

# COMMISSION ON OPTICIANRY ACCREDITATION SELF STUDY GUIDE

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*Essentials* present the minimum accreditation standards for an educational program. *Essentials* are qualitative requirements stated in broad terms, designed to promote program stability, yet accommodate reasonable variations. The extent to which a program complies with the standards determines its accreditation status. The *Essentials*, therefore, include all requirements for which an accredited program is held accountable. Guidelines and explanatory statements, which clarify the *Essentials*, are enclosed in parentheses. The guidelines are not standards, but provide examples and clarification to assist in interpreting the *Essentials*.

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## PREAMBLE

### ***SCOPE of practice for the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation***

The COA accredits two-year opticianry degree programs and one-year ophthalmic laboratory technology certificate programs. This document contains the requirements for accreditation of two-year opticianry degree programs.

### ***OBJECTIVES***

The Opticianry profession cooperates to establish, maintain, and promote standards of quality for educational Opticianry Programs and provide recognition for those educational programs that meet or exceed the minimum standards specified in these *Essentials*.

These *Essentials* are to be used in the development and self-evaluation of Opticianry Programs. The evaluation of a program's compliance is accomplished by site team visits. Lists of accredited programs are published for the information of the public, prospective students, and employers.

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## **The Concept of Self-Study**

Self-study by an institution or program is the focus of the voluntary system of accreditation. Self-study is an opportunity for institutions and programs to assess the strengths and limitations (weaknesses) and initiate changes to improve and strengthen educational offerings. As described in Section VI, "Continuing Program Evaluation" of *The Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for Opticianry*, the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation requires that each program seeking accreditation or reaccreditation undergo periodic self-evaluation and reflect the results of the self-evaluation in program operation.

## **Characteristics of an Acceptable Self-Study Report**

1. The self-study is performed by the institution or program for the purposes of improving its educational programs and offerings.
2. The self-study is performed, as a cooperative effort, by a representative proportion of individuals with varied interests in an improved educational program, i.e., administration, program faculty, students, advisory committee, and other interested and affected groups.
3. The Self-Study Report incorporates sufficient data about graduates and educational outcomes in general to validate the goals and learning objectives of the program.
4. The Self-Study Report includes an assessment of the program's relative compliance with *The Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for Opticianry (Essentials)*.
5. The Self-Study Report contains a summary of perceived strengths and limitations (weaknesses) in the program's operation, curriculum content, and the plans for program improvement.
6. The Self-Study Report incorporates sufficient quantitative and qualitative information in its narrative and exhibits to document the conclusions of the self-study, such as, compliance with the *Essentials*, validation of goals and learning objectives, strengths, and a schedule of improvements completed or in process.
7. The Safety and Environmental Management Checklist will be submitted as part of the Self Study. This checklist will be sent to Program Directors along with the Self Study Format. The program will then complete the checklist, indicating a "yes" if the standard is in place and a "no" if it is not. Any items checked "no" should be commented upon. In addition, any appropriate documentation indicating an exemption from the standard should be attached. Upon completion, the Program Director and the designated Safety Officer must sign in the appropriate place.

## **Instructions and Suggestions for Performing and Submitting a Self-Study Report**

1. Read the *Accreditation Guide for Opticianry Programs* to become familiar with the accrediting standards, the *Essentials*, the required scope of the Self-Study Report, and instructions for preparing the Self-Study Report.

2. Assemble all data, conclusions, and reports from previous and on-going self-studies performed by the institution or program for distribution as resources to the self-study committee.
3. Convene a self-study committee by identifying and securing the cooperation of individuals who represent the interests discussed in item 2 of "Characteristics of an Acceptable Self-Study Report."
4. Set a timetable for completion of the interim stages of self-study and the final report.
5. Assign specific tasks for development of the Self-Study Report and make all pertinent data available.
6. Select the format for the Self-Study Report. If the format recommended by the Commission is not followed, the format used must contain all of the "Characteristics of an Acceptable Self-Study Report" as well as each criterion listed in the "*Essentials*."
7. Set a realistic deadline for the first composite draft of the Self-Study Report so that the self-study committee can begin working toward assessment and improvement of the program as a whole.
8. Reflect the consensus of the self-study committee in the Self-Study Report.
9. Type the Self-Study Report with narratives and documentation (exhibits) bound separately and clearly identified. The narrative should not exceed 100 pages, and pages should be numbered. The exhibits should be representative samples of documents rather than entire master plans, outlines, syllabi, and the like.
10. Write an introduction, which clearly identifies those serving on the self-study committee, their titles, and their role in conducting the self-study and in preparing the Self-Study Report.
11. Sign the Self-Study Report. The signatures of the program director and the institution's chief executive officer are required at the end of the report. The signatures of the self-study committee are desired.
12. Bind the Self-Study Report simply and attach the cover so that it can be easily read.
13. Please make available during the on site copies of all Annual Reports and/or Progress Reports submitted to the Commission since your last Self Study Report.
14. Upon receipt of the names and addresses of the on-site evaluation team members, send one copy of the report to each team member and one to the COA office. These copies should be received at least 45 days prior to the site visit. A late fee of \$200.00 was adopted 10/25/98.

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## **I. INSTITUTION**

- A. The institution offering the program must be accredited by the appropriate regional accrediting agency and/or appropriate state accreditation or registry agency in the state in which the program is physically located. In Opticianry Programs, which have academic and clinical phases provided in more than one institution, the institution granting the degree is responsible for assuring that assigned student activities, both on and off campus, are aligned with student learning objectives.

### **SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Identify the regional and/or appropriate state agency by which the institution is accredited. How does your sponsoring institution supervise the educational program and meet the criteria of the *Essentials*?

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a copy of the most recent letters of notification of accreditation. Provide a copy of degree (diploma, certificate) granted.

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- B. Opticianry Programs may be housed in:
1. colleges or universities
  2. community or junior colleges
  3. postsecondary, vocational-technical schools, or institutes
  4. military schools
  5. proprietary schools.

The Opticianry Program must have been in operation for at least two academic years, or the equivalent, and have graduated at least one class, graduates having been awarded a degree appropriate to Opticianry. However, for initial accreditation of new programs, if a letter of intent to seek accreditation is filed within the first year of the program and an on-site evaluation is made within one (1) year of the graduation of the program's first class, that first graduating class is eligible for retroactive accreditation. For initial accreditation of an existing program, accreditation will include the graduating class immediately prior to the date the accreditation is granted, where appropriate.

### **SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Identify the category, which applies to sponsoring institution. State how many years the program has been in operation.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide organizational chart of the institution. Provide program enrollment data for the past two academic years.

## II. MISSION, GOALS, AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Goals refer to those long-range purposes or aims, which the program must sustain year after year. Goals define those end results to be achieved. Goals taken collectively constitute the mission of the program. Learning objectives refer to those relatively short-term conditions to be achieved within a given period of time, which is measurable evidence of progress toward achievement of the program's goals. The Mission, Goals, and Learning Objectives must be published and available to the students.

### A. Mission

The program must have a clearly stated mission, which is appropriate for Opticianry. The program's distance educational activities must have a clearly defined purpose congruent with the program's mission.

#### **SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

State institution/program mission in detail.

#### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Documents containing institution/program mission

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### B. Goals

1. The program must have clearly stated goals, which are appropriate for Opticianry. A goal of the program must be successful completion of the American Board of Opticianry Examination, National Contact Lens Examination, and state licensing examination (if applicable).
2. A goal of the program should be to eliminate hazardous waste and to reduce non-hazardous waste to the minimum levels economically and technically practical, and to be in full-compliance with all federal and state environmental regulations.

#### **SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

State program goals in detail.

#### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Documents containing program goals

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### C. Learning Objectives

The program must have clearly stated competency-based learning objectives, which are appropriate for Opticianry.

**SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

State learning objectives in detail.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Documents containing learning objectives. Documents exhibiting competencies.

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D. Review

Statements of mission, goals, and learning objectives must be reviewed annually and revised when necessary.

1. The reviews must determine whether programs are relevant to the stated mission, goals, and learning objectives; whether mission, goals, and learning objectives are being fulfilled; whether the mission, goals, and learning objectives are understood adequately by all those involved; and whether the mission, goals, and learning objectives shall be modified based on experience.
2. A documented annual review of mission, goals, and learning objectives must include students, faculty members, administrators, and members of the Advisory Board.
3. Review processes must ensure the appropriateness of the technology being used to meet the program’s objectives.

**SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

The analysis (review) should include, but not be limited to addressing such questions as: What are the goals and learning objectives of the institution? ...the program? How do these goals and learning objectives relate? Are the learning objectives appropriate? Are the learning objectives achieved?

The evidence should include a critical evaluation of the institution/program strengths and limitations (weaknesses). Specify plans to remedy existing limitations (weaknesses). List in order of priority, with established dates for implementation. Identify those who participated in the review.

**SUGGESTED**

Documents of Reviews

**EXHIBITS**

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E. Program Outcomes

The program must evaluate outcomes through a systematic plan for assessing program effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance by achieving specified requirements with respect to:

- a. program completion;
- b. job placement;
- c. National Opticianry Competency Examination (ABO) pass rates;

- d. NCLE, in states where contact lens fitting is included in the definition of the scope of practice for Opticians; and
- e. state licensure pass rates, in states where opticians are licensed.

Refer to Accreditation Guide, page 68 for details.

### **SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Indicate what the outcomes are, document how you determine them. Indicate how they are evaluated, who is present for the evaluations, what has been done in the past as a result of the evaluations.

### **SUGGESTED**

Documentation of the above program outcomes.

### III. CURRICULUM

The minimal length of the educational program for the Opticianry Program is two academic years or equivalent. Instruction must follow an educationally sound and sequenced plan, which documents:

#### **SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe length of program

#### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide samples of promotional and marketing materials.

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- A. A structured curriculum with clearly written course syllabi which describe competencies and student learning objectives. Unless expressly prohibited by state law, the curriculum must include, but not be limited to:

Profession Related Content Areas

1. Assessment of the Visual System
2. Business Management
3. Contact Lens Clinical Experience (Internship or Externship)
4. Contact Lens Fitting
5. Contact Lens Modification
6. Contact Lens Theory
7. Dispensing Clinical Experience (Internship or Externship)
8. Dispensing Theory
9. Fabrication Techniques
10. Geometric Optics
11. Ocular Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology
12. Ophthalmic Materials
13. Ophthalmic Terminology
14. Ophthalmic Optics
15. Opticianry Sales Techniques
16. Patient/customer/client Relationships
17. Prescription Analysis
18. Production & Quality Control Methods
19. Professional Ethics
20. Relationships with Eyecare Professionals and Laboratory Personnel
21. Safety and Environmental Health
22. Scope of Practice
23. Spectacle Fitting and Adjusting
24. State and National Opticianry Regulations

General Education Content Areas \*

1. Behavioral Science

2. Computer Technology
3. English
4. Mathematics
5. Science

The curriculum must include a plan for a well-structured, competency-based clinical practice program.

The complete and detailed up-to-date curriculum must be kept on file and be based on clearly stated learning objectives. Course syllabi should include learning objectives, grading criteria, Instructor's name, office hours, didactic and clinical education schedules, and assigned texts. Individual course outlines, class schedules, and laboratory schedules must be available and distributed to students. Records of directed work experience, i.e., clinical, laboratory or cooperative, and student evaluation must be maintained.

\* (Although the Essentials emphasize learning objectives, they do not specify exact hours and a content area may be included in a course with other content areas. Educators should develop a program, which satisfies these learning objectives, utilizing to the best advantage facilities and personnel available. Freedom from the restrictions of required hours of instruction on specific subjects should encourage innovations to improve education.)

**SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe the curriculum stating duration, courses, sequencing, philosophy, objectives, prerequisites, curriculum monitoring, and evaluation process. List the requirements for the diploma or certificate. Describe the clinical experience plan for both dispensing clinic and contact lens clinic, where appropriate.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide listing of all courses included in the curriculum, course outlines, objectives, faculty assignments, and didactic class schedules. Include samples of lesson plans used by each instructor and faculty member. Must be available for review by members of the evaluation team.

B. Instructional Material (textbooks, manuals, handouts, etc.)

Material required to meet educational goals and/or learning objectives of the program must be available and utilized. Sufficient resources must be available to support assignment of professionally related research papers. Sufficient learning resources must be made available to support student learning in distance educational activities.

**SELF-STUDY**

**REPORT**

**SUGGESTIONS**

Describe types of instructional materials including laboratory equipment that is used in the program.

**SUGGESTED**

**EXHIBITS**

Lists of textbooks and references required or suggested for student use. Must be available for review by the evaluation team.



Describe plan for supervised laboratory education. Describe laboratory practicum and other techniques used.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS** Provide copies laboratory rotation schedule including supervision. Provided samples of student records used in the laboratory area. Have available copies of any agreements or contracts with outside organizations for providing such training.

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F. Supervised and Documented Clinical Experience.

Internships or externships conducted by the institution must be supervised or coordinated by program faculty possessing the appropriate instructor qualifications. There must be a written training plan and goals for students that specify the particular application, objectives, and experiences that are to be acquired during the internship or externship. For externships, the training plan must also designate the on-site employer representative who will be responsible for guiding and overseeing the students' learning experiences and participate in the student's written evaluation. Students are to be graded with respect to their attainment of the learning objectives of the internship or externship.

Each internship or externship must have available a dispensing area that is modeled after a retail/professional optical dispensary and must include:

1. guidelines for professional appearance and presentation to the public
2. a selection of contemporary ophthalmic frames
3. hand tools necessary for adjusting and dispensing of eyewear/vision aids
4. instruments and devices necessary to properly design lenses from a given prescription
5. instruments and devices to ensure accuracy of the finished product before dispensing to the patient/customer/client
6. guidelines for financial aspects of professional/retail optical dispensing
7. an area for record retention of eyewear/vision aids dispensed.

Each internship must have available a contact lens dispensing area (if applicable) that is modeled after a retail/professional contact lens dispensary and must include:

1. guidelines for professional appearance and presentation to the public
2. an inventory of contact lenses of current technology appropriate for patient/customer/client evaluation
3. instruments and devices necessary to properly design contact lenses from a given prescription
4. instruments and devices to ensure accuracy of the finished contact lenses before dispensing
5. instruments, equipment, and solutions necessary to evaluate and dispense contact lenses
6. guidelines for financial aspects of professional/retail optical dispensing
7. an area for record retention of eyewear/vision aids dispensed

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe plan for supervised clinical education. Describe other practicum techniques used. Include information on both dispensing and contact lens clinics, where appropriate.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide copies of clinical rotation schedules including supervision. Provide samples of student records used in the clinic areas. Have available copies of any agreements or contracts with outside organizations for providing such training.

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#### G. Graduate Competencies

Graduates of an Opticianry Program must demonstrate competencies including, but not limited to, those listed below. Graduates must be able to:

1. use effective oral and written communication;
2. perform basic algebra, trigonometry, and geometry;
3. identify the human eye structure, function, and pathology;
4. determine physiognomic (facial and eye) measurements;
5. neutralize eyewear/vision aids prescriptions;
6. assess vocational and avocational needs of the patient/customer/client ;
7. assist in selection of proper frames and lenses;
8. price and collect fees for vision aids and services;
9. prepare ophthalmic laboratory job orders;
10. deliver prescription eyewear/vision aids and instruct patient/customer/client in use and care;
11. maintain records ;
12. provide follow-up service, including eyewear/vision; aids, repair, lens and frame replacement;
13. respond to inquiries and concerns;
14. apply rules and regulations for safe work practices;
15. demonstrate proficiency in the operation and function of equipment;
16. utilize and maintain equipment;
17. demonstrate proficiency in finishing techniques;
18. describe visual assessment;
19. maintain records, including third party forms, inventory, and equipment;
20. demonstrate principles of adaptation, dispensing, and fitting of contact lenses;
21. identify procedures associated with dispensing artificial eyes and low vision aids, when appropriate;
22. discuss prescription eyewear/vision aids and other patient/customer/client related information (verbal and written) with the prescriber;
23. demonstrate knowledge of applicable state statutes and regulations.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe methods of measuring the competencies of students.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide course syllabi

#### **IV. RESOURCES**

Resources, both direct and indirect, must be sufficient to support the number of students enrolled in the program.

#### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe resources available for the opticianry program. Describe process used to determine student capacity for the program.

#### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Include in the response the entering class size for past three years.

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#### **A. Program Director**

The Opticianry Program must identify a qualified individual responsible for administration, evaluation, development, and revision of the program.

##### **1. Qualifications**

In addition to serving on a full-time appointment, the Program Director must possess the following:

- A Bachelors Degree;
- At least 3 years experience in the field of ophthalmic optics; and
- All credentials for which the students are being prepared in the program, or hold comparable credentials that demonstrate at least equivalent training and preparation.

Program Directors of accredited programs reviewed under an earlier version of the *Essentials* are “grandfathered” according to those standards in effect at the time of their appointment to the position of Program Director. However, it is recommended that “grandfathered” directors not meeting these qualifications upgrade credentials accordingly.

The Program Director must demonstrate proficiency in program planning curriculum design, instruction, and academic advising. The director should have had at least two years experience, or the equivalent, as an instructor at an accredited Opticianry Program.

In the event of a change in Program Director, the Commission must be notified within thirty (30) days. A qualified person must be placed in the position within nine (9) months of the date of the vacancy. The Commission must receive the new director's curriculum vitae within thirty (30) days of period of employment. The vitae must include details of education, certification, licensure, training, and general background experience.

#### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List qualifications of the position of program director required by the sponsoring institution.

## **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide copy of director's curriculum vitae

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### 2. Responsibilities

In addition to teaching and other duties, the Program Director must be responsible for the organization, administration, periodic review, development, and general effectiveness of the program. The Program Director must be responsible for the maintenance of a safe and healthful work environment for staff and students. The Program Director must be responsible for maintaining the academic integrity of all distance educational activities. The Program Director's responsibilities for the program must not be adversely affected by educationally unrelated functions.

## **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List and estimate percentages of time the program director devotes to each responsibility. Describe process by which program personnel are evaluated. Discuss the safety and environmental procedures in place.

## **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide copy of program director's job description.

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### B. Instructional Staff

#### 1. Qualifications

The faculty (instructors) must be individually qualified by education and experience, must be effective in teaching the subjects assigned, and must meet the standards required by the institution.

Teaching faculty for spectacle dispensing must be certified by the American Board of Opticianry and licensed (where applicable) in the state in which the program is located.

Teaching faculty for contact lens fitting must be certified by the National Contact Lens Examiners (or equivalent) and licensed (where applicable) in the state in which the program is located.

Teaching faculty of accredited programs reviewed under an earlier version of the *Essentials* are "grandfathered" according to those standards in effect at the time of their appointment to the faculty.

However, it is recommended that "grandfathered" faculty not meeting these qualifications upgrade credentials accordingly.

Qualified faculty must provide appropriate and documented oversight for all distance delivery of education, ensuring both the rigor of those courses and the quality of instruction.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List qualifications required by the sponsoring institution for full-time and part-time faculty

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide curriculum vitae for each instructor or faculty member.

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2. Responsibilities

The faculty must be responsible for submitting course outlines and lesson plans for each course or block of instruction within the course assigned by the director, evaluating students, academic advising, preparing reports as required by the institution, and participating in the upgrading and review of course material.

Lesson plans must be on file and available for review by authorized persons. Lesson plans could include, but not be limited to:

1. Weekly subject material;
2. Handouts;
3. Tests;
4. List of videos or other technology or teaching tools;
5. Learning objectives;
6. Type of instruction; and
7. References for both student and instructor.

It is important to note that the lesson plans are flexible.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List and describe assigned responsibilities for each instructor and faculty member.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a sample of course outlines and lesson plans used by instructors and faculty members. Course outlines and lesson plans must be available for review by the evaluation team.

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3. Instructor/Student Ratio

The instructor/student ratio must be adequate to achieve the stated learning objectives of the curriculum.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe how curriculum objectives are met with existing instructor/student ratio.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Attach any institutional policy establishing instructor/student ratio. Provide instructor/student ratios.

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4. Professional Development and Review
  - a. The institution and Opticianry Program must encourage and provide opportunities for the faculty members to improve their optical, educational, and professional expertise. The program must provide training for faculty who teaches via the use of technology.
  - b. The Opticianry Program must have established and published procedures for evaluation of instructors.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe the institution’s policy that provides for and encourages continuing education for instructor staff. Refer to budget for locations for continuing education.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide policy documents. List continuing education opportunities available to instructor staff. List participation in professional development for the last two years and plans for next year.

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C. Financial

The institution must show financial responsibility and commitment to the program. Budget records identifying financial resources of the Opticianry Program must be maintained and available for a period of three (3) years. The Program Director, with the assistance of the administration and faculty, should be responsible for planning the budget.

For distance educational activities, the institution must demonstrate a commitment to ongoing support, both financial and technical, and to the continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable enrolled students to complete the degree.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe funding of program including history and sources of funding. Describe participation by program director and instructor staff in budget development and expenditure control.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide copies of program budget, including income, expenses, capital expenditures for last year, this current year, and next year.

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D. Facilities

1. General

Adequate classrooms, laboratories, administration offices, and other facilities, as required, must be provided in accordance with accepted educational standards.

Classrooms must provide an environment conducive to learning. The facilities must include, but not be limited to, an Optical Dispensing Laboratory, an Optical Fabrication Laboratory, and a Contact Lens Laboratory. Laboratory supervisors must be present during laboratory hours. The Program Director's office must provide privacy. The location must be secure for record maintenance.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe classroom and laboratory facilities used by program. Note changes and improvements expected next year or programmed in the future.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Schematic drawings of classrooms and laboratories.

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2. Equipment and Supplies

The institution must provide appropriate classroom, office, and laboratory equipment. Current laboratory materials in adequate quantities must be provided. There should be a plan for scheduled equipment replacement and repair.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List and describe classroom and laboratory equipment and supplies available for program. Provide student/equipment ratio for laboratories.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Attach a listing of optical equipment available for program.

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3. Library

A library must be readily accessible and contain an adequate supply of current books, scientific references, periodicals, and other materials related to the curriculum.

The library holdings must contain sufficient reference material to facilitate required student and faculty study and research. The faculty must have input in the selection of Opticianry reference materials. A listing of the Opticianry material must be available to the students. Opticianry reference materials must be accessible in terms of location and hours of operation.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe library facilities provided by sponsoring institution and the usage of these facilities by student and faculty. Also describe the policy of selection and acquisition of new equipment and learning materials.

4. Records

Satisfactory records must be maintained for all student admissions, attendance, health (if required by the state), achievement, and evaluation, including distance educational activities.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe types of records relating to program and how and where they are maintained.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide sample of each program record maintained.

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E. Instructional Resources

Adequate and current multimedia and audiovisual materials must be available for instruction.

Faculty and students must have access to computers and to the Internet.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe types of audiovisual aids used and available to the program.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a list of instructional aids and published regulations and related procedures.

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F. Safety and Environmental Management

Program must operate in accordance with federal and state occupational safety, health and environmental regulation. Accepted universal precautions should be observed. The Safety and Environmental Checklist as supplied by the Commission must be adhered to.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe procedures used as they relate to federal and state occupational safety, health, and environmental regulations. Discuss your program's compliance with COA's Safety and Environmental Checklist.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide documentation of published regulations, safety posters, student information, etc.

### **REQUIRED EXHIBIT**

Safety and Environmental Management Checklist.

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#### G. Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee must be formed with a clearly defined role and function, and a detailed description of that role and function must be distributed to all members. Members must be appointed in accordance with institutional policy.

### **SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Discuss role of advisory committee in relation to the program. Tell how members were selected, how the committee functions, and when the committee meets.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a mission statement and a roster of members of advisory committee. Provide copies of the agenda and minutes of the meetings for the past three years. The minutes must include a list of attendees and absentees.

#### 1. Qualifications

Advisory Committee members should be certified by the American Board of Opticianry, National Contact Lens Examiners or state licensed, if required by the state, or could have other appropriate ophthalmic qualifications. No more than two of the committee members may represent the allied health profession or the public. Student representation on the committee is required.

The Advisory Committee should consist of at least nine members and should consist of Opticians, Optometrists, Ophthalmologists, and laboratory manufacturing representatives. Full-time faculty and institution administration are ex-officio members.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List qualifications prescribed for advisory members by sponsoring institution, if any.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a qualifications and credentials for each advisor.

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#### 2. Responsibilities

The committee must meet regularly on a semi-annual basis. For each meeting an agenda must be distributed in advance and the minutes recorded and maintained. Minutes must include list of attendees and absentees, and their affiliations.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List the major suggestions of the advisory committee last year. Indicate results.

## V. STUDENTS

### A. Program Description

An accurate description of the Opticianry Program, course content, course objectives, and learning outcomes must be provided to the students.

The program must make available to each entering student current information regarding the criteria for successful completion of the program. The institution and or program must also make available accurate information which includes:

- Description of Opticianry;
- a brief description of the required and elective courses;
- number of credit hours;
- names and rank of faculty;
- entrance requirements;
- tuition and fees;
- scholarships;
- financial aid;
- cancellation and refund policies;
- standards of performance and conduct;
- disciplinary procedures and policies;
- availability of student health services;
- state licensing requirements;
- state licensing and national certification pass rates, where available;
- laboratory safety procedures;
- grading policies;
- clearly stated learning objectives and outcomes;
- exit competencies;
- job placement rates;
- information about clinical education; and
- listing of available periodicals.

If the program is accredited by the Commission, any references to the accreditation classification in official publications must be accurate.

The institution or program must include in its catalog an academic calendar that outlines schedules for academic terms, school years, and projected student completion timelines.

Grading policies and completion requirements must be published. The admission of students, including advanced placement, must be made in accordance with the accepted practices and policies of the institution. The program's admission policies must be supportive of the institution's mission. These policies must include requirements that identify potential students who demonstrate a capability to be successful in this program.

A recruitment policy must be in place. Cancellation and refund policies must be available to the incoming student, and must be in compliance with state and federal laws. Enrollment procedures must be clearly defined and comply with prevailing law. These

practices must be clearly defined, published in the college catalog, readily available, and nondiscriminatory.

All institution and program publications and advertising must be truthful and not mislead students or the public. The institution should address Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title IV, HEA eligibility, and any other state or federal regulations that protect the rights of students.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe the process and procedures used to inform the entering students of the requirements of the educational program. Describe the process and procedures used to evaluate successful completion of the program.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a copy of the latest edition of the school and program catalogs and brochures. Provide data on grades acceptable for graduation.

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#### B. Admission

1. Admission of students, including advance placement, must be made in accordance with the accepted practices and policies of the institution. These practices must be clearly defined, published, readily available, and nondiscriminatory.

The Program Director and/or a member of the instructional staff must cooperate with the institution's admissions officer in establishing admission requirements for students and participate in the final student selection. The Program must adhere to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act).

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Briefly discuss admissions process for the program or institution. Describe role of counseling and discuss program prerequisites for admission. Discuss policy for awarding credit for previous learning experience.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide copies of information sent to prospective students and counselors.

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2. Candidates for admission must be high school graduates or the equivalent, or have passed pre-admission testing standard to the institution sufficient to confirm the candidate's ability to benefit from the program. High school courses (or equivalent) in biology, English, mathematics, physics and use of

electronic multimedia are recommended. The institution must admit to its distance educational programs only those students who meet institutional admission requirements and who also are prepared by background, knowledge, and technical skills to succeed in the distance delivery environment. All enrolled students must have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning.

Once admitted, students from other accredited programs in Opticianry and other allied health professions should be given appropriate transfer credits in accordance with the policies of the institution. There should be a system of challenge by examination.

The faculty and educational facilities must be adequate for the size of enrollment. A pre-entrance counseling visit is recommended.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe admission requirements and the methods used to evaluate applicants. Describe admissions committee functions and membership.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a copy of admission requirements for program, entrance testing material, and list of members of admissions committee.

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#### C. Health Services

The institution must inform the students of its health care services and students must have access to those services. Emergency medical care must be available. This information should be in the program handbook.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe how students are made aware of health care services, health care policy for students enrolled in program, and health standards that must be met by program applicants. Describe emergency medical services available.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide published policies.

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#### D. Guidance and Counseling

Academic guidance, career guidance, and student counseling must be available.

Qualified counseling personnel must post office hours and should be readily available to students needing this service. Counseling sessions should be documented. Information concerning counseling available for students should be published.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

List academic and personal counseling services available to the students and the procedure used to inform the student of these services.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide copies of printed guidance material.

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#### E. Student Records

Satisfactory records must be maintained for student admission, attendance, and evaluation. Grades and credit for courses must be recorded on the student transcript and permanently maintained by the institution in a safe and accessible location. The student must be informed of the right to access his/her own records. Access must be limited to authorized persons.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe procedures for maintenance and access to student records.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide samples of written policy.

#### F. Grievance and Appeal Procedures

Appropriate appeal procedures must be clearly defined and available to the student. The student must be informed of due process with regard to unfavorable evaluation, disciplinary action, dismissal, and suspension.

The institution must provide and implement an appropriate policy for handling complaints from students, graduates and former students, and mandate that this policy is printed in the institution's catalog. There must be a comprehensive written policy for student complaints. The institution must set up and have available a record of student complaints received.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe appeal procedures for academic and disciplinary matters available to students and the procedure used to inform the student of these services. Describe policy for handling student complaints.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide samples of written policy.

**VI. OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

- A. Institution and program announcements and advertising must reflect accurately the Opticianry Program offered.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe how and to whom the program is promoted.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide samples of promotional material.

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- B. Student costs and the awarding of academic credit and degree information must be accurately stated and published.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe procedures by which students are informed of institutional policies regarding academic credit and program costs.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide published documents on academic credit and costs.

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- C. Policies and processes for student withdrawal, refunds of tuition, and refunds of fees must be consistent with the institution's general policy, published, and publicly available.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe process by which students are informed of withdrawal and refund policies.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a copy of all refund policies.

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- D. Policies and practices regarding student clinical practice must be published and made available to the students. This must include a policy on infectious disease control and all-applicable state and federal requirements.

Students on clinical rotation must be directly supervised by a qualified Ophthalmic Dispenser.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe how clinical portion of program is supervised by the sponsoring institution. Describe any policies regarding credit given for ophthalmic employment during clinical experience.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a copy of policy regarding clinical practice, student supervision, employment, and infectious disease control.

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- E. Student and faculty recruitment and student matriculation practices must be nondiscriminatory with respect to race, creed, color, sex, age, handicap(s), or national origin.

**SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe student and faculty recruitment procedures.

**SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a copy of nondiscriminatory statement published by sponsoring institution.

## **VII. CONTINUING PROGRAM EVALUATION**

- A. A process for periodic self-evaluation of the program's effectiveness must be reflected in program policy and be documented. The institution must evaluate the program's educational effectiveness. The evaluation should include assessment of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student faculty satisfaction. With regard to distance educational activities, the demonstrated assessment of student learning outcomes must be comparable to outcomes of student learning in more traditional formats. The institution must conduct assessment of the characteristics of student capability to succeed in the distance delivery environment. This information should be applied to future admission decisions.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe the on-going program review process. Describe how the program determines if it is achieving the program's/institution's own educational goals. Include a statistical and empirical validation. Describe evaluation policy used to determine the effectiveness of instructional staff.

### **SUGGESTED EXHIBITS**

Provide a written policy/procedures for program review. Provide a copy of instrument used for graduate follow-up, data obtained from studies, i.e., pass/fail ratio of graduate on ABO exam, NCLE, and state licensure exam regarding programs effectiveness in achieving own goals. Provide a copy of instructor evaluation.

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- B. The results of the self-evaluation must be appropriately reflected in program organization.

The continuing program self-evaluation must include a system for internal and external curriculum validation, evaluation by current students, follow-up studies of alumni, and a dedicated employer survey of graduates. The program must secure sufficient qualitative information to demonstrate an ongoing system of evaluation consistent with the goals of the program.

The Advisory Committee may facilitate program development, evaluation, support, planning, and coordination by periodic evaluation of the program's functions and of its success in achieving its stated learning objectives.

A list of program graduates must be maintained. The results on the National Opticianry Competency Examination administered by the American Board of Opticianry, the National Contact Lens Examination, and state licensure examinations must also be documented, if available, and reviewed periodically to evaluate effectiveness of the program. The maintenance and documentation of the employment records of recent graduates of the program must be one aspect of program evaluation.

### **SELF STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS**

Describe program changes that have occurred from prior self-evaluation.

## VIII. MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION

- A. The annual report form or progress report provided by the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation must be completed under the supervision of and signed by the Program Director and either the division chairperson, department head, or institution Chief Executive Officer, and returned by the established deadline. Programs submitting reports later than the established deadline will be charged a \$200 late fee per report.
- B. In the event of a change in Program Director, the Commission must be notified within thirty (30) days. A qualified person must be placed in the position within nine (9) months of the date of the vacancy. The Commission must receive the new director's curriculum vitae within thirty (30) days of period of employment. The vitae must include details of education, certification, licensure, training, and general background experience.
- C. Accreditation of the Opticianry Program may be withdrawn only after notice has been given to the Chief Executive Officer of the institution and the Opticianry Program Director that such action is contemplated. The program is entitled to explanations of the reasons for withdrawal, sufficient time to permit a considered response, and the use of established procedures for appeal.
- D. The Commission on Opticianry Accreditation may withdraw accreditation if:
  - 1. The Opticianry Educational Program is not maintained in substantial compliance with the *Essentials*.
  - 2. The program does not permit reevaluation after due notice.
  - 3. The institution's Chief Executive Officer requests withdrawal of accreditation by submitting a written request to the Commission.
  - 4. There are no students in the program for two consecutive years.

## **ACCREDITATION ADMINISTRATION**

Application for accreditation of a program in Opticianry must be made to:

Commission on Opticianry Accreditation  
PO Box 592  
Canton, NY 13617  
[director@coaccreditation.com](mailto:director@coaccreditation.com)

The evaluation and accreditation process of an Opticianry Program is voluntary (including on-site visits) and can be initiated only at the expressed and written request of the Chief Executive Officer of the institution and the Opticianry Program Director.

The institution may withdraw its request for accreditation at any time prior to the final action by the Commission.

The institution/program being evaluated is given the opportunity to review and comment on the content accuracy of the Evaluation Report before final action is taken in deciding the accreditation classification.

The Chief Executive Officer of the institution may request a return on-site evaluation.

Accreditation decisions may be appealed in writing to the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation in accordance with the appeal procedures.

The Commission on Opticianry Accreditation will periodically survey educational programs for continued accreditation.

- Website: [www.COAccreditation.com](http://www.COAccreditation.com)