

Optometry Career Progression Programme Specification BSc (Hons) Accelerated Route

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/optometry/career-progression-programme/>

Academic Year:	2022/23
Degree Awarding Body:	The University of Bradford
Target Degree Award:	Bachelor of Science with Honours in Optometry [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications Level 6]
Interim/Exit Awards:	Honours Degree of Bachelor in Vision Science [FHEQ Level 6]; Diploma of Higher Education in Vision Science [FHEQ Level 5]; Certificate of Higher Education in Vision Science [FHEQ Level 4]
Subject Benchmark Statement:	Optometry (QAA 2015)
Programme Accreditation:	General Optical Council
Programme Admissions:	January
Programme Mode of Study:	18 calendar months with at-distance (16 weeks part-time) and attendance (45 weeks full-time) components.

Please note: Graduates are required by the General Optical Council to achieve a minimum degree award of Second Class Honours, Second Division classification (2:2) in Optometry to be permitted to enter the pre-registration period in practice.

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

Minor Modification Schedule

1. June 2021: Annual changes for 2021 academic year
2. May 2022: Inclusion of clinical competence module in Stage B1. Specification reformatted and made accessible

Introduction

Optometrists are healthcare professionals whose primary role involves measurement and optical correction of sight defects (refractive errors), and detection and recognition of ocular disease and dysfunction. Optometrists are trained to supply and fit (dispense) optical appliances such as spectacles, contact lenses and low vision aids. Optometrists are also trained to undertake assessment of binocular vision and to diagnose and manage (non-pathological) binocular vision anomalies.

In the United Kingdom, the optometry profession is the largest provider of primary eye care and is responsible for a significant proportion of ophthalmic referrals to the secondary care sector. Many of these referrals are of patients with sight-threatening conditions, including cataract, glaucoma, hypertension and diabetes.

The overall aim of the accelerated degree programme in optometry is to build upon the student's previous experience as a dispensing optician to permit a student to carry out all the other functions described above, to communicate skilfully and knowledgeably with patients and other professionals, and to uphold high standards of professional integrity and behaviour.

Students of optometry must acquire a detailed knowledge and understanding of the human eye in health and disease, as well as the skills to examine the eye, supply and fit optical appliances, and diagnose and manage ocular conditions. The work calls for a high degree of accuracy and attention to detail, and a measure of manual dexterity; all skills that students will have the opportunity to develop during the programme. Also necessary is an interest and ability in scientific work, and the ability to communicate and empathise with people and to win their confidence. Students must also function as autonomous learners having, or being able and willing to develop, the ability to engage in independent and self-directed study.

The aims and learning outcomes of the programme are informed by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) benchmark statement for Optometry 2015, the UK General Optical Council (GOC) specification for Optometry learning outcomes and clinical competencies 2016, and the University of Bradford Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy.

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to provide:

- A1 A supportive, structured learning environment that encourages an attitude of continuing professional development and independent lifelong learning.
- A2 A diversity of approaches to teaching and learning, incorporating both formative and summative methods of assessment.
- A3 Integration of theoretical, practical and clinical aspects of the curriculum.
- A4 Incremental development of students' learning and clinical skills development through the stages of the programme.

The programme is intended to encourage the development of:

- A5 A systematic understanding of the basic and clinical sciences relevant to the practice of optometry.
- A6 A professional attitude towards patients and colleague.
- A7 A range of transferable (key) skills.
- A8 Interpersonal and communication skills, including effective use of relevant information technologies.
- A9 Awareness of the legal, ethical and commercial context of optometric practice.
- A10 Ability to think critically and proficiency in clinical reasoning.
- A11 Insight into research and scientific method.

A12 Clinical competencies required for entry to the pre-registration period in optometry practice.

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the FHEQ Level 4 award of Certificate of Higher Education in Vision Science, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of:

1. The principles behind techniques used for the investigation of the visual function of the human eye.
2. The methods available for the correction of ametropia.
3. The fundamental techniques behind the assessment of ocular health.
4. The ethical principles underlying the practice of optometry and the role of optometry in a health care system.
5. The skills required to obtain and communicate relevant information from and to patients.
6. The principles underlying evidence-based practice.

Additionally, to be eligible for the FHEQ Level 5 award of Diploma of Higher Education in Vision Science, students will be able to:

7. Demonstrate an understanding and application of the principles behind techniques used for the investigation of the visual function of the human eye.
8. Demonstrate an understanding and application of the methods available for the correction of ametropia.
9. Apply a range of techniques to assess ocular and systemic health and recognise abnormal findings.
10. Apply ethical principles to the examination of patients.
11. Employ a range of skills to communicate effectively with patients and other health care professionals.

Additionally, to be eligible for the FHEQ Level 6 Degree award of Bachelor with Honours in Vision Science, students will be able to:

12. Detect and correct or relieve defects of visual function.
13. Detect ocular disease or the ocular side effects of systemic disease.
14. Produce and agree an appropriate management plan with a patient including referral to another health professional where appropriate.
15. Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental legal principles underlying optometry practice.
16. Critically appraise optometric/vision science research.

Additionally, to be eligible for the FHEQ Level 6 Degree award of Bachelor with Honours in Optometry, students will be able to:

17. Complete the requirements for a professional Certificate of Clinical Competence, which includes an appropriate number of patient episodes and demonstration of the full range of clinical competencies as defined by the General Optical Council.

Curriculum

All modules on the programme are core, with slightly different modules provided to students depending on their existing experience and qualifications. Modules are organised in the University's Academic Year system where Semester 1 starts in September and Semester 2 in January. As an accelerated route, the Optometry Career Progression Programme uses a three term Full Year where "Semester 3" runs during the summer.

At Stage A, students who have already registered a recognised qualification in contact lens fitting will study the 50-credit module OPT4014-V. All other students will complete the 60-credit module OPT4015-E.

Stage A Modules

Study Period	Title	Code	Credit	Level
Semester 2&3	Optometric Skills – Contact Lens Optician (Accelerated Route)	OPT4014-V	50	FHEQ 4
Semester 2&3	Optometric Skills – Dispensing Optician (Accelerated Route)	OPT4015-E	60	FHEQ 4

At the end of Stage A students will be eligible to exit with the award of Certificate of Higher Education in Vision Science if they have achieved at least 120 credits (60 credits of which must be non-imported credit) and achieved Programme Learning Outcomes 1-6. Students who have successfully completed 50 credits of non-imported credit will be eligible to exit with the award of Certificate of Continuing Education.

In Stage B1, all students will study 120 further credits and the pass/fail module Clinical Competence and Professionalism.

Stage B1 Modules

Study Period	Title	Code	Credit	Level
Academic Year	Clinical Optometry and Communication Skills	OPT5004-B	20	FHEQ 5
Academic Year	General and Ocular Pharmacology	OPT5006-B	20	FHEQ 5
Academic Year	The Assessment and Management of Binocular Vision	OPT5008-B	20	FHEQ 5
Academic Year	Ocular Health Assessment 2	OPT5014-B	20	FHEQ 5
Academic Year	Clinical Competence and Professionalism 2	OPT5019-Z	Exempt	FHEQ 5
Academic Year	Management of Ocular Disease	OPT6019-D	40	FHEQ 6

At the end of stage B1, students will be eligible to exit with the award of Diploma of Higher Education if they have achieved at least 240 credits (of which 120 credits must be non-imported credit and, of these 120 credits, 100 credits must be at Level 5 or above) and achieved Programme Learning Outcomes 1-11.

In Stage B2, students will prepare for clinical practice by working towards the Certificate of Clinical Competence (OPT6012-Z) and participate in optometric practice vision clinics.

Stage B2 Modules

Study Period	Title	Code	Credit	Level
Semester 3	Clinical Competence	OPT6012-Z	Exempt	FHEQ 6
Semester 3	Clinical Decision Making	OPT6008-B	20	FHEQ 6
Full Year	Clinical Practice and Professional Studies	OPT6022-B	40	FHEQ 6

Students will be eligible for the award of Honours Degree of Bachelor in Vision Science if they have successfully achieved 360 credits (including imported credit of 120 credits in the case of Dispensing Opticians and 130 credits in the case of Contact Lens Opticians) and achieved Programme Learning Outcomes 1-16. This award is made to students who have not achieved the Certificate of Clinical Competence (OPT6012-Z).

Students will be eligible for the award of Honours Degree of Bachelor in Optometry if they have successfully achieved 360 credits (including imported credit of 120 credits in the case of Dispensing Opticians and 130 credits in the case of Contact Lens Opticians) and achieved Programme Learning Outcomes 1-17.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

Key skills are embedded throughout the curriculum. A wide variety of teaching methods appropriate to the learning outcomes are employed throughout the programme. They focus progressively on student-centred approaches to learning, such that students are expected to take increasing responsibility for their learning as they progress through the programme, in order to encourage development of the attributes needed for lifelong learning and continued professional development.

Assessment Strategy

Assessment provides an evaluation of students' competence in meeting specified objectives, but it is also an essential part of the teaching and learning process. Properly selected assessment tasks signal the importance of particular content, concepts and skills, influence approaches to study and help students to allocate their time appropriately. Constructive and timely feedback on assessment helps students to gain a sense of achievement and progress, an appreciation of the performance and standards expected in a particular discipline or professional area, and to learn from their endeavours.

The Optometry programme aims to select from a range of assessment methods for each module. All modules include both formative and summative assessments.

Formative assessment has a developmental purpose and is designed to help students learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained. Examples of formative assessments include in-lecture polling of answers to questions with immediate feedback, specific tests to be completed prior to teaching sessions where answers are discussed, or designated assessments completed online with feedback provided electronically.

Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment but is always used to allow students to identify areas of success and those requiring further work. Most practical sessions incorporate opportunities for reflective practice.

Summative assessment is used to indicate the extent of a student's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme. Summative assessment includes written exams and demonstration of practical or clinical ability or competence.

In addition, some of the assessments in later stages of the programme, for example in clinical practice and clinical decision making, are synoptic in nature. Synoptic assessments are those that encourage students to combine elements of their learning from different parts of a programme and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area. A synoptic assessment normally enables students to show their ability to integrate and apply their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth in the subject. It can help to test a student's capability of applying the knowledge and understanding gained in one part of a programme to increase their understanding in other parts of the programme, or across the programme as a whole.

Assessment Regulations

This Programme conforms to the standard University Undergraduate Assessment Regulations which are available at the link: <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/regulations/>

However, there are three variations to these regulations on this programme:

- There is no compensation. This means that all modules must be passed at 40% or higher in order to progress between stages and be eligible for a final award of BSc (Hons).
- There is no referral. This means that all modules must be passed at each stage of study prior to starting the next stage of study.
- For modules OPT4014-V (Optometric Skills – Contact Lens Optician (Accelerated Route)), OPT4015-E (Optometric Skills – Dispensing Optician (Accelerated Route)), OPT6022-D (Clinical Practice and Professional Studies (Accelerated Route)), students must pass specified individual components at 40% as outlined in the module descriptor.

Please also be aware that graduates in Optometry are required by the General Optical Council to achieve a minimum of Second-Class Honours / Second Division (2:2) in order to be permitted to enter the pre-registration period in optometry practice.

Admission Requirements

The University of Bradford is ranked 6th in the UK for Optometry (Complete University Guide 2022) and welcomes applications from all potential students. **A maximum of 24 students with advanced standing are admitted to the Optometry (Accelerated Route) programme each year.** Offers of places are made following detailed consideration of individual applications.

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing your application. It's not just about your grades; we take the time to understand your personal circumstances and make decisions based on your potential to benefit from your studies and of your ability to succeed in the optometry degree and profession.

In addition to fulfilling the University's general entrance requirements, applicants who are seeking advanced standing worth 60 credits will need to fulfil the School of Optometry's specific requirements, which are as follows:

- Dispensing opticians registered with General Optical Council.
- Evidence of continued professional development since registration (such as an award in delegated functions).

A recognised qualification in contact lens fitting will accrue a further exemption from 10 credits and allow a student to study module OPT4014-V rather than OPT4015-E.

All students of Optometry in the UK are required to register with the General Optical Council (GOC) from the date on which they enrol on the Optometry programme, and to maintain this registration thereafter. The cost for this is £30 per year. The GOC also requires student registrants to adhere to its Code of Conduct and the GOC may take disciplinary action against any student found to be in breach of this Code. For more information about registration and what it means, visit the GOC website:

<https://optical.org/en/publications/declarations-guidance-for-students/>
