



The European Council of Optometry and Optics

**Guidelines for the accreditation of
qualifications which meet the
standards of the European Diploma in
Optometry**

Part V:
Continuing Accreditation & Re-
accreditation

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1. Introduction

Accreditation is awarded after a successful visit to the training institution. The level of accreditation awarded depends on the extent to which the training programme provides evidence that all of the graduates have achieved all of the learning outcomes, competencies and clinical experience requirements of the European Diploma.

Full Accreditation: If all parts of the European Diploma in Optometry, the learning outcomes, the competencies and the clinical experience (through a portfolio of evidence), can be shown to be taught and assessed within the training programme to a standard equivalent to the European Diploma then Full Accreditation will be awarded.

On graduating from a Fully Accredited programme and paying the fee to ECOO (at present €150) graduates receive the European Diploma along with their academic qualification.

Partial Accreditation: If not all parts of the European Diploma in Optometry are taught and assessed within the training programme to a standard equivalent to the European Diploma in Optometry then Partial Accreditation will be awarded.

If a graduate wishes to gain the European Diploma in Optometry they will be required to cover only the non-exempted sections at another approved institution and/or to submit the ECOO Portfolio of clinical experience.

Recognition towards partial or full accreditation: If a candidate graduated from an institution that holds the accreditation for the European Qualification in Optics, the successful completion of these competencies and training will be recognised as having fulfilled Part A of the European Diploma in Optometry.

2. Record of Full and Partial Exemption.

Each year, Partially and Fully Accredited institutions are required to keep a record of the names of their graduates and the awarded level of exemption from the European Diploma in Optometry. A copy of this list should be sent to ECOO and will be used as a permanent record of holders of the Diploma and where appropriate to confirm the extent of exemption if the graduate subsequently applies to take the examinations for the remaining sections of the European Diploma in Optometry.

3. Continuing Accreditation

Full and Partial Accreditation is normally awarded for a maximum of five years*, subject to the following conditions.

- Submission to ECOO of a list of the names of the accredited graduates within one month of the end of the academic year.
- Submission to ECOO, of an annual monitoring report by the training institution.

3.1 ECOO's Annual Monitoring of Accredited Programmes

ECOO requests that the following information be supplied by each accredited institution on an annual basis. This information will be requested each year in the autumn and Institutions are asked to return the form by **31st October**. This form is available in **Appendix 1** of this document.

(a) Programme Details:

In the past year:

Have there been any changes to the programme in design & content?

Have there been any changes to the programme approval by the host institution or the recognition of the programme by a regional/national body?

Have there been any changes to the programme leadership?

(b) Student Numbers:

In the Table provided, please enter the number of students who entered the first year of the programme during the past 3 years, and the numbers who progressed to the next year of the course.

(c) Staff Resources:

In the Table provided, please enter the number of staff teaching on the programme for this year and last year, and details of any new staff who have joined the programme, and of any staff who have left. For new staff, please provide a CV and details of the subjects they now teach. For details of staff who have left, please indicate which subjects they were responsible for teaching.

(d) Other resources & Facilities:

Please provide information about any substantial changes to facilities (e.g., changes to teaching space, clinic availability) or other resources (e.g., equipment, availability of placements) over the past year. In the first year of the Annual Monitoring by ECOO, please indicate what substantial changes have taken place since the last ECOO accreditation visit.

(e) Any other significant changes

Please provide information about any other significant change to programme content or delivery not captured by the points already mentioned above. Such changes might include the programme moving to a new Faculty/School within the Institution, or changes to the regulatory framework for Optics/Optomety in the country where the programme is offered (e.g., in relation to the scope of practice). ECOO would also wish to hear about changes in optionality on the programme

(e.g., the modules/courses which students can opt to take or not to take as they progress through the programme), and about significant changes to the weightings of elements of the programme, or major changes to the assessments of modules/courses.

Please note that these are only some examples of notifiable changes, and this list is not exhaustive.

On receipt of the annual report, it will be for ECOO to decide:

- if more information is required,
- if the level of accreditation should be increased or reduced,
- if a further visit is necessary.

4. Proposals for the Re-Accreditation of courses

It has been agreed that, in order to maintain the standards and credibility of the Diploma, a robust process of re-accreditation is needed. At the same time, it is recognised that accreditation procedures are both time consuming and expensive for Training institutions. When a course is accredited, accreditation is awarded for a fixed period of time, normally 5 years*.

For re-accreditation of fully accredited programmes for the European Diploma in Optometry, one of the main pillars of the process is a detailed review of a cross section of Portfolios (approximately 10%, or a minimum number; randomly selected) and the assessment process the Institution conducts. This could be undertaken prior to the actual visit.

Completion of a review of the self-assessment document, by the Training institution is required. This should not be a major exercise if there have been no significant changes in the course, which should, in any case have been notified through the annual monitoring review. Similar documentation is required to that set out in the full visit programme e.g., staffing and equipment lists, timetables, clinic details etc.

There is recognition of the cost and time involved in the visit. A re-accreditation visit will be over a period of two days and involve three visitors. This should include the reviews of the facilities, teaching and interviews with staff and students but to a tighter time scale than in the initial visit. Ahead of the visit, the panel will meet to discuss documentation and establish any issues that need clarification.

Information about the costs of re-accreditation is contained in **Part VI: Financial aspects of accreditation.**

The following information is requested from an Institution that has previously been accredited by ECOO and is undergoing re-accreditation.

4.1 Information about the training institution

- Name and address of the institution.
- Details of the nature (e.g. private/state funded), size and administrative organisation of the establishment.
- Number of departments, schools or equivalent units.
- Total number of students in the Institution.

4.2 Information about the school/department

- Name of department, or equivalent, teaching Optometry/Optics.
- Name and qualifications of the Head of the Optometry/Optics programme.
- Number of students studying Optometry/Optics in each year of the course.
- Details of the physical space occupied by the Department in the Institution.
- Details of clinic facilities and clinical equipment available for teaching purposes.
- Information about any impending changes to facilities (physical space or equipment available) and about significant changes to facilities since the last ECOO accreditation visit
- Names, qualifications, CVs and teaching roles & teaching hours of staff.
- Details of any impending changes to staffing, and any changes in staffing since the last ECOO accreditation visit.
- Details of staff development since the last ECOO accreditation visit.

4.3 Information about the award

- Level and title of the qualification in Optometry/Optics/Qualification that is awarded on graduation.
- Information about the national scope-of-practice (relative to the World Council of Optometry, levels 1-4).
- Number of years study in the Optometry/Optics programme.
- Mode of study: full-time or part-time?
- Details of the extent to which teaching on the programme is in the form of distance- or blended- learning.
- Has any legislation been passed relating change in the scope of practice or is any pending? If so, please provide details.
- Number of weeks in the academic year, including examination weeks.
- For the last three cohorts, please provide entry requirements and grades on entry to the programme.
- The number of students applying and the number accepted.
- Details of any information held by the Institution/School about employment of graduates.
- Is this qualification graduates receive recognised by national legislation?
- Is this qualification linked to a regulatory body that the graduate needs to register with?
- Details of the clinical assessment strategy employed in the programme. For example, is it competency-based?

- Details of any period(s) of supervised clinical practice during the programme, to include information about duration of any such placements, who organises these (the training institution or the student?), and how it is ensured that an appropriate and consistent level of supervision is received by the student whilst on placement.
- Please provide information about the nature and type of any assessments that are set and marked whilst in supervised practice.

In addition, please supply:

- The programme specification document (or equivalent) that gives details of the courses/modules taught, the level of each course/module, the year in the programme when this is taught, and the number of ECTS credits assigned to each module/course.
- The assessment schedule for the programme and examples of written examinations, model answers and marking schemes, and examples of clinical/practical exams together with marking schemes.
- Student timetable, didactic and clinical.
- Records held by the School about each student's clinical experience.
- Examples of Portfolios completed by students. ECOO asks for access to these one month in advance of the visit. Please provide ECOO with a list of students and who will then select at random the names of the students whose Portfolios ECOO wish to see. ECOO will aim to complete this work prior to the visit. (Note: we are conscious that the information recorded in the Portfolios will not be in English and that we will need to recruit the help of a translator).

4.4 The Head of School/Programme is also asked:

- to complete Part II, the competency Self-assessment document.
- to demonstrate how the statements in Part IV Section 1.4 are ~~III Sections 2-7~~ **are** satisfied (Note: the wording in red font was changed in April 2025 to correct a typographical error).
- to provide written evidence supporting each section or to indicate where the evidence is located in existing institutional documents, e.g., in internal or external programme reviews, the programme specification document, the examination regulations document, in student handbooks or in clinic handbooks.
- to highlight details of any changes to the programme since the last ECOO evaluation of the programme.

*** The European Council of Optometry and Optics reserves the right to give full or partial accreditation for a period of less than five years, to specify the requirements for continuing accreditation and to make further visits to ensure that the accredited standard is being maintained.**

- END -

Appendix 1: Annual monitoring form

Form for Annual Monitoring of Fully- or Partially-Accredited Institutions

Name of Training Institution

Name of ECOO-Accredited Qualification

Name of Individual Leading the Programme

Name of Individual Completing this form

Dates of Current Accreditation: From _____ to _____

ECOO requests that the following information be supplied by each accredited institution on an annual basis. This information will be requested each year in the autumn and Institutions are asked to return the form by **31st October**.

Please provide details of changes as follows:

Programme Details:

In the past year, have there been any changes to the programme in design &/or content?

Have there been any changes to the programme approval by the host institution or the recognition of the programme by a regional/national body?

Have there been any changes to the programme leadership?

Student Numbers:

In the Table provided, please enter the number of students who entered the first year of the programme during the past 3 years, and the numbers who progressed to the next year of the course.

Academic Year	Number of students entering the 1 st year of the programme	Number of students entering the 2 nd year of the programme	Number of students entering the 3 rd year of the programme	Number of students entering the 4 th year of the programme
2020/21				
2019/20				

2018/19				
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Staff Resources:

In the Table provided, please enter the number of staff teaching on the programme for this year and last year, and details of any new staff who have joined the programme, and of any staff who have left. For new staff, please provide a CV and details of the subjects they now teach. For details of staff who have left, please indicate which subjects they were responsible for teaching.

Academic Year	Number of staff (full-time equivalent numbers teaching on the programme	Names of new staff who have joined the Institution on a full-time or part-time basis. Please indicate FTE (e.g. 1.0 means a full-time staff member) & provide their CV	Please indicate the FTE of the staff members who have left (e.g.1.0 means they were a full-time staff member)	
2020/21				
2019/20				

Other resources & Facilities

Please provide information about any substantial changes to facilities (e.g., changes to teaching space, clinic availability) or other resources (e.g., equipment, availability of placements) over the past year or since the last ECOO accreditation visit to your Institution.

Appendix 1: Annual monitoring form

Any other significant changes

Please provide information about any other significant change to programme content or delivery not captured by the points already mentioned above*

*Such changes might include the programme moving to a new Faculty/School within the Institution, or changes to the regulatory framework for Optics/Optomety in the country where the programme is offered (e.g., in relation to the scope of practice). ECOO would also wish to hear about changes in optionality on the programme (e.g., the modules/courses which students can opt to take or not to take as they progress through the programme), and about significant changes to the weightings of elements of the programme, or major changes to the assessments of modules/courses. **Please note that these are only some examples of notifiable changes, and this list is not exhaustive.**

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Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Please note on receipt of the annual report, it will be for ECOO to decide:

- if more information is required,
- if the level of accreditation should be increased or reduced,
- if a further visit is necessary outside of the next scheduled re-accreditation visit

