
Rita Dassouli

ECOO Student visitor



Rita Dassouli joined the ECOO visitor panel in October 2022 as a student visitor. Rita is studying for the Bachelor in Optometry at the University of South-Eastern Norway, in Kongsberg and is in the third and final year of her studies. We asked Rita some questions about her experience as a student visitor and her thoughts on the ECOO European Diploma.

What motivated you to apply for an ECOO student visitor position?

I am interested in how optometric education is structured and taught in other European countries. I want to learn more about the different scopes of practice and increase my understanding of audit and quality assurance principles. Being a student visitor gives me the opportunity to meet optometry students and visit other institutions as well as allowing me to work as part of an international team. I have enjoyed the opportunity to give my opinions and be part of a team that influences and develops education and the profession.

Which visit did you join?

In April 2023, I joined a visit to the Bar Ilan University in Tel Aviv, Israel.

What was your experience and key takeaway?

It was my first accreditation visit and my first time in Israel. I had a good experience and it was interesting to see how they practice optometry in Israel. I observed the teaching and looked at the eye examination methods and equipment they use. I talked to the students and staff about different aspects of the optometry programme. I feel that having a student visitor on the visitor panel is a good idea as it can be easier for them to interact with the students. More communication with the university students can provide more input on their thoughts, experiences and valuable input to the accreditation process.

What are your thoughts around the ECOO European Diploma in Optometry (EDO)?

The EDO is very useful and important to the students and facilitates optometrists to get recognition in other European countries. The European Diploma encourages universities to improve their standard of education and can provide them with useful recommendations on how they can increase competence and improve courses in their education programme.

How important do you think the European Diploma is to students from accredited universities?

I consider it very important as it contains a lot of clinical work and contributes to harmonising the standard of optometry. It demonstrates the university's quality of education and can improve career prospects, ultimately leading to better quality of eye care.

What are your future career plans?

Once I have completed my Bachelor's degree, I plan to work in Oslo and will consider starting the Master's degree, which includes the European Diploma. My plan is to specialise in a field that I find interesting in optometry.

What do you hope for the future of optometry?

For the future of optometry, I hope the quality of practice will be more harmonised and that more optometrists will get additional rights from their governments to do more advanced practice and treatments and have a larger role in public health. I hope more optometrists will have the right to do cycloplegic refraction independently, so they can determine the best optical correction for children.