

GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ECOO

PROFESSOR JULIE-ANNE LITTLE
CHAIR OF THE EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS BOARD

What is your professional background, and what is your role at ECOO?

I trained as an optometrist in the UK, and work in a University optometry department.

I have been involved with ECOO since about 2007! I am a UK representative for the Association of Optometrists, and was President of ECOO in 2012-2014. I became increasingly involved in accreditation activity for the European Diploma in Optometry as Vice-chair of what was then called the ECOO Board of Management, and I then succeeded Bob Chappell as Chair when he retired. As Chair of the European Qualifications Board, I also serve on the Executive Committee of ECOO.

What are the most important skills/personal attributes needed to do your job?

A passion for optometry and eyecare! And a real desire to work with people, with an ability to listen and bring together comments and issues. In my academic role, I am active in research as well as teaching, and so no two days are the same! And you also need to have a



good ability to prioritise work and give timely feedback to students and the research team.

What has taken you by surprise in your work with ECOO?

I'm not sure that it is a surprise, but the camaraderie and warmth of ECOO colleagues is always lovely. I always appreciate how dedicated everyone is to eyecare and the value placed on delivering good services for our patients/clients.

What is your biggest achievement at ECOO so far?

I think getting the system for accreditation up and running, building on the huge amount of work that had been put into the European diploma examination process, is a big achievement for ECOO. It is a long-term project, but the European Diploma in Optometry has shaped the development of optometric education and continues

to be important for harmonization and upskilling of our professionals delivering eyecare across Europe.

What is the best piece of professional advice you have received?

Ask questions and get involved! I'm a firm believer that there is always more to learn.

Bonus question:

When you manage to escape from ECOO or your day job, how do you like to spend your time?

I enjoy the outdoors, running and hiking, and you will usually find I squeeze in some time at ECOO meetings to get out for a run and explore the beautiful cities we are fortunate to visit. But in the evenings, good food, good conversation and a glass of wine is lovely too!