

**General Optical Council**  
**Annual Monitoring & Reporting – 2017/18**  
**Sector Report**  
**August 2019**

## **Annual Monitoring and Reporting Sector Report 2017/18**

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## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This year's annual monitoring and reporting (AMR) process has identified several areas of strength in the optical education sector, in particular amongst optometry programmes. Our analysis has also identified a number of systemic risks to the sector that require careful management by the General Optical Council (GOC).
- 1.2. The amount of information submitted was variable for both the narrative questions (programme changes, key events and risk analysis) and the quantitative data requested (student admission, progression and attainment) in respect of the programmes.
- 1.3. Optometry (OO) programmes reported a high ratio of applications to admissions and strong academic qualifications (average offer) amongst prospective students. They also reported high levels of student progression and attainment. Ophthalmic dispensing (DO) programmes reported high levels of student progression. National Student Survey (NSS) scores for OO and DO programmes outperform the national average.
- 1.4. Independent prescribing (IP) and contact lens optician (CLO) programmes provided limited comparable information in this year's process.
- 1.5. Our analysis of the student performance and progression data submitted was inconclusive across the different elements of the routes to registration. This has raised concerns regarding the comparability and compatibility of pass rate data reported across the routes to registration delivered by more than one provider.
- 1.6. Compliance with GOC conditions is generally good, based on the information submitted.
- 1.7. Several key risks have been identified within the optical education sector. These include:
  - 1.7.1. risk management and risk reporting;
  - 1.7.2. data and information management;
  - 1.7.3. sustainability of student numbers;
  - 1.7.4. resourcing and investment, including staffing; and
  - 1.7.5. progression and attainment data comparability across programmes and the routes to registration.

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The GOC (also referred to as “we” in this document) are required to “keep informed of the nature of the instruction given by any approved training establishment to persons training as optometrists or dispensing opticians and of the assessments on the results of which approved qualifications are granted”, under s.13(1) Opticians Act 1989. Qualifications leading to a registrable therapeutic / independent prescribing (IP) or contact lens optician (CLO) specialism are also included within the GOC’s regulatory scope.
- 2.2. In executing this duty, we regulate and quality assure all elements of a ‘route to registration’. The term ‘route to registration’ describes all elements of training, learning and assessment that a provider(s) must deliver for its students to meet the GOC’s requirements, and to enable students to be eligible to register with the GOC as an optometrist (OO) or dispensing optician (DO), or with an IP or CLO specialty, upon successful completion of their training and assessment. A route to registration must be comprised of the following elements:
  - 2.2.1. an academic qualification (academic study and practical experience);
  - 2.2.2. practice-based learning (supervised external placement(s)); and
  - 2.2.3. qualifying assessments.
- 2.3. A route to registration may be delivered by one or more provider. For example, a student may study for an academic award at a university or college, followed by undertaking practice-based learning and / or qualifying assessments with a different provider, typically an awarding body. There are also alternative models such as integrated models whereby one provider is responsible for the student’s progression all the way through to their final assessments where they become eligible to apply to join the GOC fully-qualified register or specialty register.
- 2.4. As part of our approval and quality assurance (A&QA) of education establishments and qualifications (referred to as ‘providers’ and ‘programmes’ respectively in this report), all providers are required to demonstrate how their programme(s) satisfy our requirements, as currently listed in our handbooks.
- 2.5. We seek assurance from providers in a number of ways, including quality assurance visits, notification of reportable events and changes to programmes, conditions management, and the annual compulsory AMR submission.
- 2.6. Failure by a programme to submit an AMR form on time, or submitting incomplete or inaccurate data, is treated very seriously, and may result in us undertaking additional quality assurance activities in relation to that programme. This may include actions that may ultimately lead to a withdrawal of GOC approval for a programme.

### **3. Annual Monitoring and Reporting process**

- 3.1. Providers were required to report information pertaining primarily to the period 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018.
- 3.2. All approved programmes – awarding body, OO, DO, IP and CLO programmes – were required to complete and submit a standard form. The form requested information relating to programme changes, programme delivery (including risks to delivery), GOC conditions, and lessons learned and good practice.
- 3.3. We issued AMR forms to providers on 3 October 2018. Providers were required to submit a completed form by 7 January 2019. The period from 3 October 2018 – 7 January 2019 is referred to as the ‘reporting period’.
- 3.4. Every AMR return must be signed by a ‘Responsible Officer’. The Responsible Officer is a member of staff with sufficient authority to represent and bind the institution and bears ultimate responsibility for the information submitted in the AMR form. The Responsible Officer must only sign off the form when they are satisfied that the responses submitted give a true and fair account of the programme.
- 3.5. Following the end of the reporting period, we analysed the information to identify:
  - 3.5.1. updates regarding key events and changes at individual programmes;
  - 3.5.2. current risks and issues relating to individual programmes;
  - 3.5.3. progress made against conditions;
  - 3.5.4. themes, strengths and risks within the optical education sector;
  - 3.5.5. examples of good practice and lessons learnt within the sector; and
  - 3.5.6. ways in which the GOC’s approval and quality assurance activities could be further developed.
- 3.6. This sector report provides a high-level summary of the outcomes of the 2017/18 AMR process in order to identify key themes.
- 3.7. In addition to this report, we have produced a short report for each programme (referred to as a ‘programme report’) to provide specific feedback regarding the programme’s submission.
- 3.8. The analysis and outcomes are based upon the information and data as calculated and submitted by the programmes. We have not sought to externally verify the information submitted.
- 3.9. We will consider feedback from stakeholders regarding the 2017/18 AMR process and use this to help refine the AMR process for 2018/19 and subsequent years. We seek to develop our data capabilities to enable effective oversight and assurance of optical education programmes, which will include standardising the data submitted to allow effective comparison between programmes. At present, we have analysed the data submitted by programmes to identify trends and undertake statistical analysis.
- 3.10. The publication of this report closes the 2017/18 AMR process.

## **4. Themes**

- 4.1. Compliance with this year's AMR process was very good, with 27 (87.10%) returns submitted by the 7 January 2019 deadline, and all returns received by 21 January 2019. Responses to additional queries were generally prompt. No significant compliance breaches occurred.

### **Student applications, progression and attainment**

- 4.2. Academic (non-awarding body) programmes appear to have high rates of student progression and student attainment. For those programmes offering honours degrees, performance in the National Student Survey (NSS) is good. OO and DO programmes' average scores across all NSS categories exceeded both the national average and the average for 'Subjects Allied with Medicine' (as defined by Unistats).
- 4.3. OO programmes have reported robust application and entry figures, and good student progression and attainment. DO programmes also demonstrate good student progression.
- 4.4. IP and CLO programmes provided limited information in this year's process regarding applications, progression and attainment.
- 4.5. Accreditation / recognition of prior learning (RPL) has been used at a minority of programmes in the reporting period. Thirteen programmes reported applying RPL in the period, most of which were used for a small number of applications.
- 4.6. There was no material difference in the proportion of applications to admissions or the average UCAS tariff points (equivalent) offer between provisionally approved and fully approved programmes. There was generally no material difference in student progression between provisionally approved and fully approved programmes.

### **Student numbers**

- 4.7. Student numbers were identified by programmes as an area of risk to the optical education sector. Whilst OO programmes reported good student application numbers, several DO programmes identified low student numbers as a risk to the sustainability of the programme, citing a range of factors including new optometry provision and Brexit.
- 4.8. Student numbers for programmes with a GOC student number cap are generally below that cap.

### **Resourcing and investment**

- 4.9. Resourcing of programmes, in terms of staffing, accommodation and clinical equipment, has been highlighted as a significant risk for several programmes. Difficulties in recruiting, retaining and replacing staff appears to present a particularly high risk to DO programmes. External factors, such as Brexit and the outcome of the Augar Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, have the potential to exacerbate this risk.

## **Risk and information management**

4.10. Although guidance notes for completing the AMR form were published, the amount of information submitted was variable. This was particularly notable for narrative questions (programme changes, key events and risk analysis).

4.11. There was also variance in the amount of data submitted regarding the admission, progression, attainment and number of students on programmes.

## **Conditions**

4.12. Compliance with GOC conditions is generally good, based on the information submitted.

## **Student progression and attainment data**

4.13. There were differences in how student attainment has been measured and reported across different programmes, in particular between 'academic' programmes and 'awarding body' programmes. The differences in how attainment has been calculated has meant that we are unable to accurately capture student progression through the different elements of a route to registration (other than for the fully integrated (single provider) routes to registration).

4.14. The different methodologies used means that a comparison of student attainment between 'academic' and 'awarding body' programme would not accurately reflect student attainment at each stage of a route to registration. This presents an issue as there is a lack of comparability of student attainment data within a route to registration, where that route to registration is delivered by more than one provider.

## **5. Recommendations & actions**

5.1. We will:

- 5.1.1. continue to monitor risk to programmes – including student progression and student attainment – through our existing quality assurance activities;
- 5.1.2. scrutinise any unmet conditions and take appropriate action;
- 5.1.3. consider taking additional steps across all programmes to gain greater assurance over risk management, quality assurance and governance (including the availability and management of data) of programmes;
- 5.1.4. consider taking additional steps to obtain greater assurance in relation to specific risks identified within this report, such as student numbers, staffing and investment for programmes;
- 5.1.5. request historic examination data relating to the awarding body programmes to assess its comparability across the rest of the route to registration;
- 5.1.6. review how the 2017/18 AMR reporting process has operated and seek feedback from key stakeholders (including programmes). Based on this, we will make appropriate refinements and enhancements for the 2018/19 AMR process; and

5.1.7. use the information obtained in the AMR to contribute to our Education Strategic Review.

## **6. Programme findings**

Set out below is a summary of our findings for each programme type, as follows:

- Optometry
- Independent prescribing
- Ophthalmic dispensing
- Contact lens opticians
- Awarding bodies (CLO and DO)
- Awarding bodies (IP and OO)

# Optometry

Unless otherwise indicated, the comments in this section relate to all optometry (OO) programmes other than the optometry awarding body programme.

## 1. Themes

- 1.1. Overall, the information submitted indicates good performance amongst optometry programmes in a number of metrics. No significant systemic risks have been identified.
- 1.2. Applications for OO programmes are buoyant, although the number of places on offer varies considerably.
- 1.3. In general, student progression through OO programmes is high. Student attainment is very high, with an average of 96.94% of students obtaining a 2.2 or better in the reporting period.

## 2. Key data – Optometry programmes

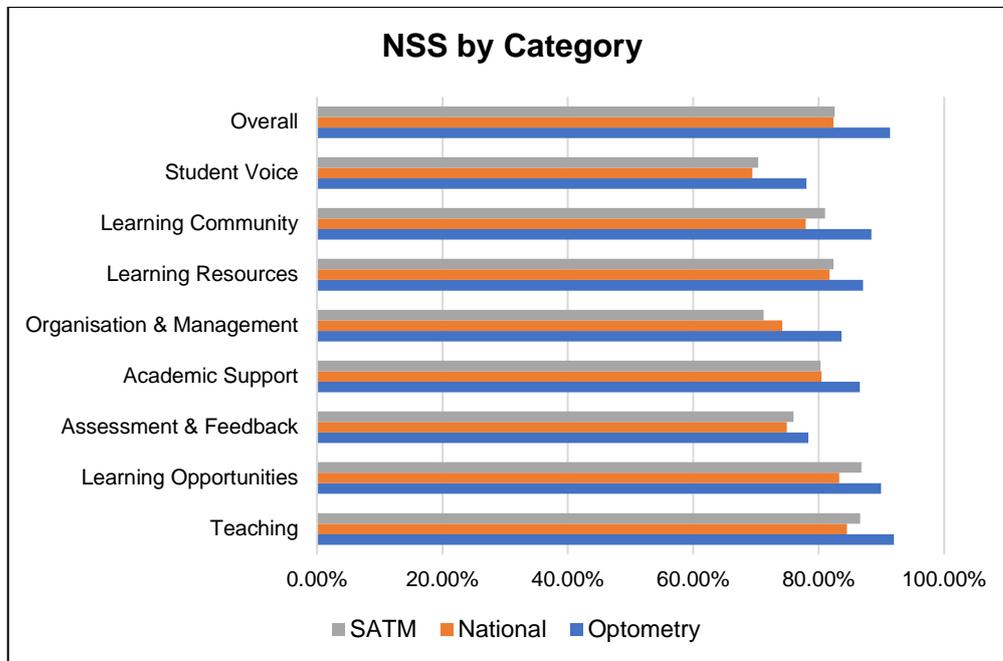
Metric	Lowest	Average	Highest
Applicants admitted	4.05%	20.12%	64.58%
Average UCAS points offer	110.00	146.06	196.00
First year progression	65.00%	89.23%	100%
Progression to following year	76.96%	89.88%	98.00%
Successful completion	87.00%	96.88%	100%
Degree – 2:2 or better	85.70%	96.94%	100%

## 3. Observations

- 3.1. In the reporting period, OO programmes admitted an average of 20.12% of applicants. This compares with an average of 51.44% for all optical programmes covered by this year's AMR process. However, there is significant variance in the number of students admitted (ranging from 9 to 156 students).
- 3.2. The average academic offer made by OO programmes to prospective students is 146.06 UCAS tariff points (equivalent), which roughly equates to AAA at A-Level. The range is from 110 UCAS points (c. BBC at A-Level) to 196 UCAS points (c. AAAA at A-Level). This compares with an average of 128.51 UCAS points for all optical programmes making a UCAS (equivalent) offer. There appears to be a weak correlation between the admissions percentage and average UCAS offer.
- 3.3. An average of 89.88% of students progressed to the following year of the programme. An average of 96.88% of students successfully completed the programme in the reporting period. There is a low variance for these two categories.
- 3.4. An average of 96.94% of students obtained a 2.2 or better in the reporting period, with an average of 1.27% of students failing the programme. This is consistent

across all OO programmes, with a low variance. There does not appear to be any correlation between the average UCAS offer and student attainment.

- 3.5. By category<sup>1</sup>, the OO average score in the National Student Survey (NSS) is above both the national average and the average for ‘Subjects Allied to Medicine’ (SATM), which includes OO programmes. The averages by category are illustrated in the chart below.



- 3.6. OO programmes perform particularly well in the NSS in relation to teaching, academic support, organisation and management, learning community and student voice, as well as on overall student satisfaction.
- 3.7. Compliance with outstanding GOC conditions appears generally to be very good.
- 3.8. There do not appear to be any significant systemic risks to OO programmes at present.
- 3.9. The average OO cohort size varies considerably. The average cohort sizes across 2017/18 and 2018/19 are 81 students (year 1), 77 students (year 2), 70 students (year 3) and 26 students (year 4, where applicable). The size of individual optometry programme cohorts vary significantly. For example, the 2018/19 year 1 cohort size varies from 9 to 137 students.
- 3.10. There is notable variance in the level of progression from the first year of OO programmes. Whilst the average progression 89.23%, this varies from 65.00% to 100%. The cause of this variance is not clear from the information received through the AMR process. For example, there does not appear to be any correlation between the average UCAS offer and first year progression.

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<sup>1</sup> An explanation of the category groupings is provided at appendix 2.

3.11. Several programmes have identified competition from new OO provision as a risk to their programme.

3.12. External factors, such as Brexit and the outcome of the Augar Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, have the potential to increase systemic risk amongst OO programmes.

#### **4. Recommendations & actions**

We will:

- continue to monitor risk to programmes through our existing quality assurance activities; and
- consider taking additional steps across OO programmes to gain greater assurance over risk management, quality assurance and governance (including the availability and management of data) of programmes.

# Independent Prescribing

Unless otherwise indicated, the comments in this section relate to all independent prescribing and therapeutic prescribing programmes (IP) programmes, other than the IP awarding body programme.

## 1. Themes

1.1. The quality and depth of the risk analyses and data submitted by IP programmes is variable.

1.2. IP programmes reported an average pass rate of 91.28%.

## 2. Key data – IP programmes

Metric	Lowest	Average	Highest
Applicants admitted	72.97%	90.38%	100%
Attainment – pass or better	73.60%	91.28%	100%

## 3. Observations

3.1. An average of 91.28% of students passed the IP programme in the reporting period, with 3 of the 5 programmes having a pass rate of over 95%.

3.2. IP programmes do not participate in the National Student Survey (NSS). A number of IP programmes have indicated that they undertake alternative work to obtain feedback and monitor student satisfaction with the programme.

3.3. The quality and depth of the risk analyses provided for IP programmes was variable. There was also a variance in the amount of data submitted regarding the admission, progression, attainment and number of students on IP programmes.

3.4. IP programmes admitted an average of 90.38% of applicants in the reporting period. Where the GOC has imposed a cap on student numbers, student numbers are generally below this cap, with several programmes having student numbers significantly below the cap.

3.5. The size of IP programme cohorts varies significantly. The average year 1 cohort size across 2017/18 and 2018/19 is 44. However, for example, the 2018/19 year 1 cohort size varies from 5 to 136 students.

## 4. Recommendations & actions

We will:

- continue to monitor risk to programmes through our existing quality assurance activities;
- consider taking additional steps across IP programmes to gain greater assurance over risk management, quality assurance and governance (including the availability and management of data) of programmes; and
- work with IP programmes to improve the comparability of their student progression and attainment data.

# Ophthalmic Dispensing

Unless otherwise indicated, the comments in this section relate to all ophthalmic dispensing (DO) programmes, other than the DO awarding body programme.

## 1. Themes

- 1.1. DO programmes demonstrate good student progression throughout the programmes. Student attainment is also good.
- 1.2. DO programmes generally performed well in the National Student Survey (NSS) and outperform both the national average and the average for Subjects Allied with Medicine.
- 1.3. DO programmes highlighted that student numbers were an ongoing concern at several DO programmes. This risk is being driven by a range of factors, including new optometry provision and Brexit.
- 1.4. Programmes also noted challenges recruiting, retaining and replacing programme staff, and in obtaining adequate investment in programme infrastructure, in particular investment in clinical equipment.

## 2. Key data – DO programmes

Metric	Lowest	Average	Highest
Applicants admitted	17.11%	59.36%	91.09%
Average UCAS points offer	0.00 <sup>2</sup>	61.71	180.00
First year progression	65.20%	89.25%	100%
Progression to following year	77.80%	90.52%	100%
Successful completion	42.67%	85.87%	97.40%
Award – 2:2 or better / pass or better (see 3.4 below)	66.67%	89.40%	97.50%

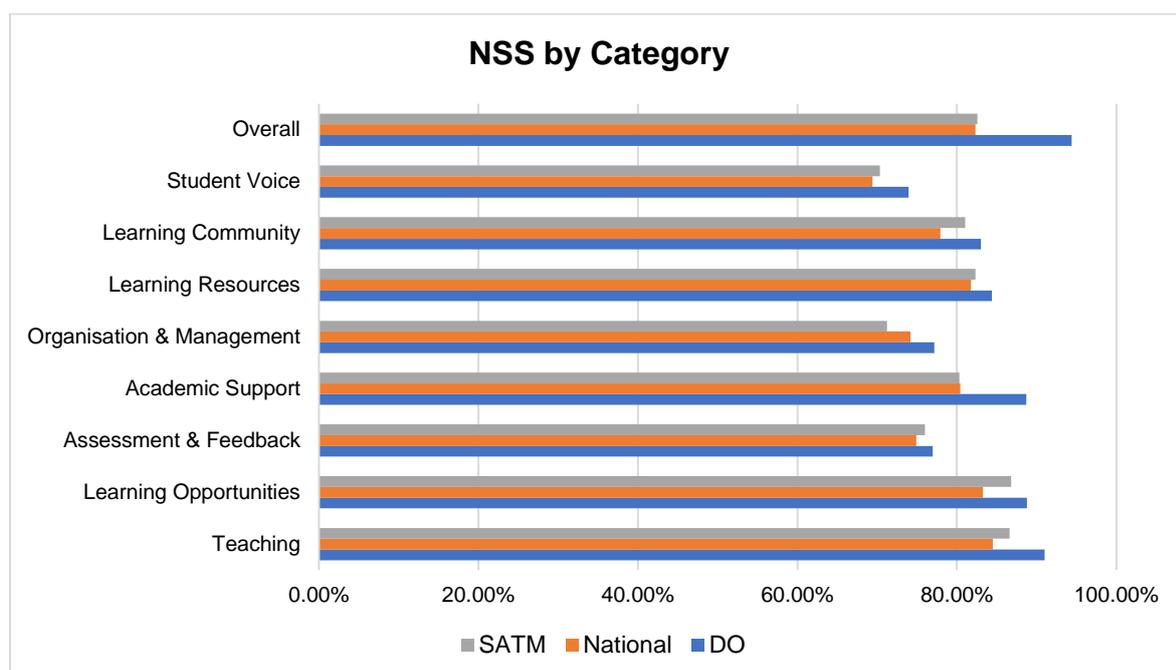
## 3. Observations

- 3.1. Several programmes reported instances of non-registration and student academic misconduct. The programmes in question appear to have identified and dealt with these issues appropriately.
- 3.2. In the reporting period, DO programmes admitted an average of 59.36% of applicants. This is slightly above the average of 51.44% for all optical programmes covered by this year's AMR process. However, there is significant variance amongst DO programmes (see 3.8 below), with three programmes having an admissions percentage over 85% and two below 30%. There appears to be a weak correlation between the admissions percentage and average UCAS offer.

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<sup>2</sup> DO programmes that do not require UCAS points for entry to the programme are recorded as a zero value.

- 3.3. An average of 89.25% of students on DO programmes progressed from the first year of the programme. An average of 90.52% of students progressed to the following year of DO programmes in the reporting period. An average of 85.87% of students successfully completing DO programmes in the reporting period. There is a low variance for these three categories.
- 3.4. An average of 89.40% of students obtained a 2:2 or better (for honours degrees) or a pass or better (for non-honours qualifications) in the reporting period, with an average of 6.84% of students failing the programme. This is generally consistent across DO programmes, although there are two programmes with a failure rate above 10%. There does not appear to be any correlation between the average UCAS points offer and student attainment.
- 3.5. By category<sup>3</sup>, the average score for DO programmes in the National Student Survey (NSS) is above both the national average and the average for 'Subjects Allied to Medicine' (SATM), which includes DO programmes. The averages by category are illustrated in the chart overleaf.
- 3.6. DO programmes perform particularly well in the NSS in relation to teaching, learning opportunities and academic support, as well as for overall student satisfaction.



- 3.7. Compliance with outstanding conditions appears generally to be very good.
- 3.8. Several DO programmes identified low student numbers as a risk to the sustainability of the programme. This risk is being driven by a range of factors, including new optometry provision and Brexit.

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<sup>3</sup> An explanation of the category groupings is provided at appendix 2.

- 3.9. This is reflected in the admissions data received, and there is a significant variance in the ratio of applications to admissions. Three programmes reported an admissions ratio of over 85%. Where programmes have a GOC student number cap, actual student numbers are generally well below that cap.
- 3.10. Several programmes noted the increasing number of optometry programmes as a risk to their programme. It was suggested that widening access to optometry could reduce the potential DO student population, further impacting student numbers.
- 3.11. In addition to student numbers, staffing was highlighted as a risk in several submissions. A number of programmes noted significant changes in senior programme staff, and several also noted (potential or actual) difficulties recruiting or replacing staff.
- 3.12. Several programmes identified infrastructure-related risks to the programme. A number noted aging / obsolete clinical equipment and challenges in replacing the equipment required to deliver the programme.
- 3.13. There is a variance in the average UCAS tariff points (equivalent) offer made to students entering DO programmes. The average UCAS offer is 64.00 points (DDE at A-Level), compared to an average of 128.51 points for all programmes. However, the average offer amongst individual DO programmes varies from 180 UCAS points (AAAB – AABB at A-Level) to 24 points (D at A-Level). In addition, two DO programmes do not make offers based on UCAS points, and rather have entry requirements relating to GCSE attainment and / or professional experience. Please note that two (of seven) DO programmes do not require UCAS tariff points for entry to the programme.
- 3.14. The average cohort sizes across 2017/18 and 2018/19 are 57 students (year 1), 62 students (year 2) and 60 students (year 3). The size of individual DO programme cohorts varies significantly. For example, the 2017/18 year 1 cohort size varies from 7 to 202 students. However, this variance is caused by two outlier programmes, and the cohort size of the remaining five programmes are broadly consistent.

#### **4. Recommendations & actions**

We will:

- continue to monitor risk to programmes through our existing quality assurance activities;
- analyse any unmet conditions and take appropriate action;
- consider taking additional steps across DO programmes to gain greater assurance over risk management, quality assurance and governance (including the availability and management of data) of programmes; and
- consider taking additional steps to obtain greater assurance in relation to specific risks identified within this report, such as student numbers, staffing and investment for programmes.

## Contact Lens Opticians

Unless otherwise indicated, the comments in this section relate to all contact lens optician (CLO) programmes other than the CLO awarding body programme.

### 1. Themes

- 1.1. CLO programmes submitted limited data regarding the admission, progression, attainment and number of students on CLO programmes.
- 1.2. There are considerable differences in cohort size amongst CLO programmes (with an average cohort size between 9 and 76 students), with one large provider and the remaining programmes being significantly smaller.

### 2. Key data – CLO programmes

Metric	Lowest	Average	Highest
Applicants admitted	n/a	93.33%	n/a
Attainment – pass rate (NB: for 2 of 3 programmes)	n/a	51.75%	n/a

### 3. Observations

- 3.1. Two CLO programmes admitted 100% of applicants in the reporting period, and the third admitted 80%.
- 3.2. Cohort sizes vary. One provider is a major outlier with a cohort of 94 students in 2018/19, the cohort size for each of the remaining CLO programmes is fewer than 15 students.
- 3.3. CLO programmes do not participate in the National Student Survey (NSS). All programmes have indicated that they undertake alternative work to obtain feedback and monitor student satisfaction with the programme.
- 3.4. For the two CLO programmes that provided student attainment data, the average pass rate was 51.75% for the reporting period. It is unclear whether this is an anomaly or whether pass rates for CLO programmes are consistently low.

### 4. Recommendations & actions

We will:

- continue to monitor risk to programmes through our existing quality assurance activities;
- analyse any unmet conditions and take appropriate action;
- consider taking additional steps across CLO programmes to gain greater assurance over risk management, quality assurance and governance (including the availability and management of data) of programmes; and
- work with CLO programmes to improve the comparability of their student progression and attainment data.

## Awarding Body (Dispensing & Contact Lens Opticians)

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Unless otherwise indicated, the comments in this section relate to the (standalone) CLO and DO awarding body programmes.

### 1. Themes

- 1.1. The pass rates submitted by awarding bodies were calculated on differing bases from each other and from academic programme pass rates. To some extent this reflects the different nature of their roles. We will continue to discuss this with programmes to ensure the comparability of student progression and attainment data.

### 2. Key data – 2017/18 student attainment data

Programme	Pass rate
Contact Lens	35.00%
Dispensing – Practical	45.50%
Dispensing – Theory	73.14%

### 3. Student attainment data

- 3.1. Due to the nature of the awarding body programmes and the format of this year's AMR form, each awarding body has provided student attainment data on differing bases, i.e. the basis for each calculation has been different. This makes comparison with academic programmes, and between awarding body programmes, challenging. It also limits the value of such comparisons.
- 3.2. For clarity, an explanation of the student attainment data for the CLO and DO awarding bodies is set out below.
- 3.3. The CLO awarding body programme reported a pass rate of 35% in its submission. Additional commentary detailed the number of students sitting the assessments in January 2018 and Summer 2018, and the number of certificates awarded at these sittings. In addition, a spreadsheet was provided by the programme, setting out examination statistics for Winter 2017 and Summer 2018.
- 3.4. The DO awarding body programme reported an overall pass rate of 45.5% in its submission. This is the annual pass rate for the 2017/18 sittings of the practical assessments (preliminary qualifying exams and final qualifying exams) only. It does not include the pass rate for theory assessments. The reported pass rate for theory assessments is 73.14%. Additional commentary was provided by the programme in its submission. This explained that a single candidate is counted for each assessment that they sit, i.e. a student sitting three assessments would be counted as three candidates, rather than one. The programme also provided detailed summaries of the Summer 2018 results and the September 2018 resit results. Please note that the pass rate for 2017/18 was adversely impacted by an incidence of academic misconduct (see 4.1 below).

#### **4. Observations**

- 4.1. The DO awarding body programme reported that a serious instance of academic misconduct had occurred in the reporting period. This incident was reported to the GOC in an appropriate and timely manner, and was dealt with by the programme appropriately.
- 4.2. Awarding body programmes are not required to take part in the National Student Survey (NSS). The DO awarding body programme undertakes alternative activities to capture and monitor student feedback on the programme. We understand that this feedback is generally used to continually improve the programmes.
- 4.3. The DO awarding body reported a 125% increase in the cohort from 2017/18 to 2018/19.

#### **5. Recommendations & actions**

We will:

- continue to monitor risk to programmes through our existing quality assurance activities;
- analyse any unmet conditions and take appropriate action; and
- request historic examination data and work with awarding body programmes with the view to ensure the comparability of their student progression and attainment data, and to identify any trends in the examinations data.

## Awarding Body (Independent Prescribing & Optometry)

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Unless otherwise indicated, the comments in this section relate to the (standalone) IP and OO awarding body programmes.

### 1. Themes

1.1. The pass rates submitted by awarding bodies were calculated on differing bases from each other and from academic programme pass rates. To some extent this reflects the different nature of their roles. We will continue to discuss this with programmes to ensure the comparability of student progression and attainment data.

### 2. Key data – 2017/18 attainment data

Programme	Pass rate
Independent prescribing	90.67%
Optometry (27 month)	96.10%
Optometry (18 month) <sup>4</sup>	70.70%

### 3. Attainment data

- 3.1. Due to the nature of the awarding body programmes and the format of this year's AMR form, each awarding body has provided attainment data on differing bases, i.e. the basis for each calculation has been different. This makes comparison with academic programmes, and between awarding body programmes, challenging. It also limits the value of such comparisons.
- 3.2. For clarity, an explanation of the attainment data for the IP and OO awarding bodies is set out below.
- 3.3. The IP awarding body programme reported an average pass rate of 90.67% across three sittings in the reporting period. Please note that this does not relate to first time passes.
- 3.4. The OO awarding body programme pass rate is calculated on a different basis and for an alternative time period to all other programmes. This is due to the structure and timing of the programme. Reporting attainment data on this basis allows the OO awarding body programme to report data that is most reflective of attainment on the programme.
- 3.5. The 27 month pass rate reported above for the OO awarding body programme is the overall pass rate for trainees<sup>5</sup> enrolling on the programme in the enrolment year running 1 June 2016 – 31 May 2017. The pass rate represents the

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<sup>4</sup> The 18 month pass rate was specifically requested by the GOC and is not a statistic used by the OO awarding body programme. See further information at 3.7 below.

<sup>5</sup> Individuals attending the IP and OO awarding body programmes are not referred to as 'students'. The term 'trainees' is equivalent to 'student' on other programmes, as used elsewhere in this document.

proportion of trainees that successfully completed the programme within 27 months of their date of enrolment.

- 3.6. The 18 month pass rate reported above for the OO awarding body programme represents the proportion of trainees enrolling on the programme in the enrolment year running 1 June 2016 – 31 May 2017 that successfully completed the programme within 18 months of their date of enrolment.
- 3.7. Please note that the 18 month pass rate was specifically requested by the GOC and is not a statistic used by the OO awarding body programme. Other than the 27 month limit, time taken to complete the OO awarding body programme is not considered to be a measure of trainee performance by the OO awarding body programme. Time taken to complete the programme may be affected by a range of factors such as supervisor or assessor availability, a change in practice or supervisor, and a trainee's personal circumstances. In addition to this, final assessment sessions are available at fixed points in the year and not at regular intervals (January, March, July, September). A trainee may take longer to complete the programme due to the timing of the next available assessment.
- 3.8. Please note that the OO pass rate data was provided subsequent to the initial AMR form submission, to allow the programme to report data that is most reflective of attainment on the programme.

#### **4. Observations**

- 4.1. The IP and OO awarding body programmes are not eligible to take part in the National Student Survey (NSS). The IP and OO awarding body programmes undertake alternative activities to capture and monitor trainee feedback on the programme. We understand that this feedback is generally used to continually improve the programmes.

#### **5. Recommendations & actions**

We will:

- continue to monitor risk to programmes through our existing quality assurance activities;
- analyse any unmet conditions and take appropriate action; and
- request historic examination data and work with awarding body programmes with the view to ensure the comparability of their student progression and attainment data, and to identify any trends in the examinations data.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Data Tables

Unless otherwise specified, the data reported below relates to the period 1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018.

Unless otherwise specified, the data reported below relates to ‘academic’ (non-awarding body) programmes.

#### A. Application Data

	Admissions Ratio (Applications : Admissions)		UCAS Points Offer (equivalent)	
	Average	Median	Average	Median
All Programmes	51.44%	38.98%	128.51	136.00
Optometry	20.12%	17.35%	146.06	137.50
Ophthalmic Dispensing	59.36%	61.63%	61.71	64.00
Independent Prescribing	90.38%	100%	n/a	n/a
Contact Lens Opticians	93.33%	100%	n/a	n/a
<i>Fully Approved</i>	54.61%	50.31%	67.88	57.50
<i>Provisionally Approved</i>	26.08%	9.60%	133.33	136

#### B. Cohort Data – Average Student Cohort Size (2017/18 – 2018/19)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Optometry	80.86	76.73	69.64	26.10
Ophthalmic Dispensing	56.79	61.64	60.43	n/a
Independent Prescribing	45.50	n/a	n/a	n/a
Contact Lens Opticians	32.17	n/a	n/a	n/a

#### C. GOC Student Cap Utilisation (2017/18 – 2018/19)

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
84.72%	83.30%	79.50%

#### D. Student progression

	Progression from first year (average)	Progression to the following year (average)	Students completing the programme (average)
Optometry	89.23%	89.88%	96.88%
Ophthalmic Dispensing	89.25%	90.52%	85.87%

E. Student attainment

	<b>Good Pass (Average)<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Fail (Average)</b>
All programmes	90.51%	7.59%
Optometry	96.94%	1.27%
Ophthalmic Dispensing	89.40%	6.84%
Independent Prescribing	91.28%	8.72%
Contact Lens Opticians	41.98%	58.02%

F. National Student Survey – Average Score By Category

	<b>All programmes</b>	<b>Optometry</b>	<b>Ophthalmic Dispensing</b>	<b>National Average</b>	<b>Subjects Allied to Medicine</b>
Teaching	91.59%	91.99%	91.00%	84.50%	86.61%
Learning Opportunities	89.47%	89.94%	88.77%	83.24%	86.78%
Assessment & Feedback	77.80%	78.37%	76.95%	74.91%	75.99%
Academic Support	87.40%	86.54%	88.68%	80.44%	80.30%
Organisation & Management	81.04%	83.61%	77.17%	74.19%	71.22%
Learning Resources	85.99%	87.07%	84.38%	81.75%	82.32%
Learning Community	86.25%	88.40%	83.03%	77.92%	81.02%
Student Voice	76.39%	78.04%	73.92%	69.41%	70.36%
Overall	92.56%	91.34%	94.37%	82.32%	82.57%

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<sup>6</sup> Defined as 2.2 or better (honours degrees) OR a pass or better (all other programmes)

## Appendix 2 – National Student Survey Categories

#	Question	Category
1	Staff are good at explaining things	Teaching
2	Staff have made the subject interesting	
3	The course is intellectually stimulating	
4	My course has challenged me to achieve my best work	Learning Opportunities
5	My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth	
6	My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics	
7	My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt	Assessment & Feedback
8	The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance	
9	Marking and assessment has been fair	
10	Feedback on my work has been timely	Academic Support
11	I have received helpful comments on my work	
12	I have been able to contact staff when I needed to	
13	I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course	Organisation & Management
14	Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course	
15	The course is well organised and running smoothly	
16	The timetable works efficiently for me	Learning Resources
17	Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively	
18	The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well	
19	The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well	Learning Community
20	I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to	
21	I feel part of a community of staff and students	
22	I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course	Student Voice
23	I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course	
24	Staff value students' views and opinions about the course	
25	It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on	Overall
26	The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests	
27	Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course	

### Appendix 3 – Caveats

- 1) The 2017/18 AMR process remains in development and will make refinements and improvements for each year of the process.
- 2) The findings, analysis and outcomes of this year's AMR process will be fed into the GOC Education team's approval and quality assurance activities.
- 3) Please note that the findings outlined in this report are indicative and do not represent a formal position or policy of the GOC. The findings in this report should not be relied upon for advice or used for any other purpose and may not be representative.
- 4) The analysis and outcomes contained within this report are based solely upon the information and data as calculated and submitted by the programmes. The GOC has not sought to externally verify the information and data submitted. The responsible officer for each programme has attested that the information submitted in the AMR return gives a true and fair view of that programme.
- 5) The information provided by each awarding body programme in relation to student attainment (assessment pass rates) has been calculated on different bases (i.e. the basis for each calculation has been different). to the other awarding body programmes and the academic qualification programmes.