs 7,8,9 of this report)	29 June 2018
14	As per sections 3.4 and Appendix F of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with test access to the digital portfolio of Clinical Competence.	31 July 2018
15	As per section 1.4 'Protection of Title' and section 4.6.4, the University must inform the GOC in writing of the title of the degree that will be awarded if a student fails to achieve a 2.2 classification; This should be accompanied by confirmation of fulfilment of requirements for the University's internal validation processes. (see Section 7, paragraph 13 of this report)	28 February 2018 Received as requested
16	As per section 4.5 of the GOC Handbook, the University must provide the GOC with evidence that they have sufficient and appropriate equipment for the programme, prior to the enrolment of students.	31 July 2018

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 appoint a suitable individual who has relevant and appropriate experience in Ophthalmic Dispensing.
2	To consider additional hand washing facilities in the Old Laundry clinical teaching space.
3	To review the balance of practice-based learning placements, with a view to including practical dispensing as part of the student experience.

PART 2**4 Public Protection**

1. The Panel was assured, based on the verbal and documentary evidence made available, that all students on the Programme will be required to register with the GOC.
2. The Panel was satisfied, that during the admissions process, all students will be required to undergo all relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. The DBS check will be one part of a larger process to evaluate student's suitability to be admitted onto the Programme.
3. The Panel was assured that students will not be allowed to undertake placements until all relevant DBS, Occupational Health checks are completed and registration with the GOC is verified.
4. The Panel was satisfied that there was sufficient progress on the development of the Programme Handbook detailing the Programme's professional requirements.
5. The Programme Team will be finalising the Programme Handbook prior to students enrolling onto the Programme.
6. The Programme Handbook will be provided to students upon successful enrolment onto the Programme.
7. The Programme Handbook will include information on: Key Staff Details; Programme Aims; Modular Structure; Attendance Requirements; Professional Standards; Uniform Policy; Clinical Placements; Marking Criteria; and Advice and Support.

8. The Panel noted that the Programme Handbook includes the GOC's 'Standards for Optical Students'. Students will need to be informed of the requirement to abide by these GOC standards whilst they are registered and studying.
9. The Programme is looking to recruit students via Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) 'clearing', subject to provisional approval being granted by the GOC Education Committee and ratified by the GOC Council.
10. The Programme Team anticipate that the first cohort of students will commence in September 2018.
11. The University is planning to support the recruitment strategy for the Programme using a wide range of local and national social media and advertising mediums.
12. The Panel noted that admissions to the Programme will be controlled by the centralised University Admissions Department. This is standard for all Programmes and reportedly works well for all the Health and Allied Health Programmes offered by the University.
13. The Programme Team will be heavily involved during the recruitment of the first cohort of students. After the first cohort of students have been successfully recruited to the Programme a standard policy on recruitment of Optometry students will be developed.
14. The centralised University Admissions Department will become the lead in the decision making process, but will still work closely with the Programme Team to shortlist applicants.
15. Students will be required to attend an interview prior to any formal offer.
16. It is expected that a majority of interviews will be conducted face-to-face, but Skype may be used if required.
17. A typical offer to the Programme will be three A-Levels at grade AAB, two of which would normally be in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. This will be equivalent to 136 UCAS tariff points.
18. In addition, applicants will be required to have at least five GCSEs, including English Language, Mathematics and a Science at grade 5 or above.
19. As part of the University's widening participation policy, the Programme may consider direct and relevant Optometry experience, as well as academic qualifications.
20. The Panel was informed that a generic Foundation Degree is offered to students who do not meet the academic requirements of some professional Programmes.

21. After successful completion of the Foundation Degree, students are guaranteed consideration for a place on their chosen professional programme that allows entry via this route.
22. It was suggested by the Programme Lead that the generic Foundation Degree may be an acceptable route into the Programme.
23. The Panel was informed that the Programme Team are in discussions with Bristol Eye Hospital to secure the hospital-based 'Abnormal Eye Conditions' placement requirement.
24. The discussions so far have been positive and it is understood that contracts should be signed and agreed prior to students starting the Programme.
25. Additionally, early discussions have also taken place with other regional providers for Abnormal Eye Conditions placements to be undertaken.
26. The Panel was informed that students will be in Practice placement during years one and two of the Programme.
27. There will be a total of 14 weeks of Practice Placement spread out over the three years of the Programme.
28. A workplace agreement between the Programme and Practice Providers has been developed. At the time of the visit, 9 Placement Providers had signed the contracts.
29. It is currently planned that students will be placed individually with each provider, and during hospital and specialist clinics, students will attend in small groups. The Panel will seek an update on this prior to its revisit to the University.
30. A risk assessment has been completed for all clinical practices in year one and wider health and safety policies are in place across both the Faculty and University.
31. The Programme would like to recruit up to 60 students per year. However, it is recognised by the Programme Team and Placement providers that the first cohort numbers are likely to be significantly lower.
32. It is anticipated that the first cohort to the Programme will attract up to 30 students, a figure the Programme Team, Vice Chancellor and Placement Providers strongly suggested was a realistic target in terms of a new Programme still under development, given the initial resourcing commitments required.
33. Currently the Programme has two full time Optometry staff appointed with one at a senior level. The Panel had sight of a job advertisement for two additional Optometry qualified staff to meet the requirements of the Handbook.

34. The Panel also has sight of a job description for a Healthcare Technician (Allied Health Professions) to help plan and organise the practical elements of the Programme and prepare equipment and consumable items for case scenario and/or clinical skills taught sessions.
35. Based on the information available, the Panel was satisfied that there will be an appropriate staff resourcing level to manage the first cohort planned to be enrolled on the Programme.

5 Student Experience

1. As the Programme is still under development, and no GOC provisional approval has yet been ratified, there are no students currently enrolled onto the Programme.
2. The Panel was informed that the Programme will be recruiting through UCAS clearing for the first year cohort.
3. The Panel was provided with evidence of a detailed equality and diversity policy that all staff, students, visitors, and Placement Providers will be expected to abide by.
4. The Panel was provided with document copies of all Module Handbooks for the first year of the proposed Optometry Programme, these included: Anatomy and Physiology; Anterior Eye and Contact Lenses 1; Clinical Skills 1; Investigative Techniques; and Vision and Optics.
5. Overall, the Panel was satisfied at the level of detail included in these handbooks, including planned assignment and assessment briefs, and that they were appropriate for the Programme level.
6. The Panel was informed that students will have access to an integrated learning technology experience via the University's portal 'MyUWE', where they will be able to access personalised information and systems based on their enrolment and Programme.
7. From MyUWE portal, students will be able to access Blackboard Learn, the virtual learning environment (VLE) which will house the bespoke module resources and a range of learning materials throughout the Programme duration.
8. Through these module portals, students can access a range of interactive resources designed to support module learning and assessment.
9. Online learning packages will include discussion boards, audio files and quizzes that will provide opportunities for learning, formative assessment, and feedback.

10. The Panel was provided with a tour of the University's VLE system, however, noted that no bespoke material had yet been designed for the Programme.
11. The VLE / IT team reportedly take a collaborative approach when designing specific Programme material and will work closely with the Programme Team on adapting the proposed module content to be accessible and interactive.
12. The VLE / IT team explained to the Panel that they have capacity to design the Programme VLE and are aware that this will take a few months.
13. The Programme is planning to use a dedicated online e-portfolio via a system called PebblePad to record all aspects of student progression and Core Competency sign-offs.
14. Students will be able to access their e-portfolio onsite at the University and remotely. Students will be able to work while they are offline and upload their work to PebblePad whenever they have online/internet access.
15. The Programme Team will create 'workflows' on the e-portfolio system so that students' submissions get routed to Practice Providers, supervisors and tutors as and when appropriate.
16. There are currently no National Student Survey (NSS) scores as the Programme is not established.
17. The Programme team will be obtaining feedback from students at the end of each module, and once analysed, this will shape the future structure of the Programme.
18. The Panel noted that the design of the Programme had been influenced by the local and national optometry community. The Programme Lead explained that this is part of the reason why the placements for the Programme have been integrated from year one.
19. At University level, students will receive access to online resources such as online textbooks and academic journals.
20. The library will provide learning support such as managing academic references and improving learning, writing and research skills.
21. Students will also be able to access help with mathematical, numerical and/or statistical problems. Students will be able to access 'espressoMaths' sessions, where staff will provide advice or signpost to online learning resources.
22. The Panel was presented with documentary evidence that the Programme will meet the minimum student: staff ratio of 17:1.
23. For the initial cohort (regardless of the number of students recruited), the Programme will have four full time, or full time equivalent, GOC registered, optometric trained staff

delivering the Programme. The Panel also noted that there will be one dedicated technician.

24. The Panel was informed by the Programme Lead that for every subsequent cohort, recruitment of staff will follow the student: staff ratio 17:1 requirement as set out in the Handbook; and will ensure that only 30% of the work force are part-time hourly.
25. The Clinical Supervision (student: staff) ratio for years one and two, where students will be practising on their peers, will be 8:1 for most classes. However, if students are practising mildly invasive techniques, such as contact lens insertion and removal, the ratio will be 4:1.
26. For the public patient clinic in year three, students will be supervised on a 3:1 basis for primary care clinics (where students are working on a patient alone).
27. For contact lens clinics in year 3, students are able to work in pairs and so the supervision ratio will be 6:1.
28. For specialist clinics such as binocular vision/ paediatrics, low vision and dispensing, supervisors can work with a larger group of students on one patient (with consent).
29. As part of the curriculum, Clinical Placements will be embedded over all three years of the Programme. All Practice Placements will be in a variety of healthcare settings across Bristol.
30. Students will be required to complete learning outcomes whilst on placements and these will be connected to the students Portfolio of Clinical Competence.
31. It will be the student's responsibility to complete the learning outcomes in collaboration with the Placement Provider.
32. Promotion of Inter-Professional Education (IPE) is a priority for the Programme. It is hoped IPE will foster an improved understanding of the different medical disciplines in post-qualification practice.
33. The Panel noted that the Spectacle Dispensing Experience could be better integrated into the Programme design, specifically where the practical experience will be obtained.
34. The Panel was satisfied, based on the documentation available, that the range of teaching methods that will be employed by the Programme will meet the requirements set out in the Handbook.

6 Student Assessment

1. The Programme will provide a range of summative assessment methods including: written assignments, portfolios, exams, presentation, Oral Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs), Structured Oral and Practical Examination (SOPE), and a project report.
2. Formative assessment opportunities will be provided via classroom and online interactions with tutors and peers, tutor feedback on draft work, Academic Personal Tutor (APT) support, supervised skills practice, simulation and feedback both in-class and during Practice Placement opportunities, and placement provider (PP) feedback.
3. In year one, students will be required to complete the following modules: Vision & Optics, Anatomy & Physiology, Clinical Skills One, Investigative Techniques and Anterior Eye & Contact Lenses One. Overall, students should obtain skills in clinical optometric techniques.
4. In year two, students will be required to complete the following modules: Clinical Skills Two, Enhanced Clinical Skills, Anterior Eye & Contact Lenses Two, Professional, Occupational & Business Studies, Binocular Vision and Pharmacology & Therapeutics One. Overall, students should obtain skills in clinical optometric routine.
5. In year three, students will be required to cover the following modules: Research (dissertation), Posterior Eye, Pharmacology & Therapeutics Two, Clinical Skills Three and a choice of either Advanced Glaucoma or Medical Retina Studies. The Panel understood that this choice might be reviewed as both subjects were beneficial to students. Students will also obtain primary care, contact lens and specialist patient clinical experience throughout year 3.
6. The University intends to operate an extended teaching year for the BSc Optometry programme. This will be similar to other health-related programmes of study.
7. Year One will start at the main University start date (17th September 2018) enabling students to attend course induction and the University Welcome Fair. Year one will finish teaching in June with assessment periods in January and April/May. A resit period is offered in July, allowing Assessment Boards to meet during students' August vacation. Results will therefore be available to inform progression decisions prior to the start of Year 2 studies.

8. Year Two will start 2 weeks earlier than the main university start date, and has a similar design with an extended teaching year, two assessment periods and a resit opportunity timed to inform progression to Year 3.
9. Year Three will start early (as per Year Two) but will end teaching in April to allow for completion of the dissertation and specialised option modules, and to allow students to enter their pre-registration period.
10. The Programme assessment framework proposes to mix theory and practice to provide students with opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical and problem solving skills.
11. The Panel were advised that the Programme follows the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education.
12. The Panel were advised that the Programme will be subject to regular reviews specifically focused on the effectiveness of assessment technique as per QAA Chapter B6, Assessment of Students.
13. Students will be provided with assessment principles, procedures and processes for each individual module taught on the Programme.
14. The Programme Lead advised that each module assessment will have clear marking criteria. Additionally, generic staff guidance will be made available via the UWE Intranet 'Staff Administration Manual'.
15. Students will be provided with individualised feedback at each assessment opportunity. Feedback will be provided electronically through the students' secure VLE portals.
16. Students will be provided with their marking and detailed feedback within 20 working days.
17. Students will be able seek further assessment feedback from the relevant module leader, markers, and their Academic Personal Tutors.
18. The Programme Lead reported that the assessment process has been designed to allow students to demonstrate competence in the key areas of their professional and personal development.
19. The Programme will use summative assessments to provide opportunities for students to develop and implement skills learnt from Practice Placements.
20. The Programme has assessment procedures that take account of the educational and training requirements for entry to clinical practice in a variety of optometric environments.

21. The Programme has incorporated a range of teaching and learning settings and practices that are relevant to the needs of the subject and student.
22. The Panel were informed that students' abilities to manage clinical situations and problems will involve acquisition and application of clinical skills, supported by a robust theoretical knowledge base. This can be evaluated at a later stage by assessment results and student feedback.
23. The Programme Lead explained to the Panel that a distinctive approach to teaching and assessment had been developed to reflect the changing landscape of the industry.
24. Theoretical and clinical instruction will be fully integrated into the Programme, and the weighting between the two will be kept under review.
25. Students will be provided with the opportunity to reflect on all practical modules to aid their personal development.
26. All modules will require to be passed in order to progress from one stage of the Programme to the next. The minimum pass mark will be 40%.
27. The required pass mark of 40% does not supersede the GOC requirement of achievement of a 2:2 degree to be able to enter the Scheme for Registration.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The Programme has been designed to comply with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education subject benchmark statement for Optometry. As such, core elements of the Programme are dictated by the General Optical Council (GOC) requirements.
2. The University's Academic Regulations will assure the academic standards to the Programme by ensuring learners are treated consistently and equitably.
3. The Programme Quality Assurance function is managed through the University's Quality Management and Enhancement Framework (QMEF), which set out the University's procedures for the approval and enhancement of academic provision, governed by the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
4. Annual monitoring is a requirement of QMEF and is undertaken at module, programme and departmental levels with the aim of identifying and disseminating features of best practice and to manage areas requiring development.

5. The QMEF is concerned with the assurance of academic standards; quality and enhancement through curriculum design; approval; annual monitoring; evaluation and periodic curriculum review.
6. The Programme has been developed with a wide range of stakeholder participation. In addition, representation of professional services such as Library, Careers and Student Services, including the Professional Practice Office (PPO) have been sought during the Programme development process.
7. Feedback from learners and practice providers will be vital to module and Programme quality monitoring and evaluation. Following completion of a module, formal feedback will be collated through anonymous questionnaires.
8. The Programme will be encouraging the development of student representatives on the Programme, with at least one representative for every cohort.
9. Student representatives will be members of relevant Quality Management and Enhancement related committees at Faculty, Department and University level.
10. The Programme will have Student Representative / Staff Forums to discuss any issues related to the learner experience within the control or remit of the Programme.
11. The Programme is in the process of appointing two optometry qualified External Examiners. The external examining system is a key part of the internal quality assurance of the Programme.
12. The role of the External Examiners will be to contribute to the on-going review of modules and the Programme as a whole to ensure that academic standards are comparable to similar awards at other universities.
13. The External Examiners will also contribute to the feedback and assessments processes, ensuring they are fair and conducted appropriately.
14. To ensure quality assurance and consistency with Practice Providers, a workplace agreement has been developed for the first and second year Programme placements. This agreement is currently with the Practice Providers and it is expected that these will be signed prior to the start of the Programme.
15. During the Programme design, there has been high-level consultation with the profession and input from local external consultants. As a result a University- led Optometry Project Board was created.

16. Professionals and consultants have attended the Optometry Project Board meetings to input their thoughts regarding taught material and placements, and have liaised with the Project Board throughout the Programme design process.
17. Representatives include the Local Optometric Committee for Avon, optometrists and ophthalmologists from Bristol Eye Hospital, independent local optometrists, and industry leads from multiples.
18. These representatives have been able to read the developed module specifications and input into the Programme structure, including module types, competencies signed off, and the type of assessments used.
19. The Programme has taken all comments into consideration and modules have been designed and / or amended accordingly.
20. Support facilities, such as library services have been involved in the design of the Programme from an early stage ensuring that appropriate and Programme specific resources will be made available to students.
21. During the validation event held on 26 October 2017 the Validation Panel approved the Programme for delivery from September 2018 with 2 conditions and 4 recommendations. There were also 4 commendations.
22. The Panel was informed that there is one outstanding condition to be met (the assignation of an alternative award title for students who do not achieve a 2.2 classification) as set out by the Validation Panel. The GOC panel has set condition 15 to address full compliance with the internal validation process.

8 Accommodation and Resources

1. Currently, Dr Rebekah Stevens is the Programme Lead and Dr Mary-Ann Sherratt has recently been appointed as the Clinical Lead.
2. At the time of the visit, the Panel noted that two advertisements were live for a two Senior Lecturers to join the Programme.
3. The Programme Lead informed the Panel that a dedicated Programme technician will be recruited in early in 2018.
4. It was noted by the Panel that the recruitment plan suggests that more staff will be recruited as the Programme develops and as before subsequent cohorts enrol to ensure that Programme remains compatible with Appendix E of the Handbook.

5. The Panel noted that there are no current plans to recruit a dedicated Dispensing Optician although the recruitment of such individual would potentially enhance the students learning experience.
6. The Panel suggested that if an appropriately experienced and qualified Dispensing Optician applied for one of the senior lecturer roles, they would be considered as an addition to the minimum 4 full time Optometrists required.
7. The Faculty of Health and Applied Sciences has secured approval from the University's Master Planning Group to develop the Programme space on the Glenside Campus.
8. The Panel noted that two spaces are in the process of being developed to accommodate the Programme.
9. Part of the Old Laundry space, which was a former NHS industrial laundry facility, has been allocated for dedicated Optometry training facilities, and is due to be completed for September 2018.
10. Approximately 40% of the Old Laundry space will be dedicated to the Programme.
11. The Old Laundry development will include the following dedicated Optometry facilities:
16 x examination bays; optics laboratory; research / project space; problem based learning spaces; flexible learning spaces; practical spaces; break out spaces; and a basement for the storage of non-front line equipment.
12. The Panel noted that the design specifications looked as if they would meet the requirements of the GOC Handbook, although the Panel was concerned that hand wash facilities were not being installed in each bay.
13. The required refurbishment work to the Blackberry Centre is expected to begin in late 2018 or early 2019 to create a purpose built third year clinic environment. The business case is being prepared for sign off by the University Directorate.
14. The Blackberry Centre clinic will have over 15 private consultation spaces and a dedicated ophthalmic dispensary.
15. The Panel was informed that the Blackberry Centre is not expected to make money, but it is expected to break even after a period of initial investment. The Programme Lead stated that the clinic will be used for teaching and community resource purposes.
16. The Programme Lead confirmed to the Panel that the required equipment for years one and two of the Programme has been agreed financially and ordered. The equipment will be in place before September 2018.

17. The Programme Lead and Facilities Team are confident that the development of the Old Laundry space will be completed prior to the proposed start of the Programme.
18. Should the Old Laundry space not be ready prior to the proposed start of the Programme, a contingency space has been identified at the 'Exhibition and Conference Centre' not far from Glenside Campus.
19. There is currently a few optometry texts in the library at present; and some of the core reading journals are also currently available.
20. The required reading lists have been created for each module of the Programme and core texts have been ordered by the library team ready for September 2018.
21. Glenside Campus, as a whole, is in the process of benefiting from a major capital works investment programme, creating new simulation environments for Allied Healthcare Programmes, dedicated student hubs and overall enhancement to the quality of the classrooms, as well as improved Wi-Fi access and wellbeing services.
22. The Panel was informed, that once opened, the Blackberry Centre clinic may be used to as a satellite clinic to supplement local NHS resources.
23. This proposal is still in early stages of development. It was suggested by the Programme Lead that any such development would be of benefit to the student learning experience.
24. It is hoped that students that study at UWE will be inclined to work and practice within the local area once qualified. It is hoped this ideology will be bolstered by having Practice Placements early in the Programme.
25. It was suggested by the Programme Team that over 70% of graduates from the Allied Health Programmes at UWE remain within 40 miles of the geographical area.
26. The Panel was satisfied, based on the mixture of verbal and documentary evidence available to them, that the proposed accommodation and resources will meet the Programme requirements.

9 Professional Requirements

1. The Panel was satisfied that the current mapping of Core Competencies is appropriate and that the module specifications meet the requirements detailed by the GOC at Stage 1.
2. The Panel noted that there is a well drafted Supervisors Handbook, detailing what constitutes a safe or unsafe patient episode.

3. The Panel was satisfied, given the current recruitment plan, that students will be adequately supervised throughout the duration of the Programme.
4. The Programme Lead informed the Panel that Supervisors will be required to undertake training prior to undertaking supervision of students.
5. Supervisors will be encouraged to peer review their marking and discuss the standardisation and benchmarking of clinic marking, initially in conjunction with the Programme Lead.
6. The Panel was informed that the student: staff ratio will vary between the different clinic types.
7. For a Primary Care session, Supervisors will oversee a maximum of three students working alone with three patients.
8. For Contact Lenses and Dispensing, Supervisors will oversee eight students working in pairs on four patients.
9. For specialist clinics such as low vision, binocular vision and paediatrics, Supervisors will oversee a group of students, up to eight, working with one patient.
10. It is expected that students use an electronic record system for noting their clinical records and that full training will be given to Supervisors on this.
11. Students will be timed, and prompted early on in the year, to move onto other tests if they are taking too long on one technique.
12. Students will be marked on their communication, Core Competency requirement, and their ability to carry out the various techniques.
13. It is proposed that if the student examines a patient and misses a sight or life threatening condition, then this is automatically classified as an unsafe episode and recorded appropriately.
14. Students will be required to keep a comprehensive portfolio of all patient episodes and Core Competencies.
15. Students will be required to take responsibility for the sign off of their Core Competencies and to keep track of their patient episodes.
16. The Programme is planning to initially recruit patients for the clinic from the pool of university staff and students.
17. The Programme is confident that it will be able to attract patients to register from the local community as the clinic is located in a residential area.

18. The Programme hopes to attract patients with a diverse range of ocular conditions in order to satisfy the range of conditions students are expected to observe during training at Stage 1.
19. The clinic, once opened, will offer optometry services year round. The Panel noted that the clinic will be staffed accordingly for year round services.
20. The Panel was provided with evidence of a UWE placement agreement that has been given to Bristol Eye Hospital for the Abnormal Eye Conditions placement, although final contracts are still to be signed.

10 DEFINITIONS

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

GOC: General Optical Council

University: University of West England (UWE), Bristol

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

Programme(s): Unless otherwise specified, this refers to the BSc in Optometry

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. This refers to Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

* Programme Lead and Placement Lead.

11 Appendix 1 – Visit Agenda

Day 1: 10 January 2018

Time	Activity
08.45-09.00	Arrival of GOC panel
09.30-11.30 <i>With a coffee break at 10.30</i>	Meeting with Head of Department and Programme Lead and University Quality Assurance/ Governance teams (including a Presentation from the Programme Team) <i>* to give a detailed overview of the programme to include course changes since application, future plans, challenges, development</i>
11.30 - 13.00	GOC Panel private meeting with working lunch at 12.00
13.00 – 13.30	Tour of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) <i>*Senior IT support and staff /leads that will contribute towards module creation</i>
13.30-14.30	Tour of facilities Tour of facilities: staff guides should be available
14.30 – 15.00	Refreshment Break
15.00 – 16.00	Meeting with additional support <i>Professional Practice Lead, Faculty Placement Manager, External Promotion and Liaison Lead, Administration Lead (or equivalent roles)</i>
16.00 - 17.00	GOC Panel private meeting until 17.00
17.00	Close

Day 2: 11 January 2018

Time	Activity
8.45 - 9.00	Arrival of GOC visitor panel
09.30 - 10.00	Meeting with Vice Chancellor (<i>or equivalent role</i>)
10.00-10.45	Private session GOC panel: prepare questions for academic staff
10.45 - 11.45	Meeting with academic staff <i>*Meeting to include all academic staff involved in the programme. The head of department <u>should not</u> attend this meeting</i>
11.45 - 12.15	– Meeting with external providers <i>*Placement providers (Specsavers, Bristol Eye Hospital and independent providers)</i>
12.15 - 12.45	- Private working lunch GOC panel: discuss meetings with Vice Chancellor and academic staff
12.45 - 17.00	– Private session GOC panel: <i>A senior programme staff member should be available for clarification of any outstanding issues</i>
17.00 -17.30	Final meeting The chair will give informal feedback to the head of department, programme leader and SMT
17.30	Close – GOC depart