

Bachelor of Vision Science and Master of Optometry Inherent Requirements

Optometric education is a continuum from entry into optometry training to lifelong continuing education after completion of formal training and registering to practise. Optometry students are required to attend tutorials, lectures, practical classes and clinical placements during both the BVisSci and MOptom, including periods of clinical training in a variety of private and public health service sites (i.e. private optometry practices, public health optometry services and hospitals) in the MOptom component of the course. Attendance is required and in some cases compulsory for most of these teaching and learning activities. A significant component of the curriculum is delivered on-line, particularly during residential clinical placements. Students must pass written and clinical examinations in key clinical skills areas before they are allowed to practise in a clinical placement setting. They are then assessed, and required to demonstrate competency in all major areas of clinical practice (e.g. general practice, contact lenses, therapeutics, paediatrics, low vision) before they are eligible to apply for registration as an optometrist (NB pending award of accreditation to the Course by the Optometry Board of Australia). These examinations assess scientific and clinical skills and knowledge.

Optometry training is relatively expensive and there is strong competition for places in optometry courses. The government and wider community provides most of the funds for optometric training and has a reasonable expectation that this investment results in appropriately trained professionals, who are capable of delivering high quality optometric care. It is also the case that Deakin aspires to graduate students who are competent and comfortable in their chosen profession.

Deakin University's School of Medicine restricts admission to applicants who are capable of completing the optometry course, obtaining registration, maintaining continuing professional development and able to deliver high quality optometric care after graduation.

A number of capabilities are essential to complete the course and practise optometry. Students and potential students should also be aware of the Mandatory Notification requirement placed upon educational providers by Section 143 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. This requirement mandates that the School of Medicine report any students to the National Agency (AHPRA) if they feel they have an impairment that in the course of clinical training may place the public at substantial risk of harm.

1. Motor and Sensory Function

Students must possess adequate motor, tactile and visual function to use a computer, participate in practical classes and perform a full optometric examination, including detection of abnormalities by observation, manipulation and palpation. They must be able to use both monocular and binocular direct and indirect ophthalmoscopes, slit lamps, contact tonometers and gonioscopy lenses. They must be able to handle, insert and remove contact lenses, remove foreign bodies from the ocular surface and instil eye drops. They must be able to operate and manipulate a variety of clinical instruments for the detection and grading of ocular structure and function (e.g. automated perimetry, photography, tomography). They must be able to visualise and interpret the information revealed through the use of these instruments and techniques. In the event that students are unable to meet any of these requirements, they must be able to demonstrate reasonable and adequate strategies that would enable them to overcome motor and sensory deficits such that they could independently practise optometry in a safe fashion.

Further information is available from the School of Medicine.

2. Mental Health

Students must be sure any consequences of a mental health problem, or therapy associated with a mental health problem, are well controlled, such that they are able to deal with the rigours of a

demanding and, at times, inflexible, course curriculum. Students must recognise that participation in, and travel to and from, clinical placements is a requirement of the course, and that professional interactions with both patients and colleagues is expected and required at all times. During the early part of the course these clinical placements are in the central Melbourne area and in the latter part of the course students may be required to spend an extended period of time in residence anywhere in Victoria or Australia.

3. Communication Skills

Optometric practice requires advanced oral and written communication skills. Practitioners need to communicate effectively and sensitively with patients, relatives and carers from all walks of life, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religious beliefs or physical or psychological disability. An ability to gather, synthesise and evaluate information by verbal, written, pictorial and non-verbal means of communication is essential. Optometrists must also be capable of delivering concise, comprehensible written and verbal advice to patients, relatives, carers and colleagues.

Key learning formats or clinical skills employed in the course require that students have the ability to: participate in Problem Based Learning or clinical tutorials; answer written or oral examination questions; take and record a full ocular and medical history; complete a full optometric examination; deliver an oral summary of a patient's clinical findings; complete a record card or prescription; and access on-line clinical information in clinical settings.

4. Social Skills and Behavioural Attributes

The Deakin Optometry program includes a strong emphasis on professional behaviour. Progression through the course and graduation is contingent on demonstrating professional attitudes and behaviour throughout the course, and certain assessments are linked to this expectation, as these are essential for optometric practice.

Optometry students and qualified optometrists must be willing to complete a full ocular examination of male and female patients. They must be able to maintain professional relationships with all patients and colleagues and to complete demanding workloads under stressful conditions. They should also be able to recognise situations where their emotional or physical state precludes delivery of effective care. In all aspects of their professional life, optometrists must refrain from displaying any discriminatory behaviour.

Students must be able to work collaboratively at all stages of the optometry course. Applicants must be compassionate and emotionally robust. They must be prepared to put patient care above their own interests, and to maintain confidentiality and high ethical standards.

5. Intellectual or Learning Ability

The optometry course is demanding and requires high-level intellectual and cognitive skills. Capacity to solve complex problems is required during Problem Based Learning tutorials and Team-Based Learning and in clinical environments. Good optometric practice requires the ability to synthesize and respond to complex oral, written and pictorial information. Practitioners are required to accumulate considerable amounts of knowledge and to perform mathematical calculations for diagnosis and therapy. Ability to understand three-dimensional relationships is essential for anatomy, imaging and clinical examination and procedures.

6. Infectious Diseases

Students and practising optometrists are a potential source of infection for patients and colleagues, particularly for immunocompromised patients. Deakin University School of Medicine has developed

an Infectious Diseases Policy to reduce this risk. All students are required to sign a statement that they will adhere to this policy as a condition of entry into the course. The main features of the policy are:

- adherence to infection control procedures, including hand-washing, aseptic technique, disposal of sharps and clinical waste, use of single-use only equipment, sterilisation and disinfection of re-usable equipment, use of personal protective equipment and managing patients in various forms of isolation.
- compliance with an immunisation program against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), varicella (chicken pox), hepatitis A, hepatitis B and influenza.
- testing for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).
- for students who are infected with a blood-borne virus, mandatory consultation with a specialist medical practitioner to assess their medical condition and determine which clinical activities they can perform within accepted professional standards. Confidential advice may be sought from the Optometry Board of Australia, which may impose restrictions on course-related activities and subsequent optometric practice.
- adherence to University and health service protocols following exposure to blood or other body fluids.

The Infectious Diseases Policy is available from the School of Medicine.

7. Optometry Board of Australia Registration Declarations

On completion of the course, students wishing to register to practise as an optometrist will have to sign a declaration pertaining to their character and capacity to practise optometry in a safe manner. Failure to be able to sign this declaration, or the making of a false declaration, may result in the individual being unable to register and practise. Students should therefore ensure that they are able to sign and comply with the aspects of the declaration detailed below.

Key questions in the declaration include:

Do you have any criminal history in Australia?

Do you have any criminal history in another country?

Do you have an impairment that detrimentally affects, or is likely to detrimentally affect, your capacity to practise the profession?

NB. Students and potential students should also be aware that this declaration contains statements pertaining to English language capabilities that are particularly relevant to individuals who did not complete their secondary studies in an English speaking environment and could result in them having to sit a diagnostic English language test within 2 years of applying for registration.

Further confidential advice on this declaration may be obtained by contacting the Optometry Board of Australia.

Bachelor of Vision Science and Master of Optometry Inherent Requirements Guidelines

Applications are accepted for the Deakin BVisSci and MOptom from students who possess the skills and prerequisites required to complete the course, gain professional certification and practise safely. The inherent requirements of the course are listed in the document, *BVisSci and MOptom Inherent Requirements*, which is available from the School of Medicine.

The inherent requirements for this course are designed to assist in the decision about aptitude and ability to complete the course to a satisfactory standard. Each student is expected to possess the intellectual, physical, sensory and social skills necessary to complete the course.

If you have an impairment, disability, a long-term medical condition, or other attribute that you feel may affect your ability to meet the inherent requirements of the BVisSci and MOptom, Deakin University advises you to contact the School of Medicine or the Disability Resource Centre to discuss these requirements.

The University is committed to equity and equal opportunity and can introduce reasonable adjustments to courses to enable students to fulfil the requirements of the course in many, but not necessarily all instances.

All students are required to comply with the statutes, regulations, policies and procedures of Deakin University. Legislation and policies and procedures can be accessed on The Guide on the Deakin University website at: <http://theguide.deakin.edu.au/>