



**SOUTH EAST TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY**

***COURSE EVALUATION 2***

**ASSESSORS' REPORT TO ACADEMIC COUNCIL**

**COURSE EVALUATED:** Bachelor of Science (H) in Optometry  
(Level 8; 240 Credits)

**SCHOOL:** Health Sciences

**DEPARTMENT:** Nursing and Healthcare

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The following is a review report to Academic Council from the panel of assessors on the proposal from the School of Health Sciences at South East Technological University to develop a Bachelor of Science (H) in Optometry (Level 8; 240 Credits). In accordance with the regulations governing the evaluation of new programme proposals, as set out in the South East Technological University *Programme Quality Assurance Enhancement Policy and Procedures*, the programme proposal was reviewed by a panel of assessors.

The panel of assessors who contributed to this report were:

- Ciaran Lynch, Former Development Manager, Limerick Institute of Technology (Chair)
- Snowitta Anaston, Student Representative, Griffith College, Dublin
- Dr Raymond Beirne, Lecturer in Optometry, School of Biomedical Science, University of Ulster
- Patricia Dunphy, Former President, Association of Optometrists Ireland
- Dr Colette Moloney, Assistant Registrar, South East Technological University
- Kjell Nolke, Owner Director, Nolke Opticians & Hearing, Waterford
- Dr Corinne Power-O'Mahoney, Academic Council Representative, South East Technological University
- Prof John Siderov, Professor of Optometry and Vision Sciences and Head of Department, University of Huddersfield, UK

In accordance with the regulations set out in the aforementioned *Programme Quality Assurance Enhancement Policy and Procedures*, a review meeting took place on 9 March 2023. The review meeting was conducted virtually via Teams. In the course of the meeting, the panel of assessors met with the programme development team. The following members of the development team were present:

- Prof John Wells, Dean of School of Health Sciences, South East Technological University
- Dr Sara Kennedy, Head of Department of Nursing and Healthcare, South East Technological University
- Jill Campbell, Optometrist, The Association of Eye Care Providers of Ireland
- Dr Marina Green, Research Support Officer, Department of Nursing and Healthcare, South East Technological University

- Prof John Nolan, Director, Nutrition Research Centre Ireland, South East Technological University
- Martin O'Brien, Optometrist, Chair Education and CPD, Optometry Ireland

The assessors wish to thank the members of the development team for engaging generously and openly with the review process.

## 2. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONDITIONS

### 2.1 General Remarks

The panel commends the School on their engagement with the optometry sector, and in proposing a programme to meet an identified need to educate professionals in the area. It is noteworthy that this programme will be informed by the research of the Nutrition Research Centre Ireland at SETU, which has a track record of high-impact eye research at an international level. It is particularly significant that the programme will be delivered in the region, as this will allow regional-access to optometry training, which is currently only available in Dublin. The panel **recommends approval of the Bachelor of Science (H) in Optometry (240 Credits; Level 8)** until the next School Review in the School of Health Sciences. **Approval is conditional on the submission of a revised programme document that takes account of the conditions and recommendations outlined, and the approval of same by the panel; and the submission of a summary document describing the responses and actions of the School to address the conditions and recommendations made by the review panel. To expedite the approval, the revised programme document and summary document should be submitted on, or before, 17 April 2023.**

Areas for attention have been emboldened in the text for convenience of reference. Action is required on items marked 'Conditions' and such action is mandatory if the programme is to be approved; action is highly recommended on items marked 'Recommendations'.

### 2.2 Conditions

- **The entry requirements should be revised for clarity, specifically to require successful completion of Leaving Certificate and the attainment of at least a H5 in two subjects (i.e. 2 subjects: H5 and 4 subjects 06/H7), in addition to the Mathematics and English/Irish requirements stated. The entry requirements statement should also**

**clarify that equivalent examinations to the Leaving Certificate will also be accepted and that entry through Recognition of Prior Learning or proof of meeting the University's English Language Requirements, where relevant, will be as per University regulations.**

- There were some inconsistencies noted between the module descriptors and programme schedules, e.g. the contact for the module 'Clinical Practical Session I' is given as 24 hours practical and 12 hours tutorial on the module descriptor but proposed as 12 hours lecture and 72 hours practical on the programme schedule, *et cetera*. **The document should be reviewed to ensure consistency between the module descriptors and programme schedules, particularly in the area of contact volume and type, and to ensure that only hours which involve staff contact/delivery are recorded on the programme schedules.**

Currently, both module and programme learning outcomes are mapped to the generic categories of learning only. **The module learning outcomes should be mapped to the programme learning outcomes to ensure that a learner who successfully completes all modules will achieve the programme outcomes. The programme learning outcomes should be mapped to the relevant SETU Award Standards for Level 8, to demonstrate that the programme is at the requisite standard.**

**The module learning outcomes, particularly those proposed at 'Advanced' level, should be reviewed to ensure that all are articulated in language appropriate to the level. All module descriptors which propose the attainment of practical skills as part of their associated learning outcomes and assessments should be reviewed to ensure that all also include a practical element in both delivery and assessment, e.g. there are practical outcomes and assessment proposed for the module 'Low Vision and Complex Dispensing' but there is no practical included in the learning modes.**

The module reading lists appear dated. **The module reading lists should be revised to reflect current texts, most recent editions, academic papers, and online resources, where appropriate.**

There is some ambiguity re the grading of modules which have a Pass/Fail element. The assessment for the module 'Clinical Optometric Practice I', for example, is proposed as 100% Continuous Assessment, which comprises a Pass/Fail Objective Structured Clinical Assessment element and a Portfolio which attracts 10%. It is not clear, however, if the

module will be graded and, if so, how this grade will be calculated as the portfolio comprises only 10%, or if the overall module will be awarded on a Pass/Fail basis. **The assessment methods breakdown in descriptors for modules which have a Pass/Fail element should be reviewed to ensure clarity on how the grade for the module will be derived.**

- The detail given in the module descriptors on the nature of the learning and teaching methods and assessment was limited and often appeared to be generic statements, rather than applying specifically to the individual module. In the module descriptor for ‘Clinical Competence in Contact Lenses Skills’, for instance, the learning and teaching methods are described as ‘Students will undertake their learning through lectures, tutorial, and practicals delivered through a face-to-face mode’; in the ‘Learning Modes’ section of the module, however, there are no lectures, tutorials or practicals included in the delivery of the module. **The module descriptors should be reviewed to ensure that the description given in the Learning and Teaching Methods section applies specifically to the delivery for that module and that detail on the nature of the proposed assessment for the module is included in all instances. A draft assessment schedule should also be included to give an indication of the proposed workload for the student.**
- In discussion with the panel, the team articulated a more detailed vision of the management of, and requirements for, placement. **The description of placement in the main document and module descriptors should be amended to give a more detailed description of the management and nature of the placements proposed throughout the programme and to clearly articulate the requirements, including duration and deliverables. The requirement to specify a high minimum number of patient refraction and optical dispensing episodes in the learning outcomes for placement, in addition to specifying the minimum number of placement hours to be completed, should be reconsidered taking into account any specific requirements of CORU; the current high number of minimum episodes places emphasis on the quantity, rather than quality and diversity of the episodes and the skills development of the learner. The team should articulate the requirements for placement in the terms articulated by CORU; if CORU specifies clinical hours, rather than patient episodes, then the requirements in the module descriptors should reflect this.** Currently both a minimum number of patient refraction and dispensing episodes, and a required number of clinical hours are specified in the module descriptors. **The training provided to workplace supervisors to ensure an optimum and**

**consistent experience for learners on placement, and the consistency of assessment, should be detailed.**

- The intention of the School to seek CORU accreditation for the programme was stated in the proposal document but the references to, and discussion of, the CORU requirements in same were not comprehensive. **Given the seminal importance of gaining professional accreditation for the programme, a detailed discussion on how the programme requirements align to the Optical Registration Board *Profession Specific Criteria for Education and Training Programmes for Optometrists* and *Standards of Proficiency for Optometrists* should be included. A detailed mapping of the module learning outcomes to the *Standards of Proficiency for Optometrists* should be included to ensure that all the required proficiencies will be met by learners. The team should consider how to best structure module assessment to ensure that all required CORU proficiencies are assessed and their attainment verified, particularly where there may be multiple proficiencies assessed in the same module or where they form a subset only of the outcomes expected for the module. For clarity for the learners, referencing individual CORU proficiencies to the relevant associated learning outcomes in the modules would assist. The team should also clearly articulate any specific outcomes that CORU require to be passed without condonement *et cetera*.**
- **Given that the modules in the final year of the programme are assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, the modules which will contribute to the classification of the award (minimum 60 credits) should be identified in the programme schedule.**

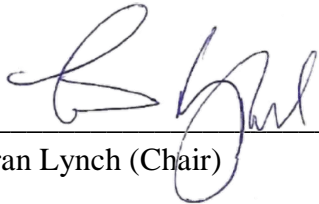
### 2.3 Recommendations

- **The School should further engage with CORU to establish a timescale for the accreditation approval process with a view to completing same as early as possible.** It would be preferable to have a commitment from CORU that the accreditation process could be completed prior to students going on placement.
- The panel welcome the School's assurance that they will not offer the programme prior to the necessary resources for the programme being in place. While there is some reference to resources in the document, there were additional requirements articulated by the team in discussion with the panel. **The School should include a more comprehensive evaluation of all spatial, equipment and staff resources required in the proposal document. In**

**particular, the School should re-evaluate the specialised personnel resources required to run the early years of the programme and to operate the proposed public clinic (e.g. receptionist, dispensing optician, and technician). Job descriptions for the proposed specialised optometry staff should be provided.**

- There appears to be some overlap of material between modules, particularly in the ‘Introduction to Optometry I’ and ‘Introduction to Optometry II’ module. **The team should review the ‘Introduction to Optometry I’ and ‘Introduction to Optometry II’ modules to remove overlap. The team should then consider incorporating the ‘Refraction’ module into the revised ‘Introduction to Optometry’, and increasing the volume of the ‘Ocular Anatomy and Physiology’ module and assigning 10 credits to same.**

**Signed:**



Ciaran Lynch (Chair)

**Date:**

20/03/2023

**Approved by  
Academic Council:** \_\_\_\_\_