

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/21/2d)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

11 March 2021

Agenda Item 5.4.1

COVER SHEET

EXTENSION OF APPROVAL

Faculty of Life and Health Sciences

Unit 28Da: Optometry (UG)

*Presenter: Professor A McKillop*

To consider a proposal for a one-year extension to the period of approval for BSc (Hons)/MOptom (Hons) Optometry. This is a second extension request.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

**UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER**

**REQUEST TO EXTEND APPROVAL AND POSTPONE REVALIDATION**

**Form CA6b)**

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**SECTION A: FACULTY REQUEST**

FACULTY: Life and Health Sciences

SCHOOL: Biomedical Sciences

REVALIDATION UNIT NUMBER AND NAME: 28Da Optometry (UG)

MONTH/YEAR CURRENTLY SCHEDULED: December 2021

PERIOD OF EXTENSION REQUESTED: 12 months to December 2022 (2022/23).

This is a second extension request. Approved first extension was to reschedule from 2020/21 to 2021/22.

COURSE(S): **BSc Hons / MOptom Hons in Optometry**

(with AB and CertHE in Vision Science exit awards)

(Identify specific courses unless the whole unit)

**REASON FOR REQUEST:**

The course regulator (General Optical Council) is due to complete their educational strategic review and release details of the new requirements for providers in the UK in the near future. The new requirements are likely to be released before the summer of 2021 but will most likely require significant changes to the current course structure. The pre-registration training year will become embedded within the training program and the University will be required to provide a registerable degree. The learning outcomes for the new training format are yet to be released. The revalidation event would be best timed when this information has been available for a sufficient period of time to allow planning for a realistic implementation by the course team.

**CURRENCY AND VALIDITY:**

(Please confirm that the curriculum remains current and valid and provide evidence of this (eg extract from most recent external examiner reports and those of relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body)

The GOC had a full quality assurance educational approval visit in October 2019 when the course was approved for a further five year.

The currency and validity of the provision was also confirmed by the most recent External Examiner reports. Extract from Dr Jim Gilchrist's annual report 2019/20:

*“The course content is coherent and appropriate to BSc/MOptom Hons level study. It is consistent with the specification in the QAA Benchmark Statement, and the accreditation requirements of the General Optical Council. The programme is designed appropriately to introduce essential science in the early stages, with increasing emphasis on clinical application and patient management in the later stages, including the MOptom extension. Academic staff in Optometry are research-active, and there is clear evidence of this activity informing the UG curriculum contact and class teaching.”*

#### STANDARDS AND QUALITY:

(Please confirm that quality is high and there are no concerns. Provide evidence of this through external examiner reports and annual monitoring datasets and reports)

Progression and achievement in optometry remain high as evidenced by progression and achievement.

Extract from Course Director report November 2020:

#### **Academic year 2019/20**

1<sup>st</sup> year: 34 students, 1 LOA, 32 out of 33 progress (97%), 1 student given first sit in next academic year.

2<sup>nd</sup> year: 37 students, 37 progress (100%).

3<sup>rd</sup> year: 31 out of 32 progress (97%). 1 student given first sit of research project in next academic year.

19 exit on BSc: 1<sup>st</sup> class: 5 students; 2:1: 8 students; 2:2: 6 students

12 progress to MOptom (8 at 1<sup>st</sup> class level, 4 at 2:1 level).

This is also confirmed by External Examiner reports.

Extract from Dr Jim Gilchrist’s external examiner annual report 2019/20:

*‘The standard in Optometry at Ulster is high, and the relatively small number of students and good staff/student ratio is an important factor in this. Student performance is generally good and compares favourably with standards at other institutions. Standards represented by the QAA Benchmark and GOC requirements for professional practice are clearly met.’*

Extract from Mr Colin Davidson External Examiner annual report 2019/20:

*‘The course is well structured in terms of teaching and assessment methods. The team have outlined plans to take some of this forward in an online mode through delivery on Blackboard. This doesn’t seem to dilute the quality of the content. This is comparable to many institutions in this pandemic’*

The course obtained 100% overall student satisfaction in NSS 2019 and NSS 2020.

PSRB (if applicable):

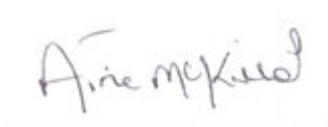
(Please confirm that any deferral will be accommodated by the PSRB and that accreditation will be ongoing for the full duration of the deferral)

The course is accredited by the GOC until the next educational visit in October 2024.

DEMAND: Average of 160 applications each academic year, for 36 places, in each of the last 5 years.

FACULTY PARTNERSHIP MANAGER'S ASSESSMENT (for partner institutions only):

**FACULTY CONFIRMATION:**



SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean (Education)

DATE: 27 January 2021  
\_\_\_\_\_

The completed form should be returned to the Academic Office, Room J410, Tower Building, Coleraine.

**SECTION B: ACADEMIC OFFICE COMMENTS:**

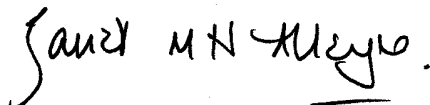
Unit 28Da comprises the BSc Hons/MOptom Hons Optometry and was due for revalidation in 2020/21 but an extension to approval was granted until 2021/22. This request is for a further delay of revalidation until 2022/23 due to a review by the GOC (new regulations that will necessitate substantial course changes are expected this summer). A review of the external examiner reports for the last three years provides assurance that quality and standards are sound, that marking standards and the standards of awards are appropriate and that the courses are performing well. It is noted that a GOC visit took place in October 2019 and the course was approved for a further 5 years. The Academic Office is content to endorse the proposed extension of approval with a view to rescheduling the revalidation in semester one of 2022/23 academic year.



SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Academic Policy and Standards Manager

DATE: 12.02.21 \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION C: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT ASSESSMENT (reflecting annual monitoring data)**



SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
2021 \_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Quality Enhancement

DATE: 12 February \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION D: ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE  
(delegated authority from Senate)**

DATE OF COMMITTEE MEETING:

DECISION: Approve (Yes/No)

Late requests (in-year and no imminent Committee meeting) (actioned by Chair on behalf of ASQEC)

DECISION: Approve (Yes/No)

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair ASQEC

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE REPORTED TO ASQEC:

Academic Office July 2019
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