

Undergraduate Programme Specification

Master of Optometry with Independent Prescribing

This specification provides a summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate where full advantage is taken of all learning opportunities offered. Further details on the learning, teaching and assessment approach for the programme and modules can be accessed on the University website and Virtual Learning Environment, GCU Learn. All programmes of the University are subject to the University's [Quality Assurance](#) processes.

GENERAL INFORMATION			
Programme Title	Master of Optometry with Independent Prescribing		
Final Award	Master of Optometry with Independent Prescribing		
Awarding Body	Glasgow Caledonian University		
School	School of Health and Life Sciences		
Department	Department of Vision Sciences		
Mode of Study	Full-time		
Location of Delivery	Glasgow Campus and placement locations across Scotland		
UCAS Code	B515		
Accreditations (PSRB)	General Optical Council (pending)		
Period of Approval	From:	September 2024	To: August 2029

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF PROGRAMME
The Master of Optometry with Independent Prescribing programme is designed to provide an education in both the science of vision and the practice of optometry and is aligned with the General Optical Council's (GOC) "Requirements for Approved Qualifications in Optometry or Dispensing Optics" and "Requirements for Approved Qualifications in Additional Supply (AS), Supplementary Prescribing (SP) and/or Independent Prescribing (IP)". On successful completion of the programme, graduates will be eligible to register with the GOC as an Optometrist and to join the GOC's specialty register of Independent Prescribing (IP) Optometrists. The programme integrates academic study, practical experience and professional practice within a curriculum where specific concepts are introduced and revisited as students progress through the programme, and where students' exposure to clinical practice increases in both volume and complexity as they advance. In Years 1-4, students undertake a programme of integrated theoretical and practical study, including extensive clinical experience within the purpose-built, on-campus GCU Vision Centre. In Year 5, students undertake extended external placements, where they gain comprehensive clinical experience under the supervision of suitably qualified clinicians. The programme has the following overall educational aims, which align with both the GCU Strategy for Learning and GCU Common Good Attributes 2030, as well as the School of Health and Life Sciences' portfolio, mission and objectives: • To provide education that is inclusive, innovative, enquiry-based and research-led • To provide all students with the opportunity of undertaking real-world, work-based experiences as part of their studies

- To allow the development of a variety of key transferable skills, with a focus on enabling students to critically reflect, appraise and evaluate their learning and performance in line with continued personal and professional development
- To develop practitioners who have the skills and knowledge required to deliver core and enhanced eyecare services to communities across Scotland and beyond, both autonomously and as effective members or leaders of a multi-disciplinary team
- To develop practitioners who are resilient and compassionate, who treat others with dignity, and who show respect for all cultures

There are a number of alternative exit points and awards available within the programme, and the specific educational aims for each level of the programme are described below.

On successful completion of Level 1, students should be able to:

- Explain the importance of professionalism and reflective practice in healthcare
- Describe the legislation and professional standards that relate to the practice of optometry
- Explain and apply the fundamental principles of geometrical, visual and physical optics
- Describe the anatomy of the eye and visual system
- Explain the aetiology, signs and symptoms of refractive error
- Demonstrate basic proficiency in assessing a patient's visual status
- Describe the optical and design principles of spectacle frames and lenses
- Demonstrate basic proficiency in the use of instrumentation related to spectacle dispensing

On successful completion of Level 2, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a holistic, patient-centred approach to communication and clinical examinations
- Describe the fundamental principles of clinical decision-making
- Describe the fundamental principles of pathology and disease
- Describe the causes, signs and symptoms of a range of ocular diseases
- Describe the fundamental principles of ocular pharmacology and the use of medicines in the diagnosis and management of eye disease
- Demonstrate basic proficiency across a range of techniques for assessing the structure and function of the eyes and visual system
- Demonstrate basic proficiency across a range of techniques for assessing the refractive and binocular vision status of a patient

On successful completion of Level 3, students should be able to:

- Carry out the elements of a routine optometric eye examination
- Select, fit and verify a range of common spectacle lens and frame types
- Demonstrate basic proficiency in contact lens practice
- Interpret a patient's presenting symptoms to formulate a differential diagnosis
- Describe treatment options for a range of ocular diseases
- Describe common theories of visual perception
- Demonstrate basic proficiency in statistical analysis
- Describe the causes, signs and symptoms of a range of binocular vision and eye movement disorders

On successful completion of Level 4, students should be able to:

- Plan and execute a programme of experimental work or a critical analysis of published literature and discuss the outcomes of the work within the broader context of eyecare and/or vision science
- Determine a patient's presenting symptoms and visual requirements, conduct an appropriate eye examination to address these, and formulate a suitable plan for refractive management of the patient
- Assess a patient's suitability for contact lens wear, fit a variety of standard contact lenses, and consider ongoing management options for contact lens wearers
- Dispense appropriate spectacles with consideration of a patient's visual requirements
- Utilise evidence-based practice to determine an appropriate diagnosis and to inform the development of an effective management plan for patients with ocular disease, including consideration of non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatment options, shared management and referral
- Describe strategies for the investigation and management of patients with visual impairment
- Consider their own learning and development needs in relation to progression to the extended clinical placements in Year 5

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

A: Knowledge and understanding

- A1 Demonstrates a critical knowledge and understanding of the scientific principles that underpin the study of the eye and vision.
- A2 Demonstrates a critical knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms that underlie the development of refractive error and anomalies of binocular vision and oculomotor function and how these may be managed.
- A3 Demonstrates a critical knowledge and understanding of the optical and design principles of devices for correcting vision, including spectacles, contact lenses, low vision aids, and specialist sporting and occupational appliances.
- A4 Demonstrates a critical knowledge and understanding of the structure and function of the human eye and body in health and disease, as well as the strategies that may be used to manage disease of the eye and surrounding tissues.
- A5 Demonstrates a critical knowledge and understanding of the use of pharmaceutical agents within eyecare for both diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.
- A6 Demonstrates a critical knowledge and understanding of the legal, regulatory, and ethical principles that underlie both the practice of optometry and the prescribing of medications, and current issues that may affect the provision of eyecare services.
- A7 Demonstrates a critical knowledge and understanding of the research process and the methodologies that can be applied to both clinical research and studies in fundamental vision science.

B: Practice: Applied knowledge, skills and understanding

- B1 Demonstrates proficiency across a range of core and specialist clinical techniques for the assessment of the visual, refractive and oculomotor status of a patient.
- B2 Demonstrates proficiency across a range of core and specialist clinical techniques for the examination of the structure and function of the eyes, adnexa, and visual pathways.
- B3 Gathers, assesses and evaluates the risk factors, symptoms, signs and natural progression of a range of ocular conditions.

- B4 Considers all relevant evidence in order to select and conduct appropriate clinical examination techniques.
- B5 Undertakes a systematic differential diagnosis and critically applies clinical decision-making in order to reach an appropriate diagnosis that will inform treatment options.
- B6 Exercises professional judgement, engages in evidence-based clinical decision-making, works within limits of competence and demonstrates self-directed problem-solving.
- B7 Develops and implements appropriate, patient-centred management plans, which may include refractive correction, non-pharmacological and pharmacological treatment, shared management, and referral.
- B8 Critically reviews information relating to a patient's medical history and existing medications in order to make safe prescribing decisions.
- B9 Demonstrates proficiency across a range of clinical techniques required for fitting and dispensing devices for correcting vision, including spectacles, contact lenses, low vision aids, and specialist sporting and occupational appliances.
- B10 Practises effectively across a range of clinical environments, including complex and unpredictable settings, and with a wide range of patient types, including children, the elderly, and those with visual impairment and complex needs.
- B11 Demonstrates proficiency in planning and executing a programme of research to address a given question relevant to eyecare and/or vision science.

C: Generic cognitive skills

- C1 Adopts a systematic approach to gathering and evaluating information from a variety of sources.
- C2 Demonstrates the ability to critically analyse, interpret, and apply the current evidence base when making clinical judgements.
- C3 Identifies current and anticipated challenges to the effective provision of eyecare services, both at a local, practice level as well as more generally, and considers suitable approaches to address these.
- C4 Engages with peers in discussion and debate of current issues related to vision and eyecare.
- C5 Identifies unanswered questions in the field of eyecare and/or vision science and considers appropriate strategies for investigating these.

D: Communication, numeracy and ICT skills

- D1 Demonstrates effective written, verbal, and non-verbal communication skills with patients, the multi-disciplinary team, and other healthcare professionals.
- D2 Communicates effectively throughout the patient consultation and adapts their approach to meet the needs of individuals.
- D3 Demonstrates effective use of appropriate systems to ensure safe, secure, and accurate clinical record-keeping (including the outcomes of the history, clinical assessment, differential diagnosis and management decisions), prescribing, data exchange, and patient referral.
- D4 Demonstrates proficiency in the use of software to collate and analyse quantitative and qualitative data and to present findings effectively.
- D5 Demonstrates proficiency in the use of software for producing written reports and for the development and presentation of promotional or educational material to colleagues and service users.
- D6 Keeps abreast of changes to policy and practice, as well as the application of emerging technologies in eyecare, through the effective use of online tools to search for relevant clinical and scientific literature.

E: Autonomy, accountability and working with others

E1	Establishes relationships with colleagues based on professional understanding and respect, and works as part of a multidisciplinary team to ensure quality and continuity of care across settings.
E2	Employs an adaptive and personalised approach to clinical care, taking into consideration the patient's social, personal, and cultural needs, and demonstrates effective collaborative working practices to ensure person-centred care, while understanding their individual role.
E3	Upholds professional standards and ethical responsibilities and applies all relevant legislation, policies and guidance safely and effectively.
E4	Works within their limits of competence and critically evaluates and identifies own learning and development needs and those of others.
E5	Engages in critical reflection and applies clinical governance to safeguard and improve the quality of patient care.
E6	Develops and utilises professional networks for support, reflection and learning.
E7	Critically evaluates risk in relation to all aspects of clinical practice and implements appropriate measures to both minimise the occurrence of adverse incidents and mitigate the impact on patient outcomes when such incidents do occur.
E8	Maintains clinical knowledge and skills appropriate to their individual scope of practice.
E9	Demonstrates effective leadership and management skills in the clinical setting to ensure safe and efficient patient and caseload management.

LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS

The programme provides a variety of learning and teaching methods. Programme and Module documentation will provide details of the learning and teaching methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the learning and teaching methods and approaches may include the following:

- Lectures
- Large group interactive sessions (including flipped classroom approaches)
- Laboratory sessions
- Tutorials
- Practical skills sessions
- Clinical sessions
- Peer discussion and review
- Online discussion forums
- Seminars
- Project or dissertation work
- Clinical placements

The above approaches may be delivered either in person or online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

The programme provides a variety of formative and summative assessment methods. Programme and Module documentation will provide details of the assessment methods specific to each module.

Across the programme the assessment methods may include the following:

- Formal examinations and class tests
- Laboratory reports
- Data analysis exercises
- Clinical portfolios
- Practical skills assessments
- Clinical assessments
- Objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE)
- Quizzes and polls
- Reflective reports
- Case-study exercises
- Oral and poster presentations
- Viva voce examinations
- Literature reviews
- Project reports or dissertations

The above assessments may be delivered either in person or online as appropriate and determined at module level by the Module Leader.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Specific entry requirements for this programme can be found on the prospectus and study pages on the GCU website at this location: www.gcu.ac.uk/study

The Course webpage specific to this Programme is:

<https://www.gcu.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate-moptom-optometry-glasgow>

All students entering the programme are required to adhere to the [GCU Code of Student Conduct](#).

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND AVAILABLE AND FINAL EXIT AWARDS¹

The following modules are delivered as part of this programme:

Module Code	Module Title	Core or Optional	SCQF Level	Credit Size	Coursework %	Examination %
M1B530327	Biology of the Human Eye and Supporting Structures	Core	7	20	100	-
M1B530329	Foundations of Optics	Core	7	20	30	70
M1B530331	Principles of Spectacle Dispensing	Core	7	20	100	-
M1B530332	Visual Optics, Refraction and Binocular Vision	Core	7	20	40	60
M1B530328	Clinical and Professional Studies 1	Core	7	20	100	-
M1B530330	Neural Anatomy and Physiology	Core	7	20	100	-
M2B530334	Diagnostic Instrumentation and Techniques A	Core	8	20	50	50
M2B530333	Clinical and Professional Studies 2	Core	8	20	100	-
M2B530336	Further Refraction and Binocular Vision	Core	8	20	40	60
M2B530337	Introduction to Ocular and Systemic Disease	Core	8	20	30	70
M2B530338	Ocular Pharmacology	Core	8	20	30	70
M2B530335	Diagnostic Instrumentation and Techniques B	Core	8	20	50	50
M3B530341	Further Ocular Disease	Core	9	20	30	70
M3B530343	Visual Development and Paediatric Eyecare	Core	9	20	30	70
M3B530339	Clinical and Professional Studies 3	Core	9	20	100	-
M3B530340	Contact Lens Studies	Core	9	20	30	70
M3B530342	Neuro-ophthalmology and Eye Movement Disorders	Core	9	20	30	70
M3B530344	Visual Perception and Methods of Enquiry in Vision Science	Core	9	20	50	50
MHB530345	Clinical and Professional Studies 4A	Core	10	20	60	40
MHB530347	Management of Ocular Disease A	Core	10	20	30	70
MHB530349	Project/Dissertation	Core	10	40	100	-
MHB530346	Clinical and Professional Studies 4B	Core	10	20	50	50
MHB530348	Management of Ocular Disease B	Core	10	20	30	70
MMB530351	Independent Prescribing: Prescribing Safely and Effectively	Core	11	30	30	70
MMB530350	Independent Prescribing: Placement	Core	11	30	100	-
MMB530352	Learning and Experience in Practice	Core	11	90	100	-

¹ Periodically, programmes and modules may be subject to change or cancellation. Further information on this can be found on the GCU website here: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/currentstudents/essentials/policiesandprocedures>

Students undertaking the programme on a full-time basis commencing in September of each year will undertake the modules in the order presented above. This may be subject to variation for students commencing the programme at other times of year (e.g. January) and/or undertaking the programme on a part-time or distance learning mode of delivery.

The following final and early Exit Awards are available from this programme²:

Certificate of Higher Education in Vision Science - *achieved upon successful completion of 120 credits*

Diploma of Higher Education in Vision Science - *achieved upon successful completion of 240 credits*

Bachelor of Science in Vision Science - *achieved upon successful completion of 360 credits*

Bachelor of Science with Honours in Clinical Vision Science - *achieved upon successful completion of 480 credits*

Master of Optometry³ - *achieved upon successful completion of 600 credits*

Master of Optometry with Independent Prescribing - *achieved upon successful completion of 630 credits*

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Students should expect to complete their programme of study under the GCU Assessment Regulations that were in place at the commencement of their studies on that programme, unless proposed changes to University Regulations are advantageous to students.

These can be found at: <https://www.gcu.ac.uk/aboutgcu/services-and-facilities/qualityassuranceandenhancement/regulations-and-policies>

In addition to the GCU Assessment Regulations noted above, this programme is subject to Programme Specific Regulations in line with the following approved Exceptions (Case 226):

1. The MOptom (IP) programme is a 5-year integrated Master's programme and is therefore classified as an undergraduate programme. In line with the GCU University Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes (paragraph 13.1.1) the default module pass mark across all years of the programme is therefore 40% (with candidates required to obtain a mark of no less than 35% in each element of coursework and examination). In accordance with the GCU University Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes (paragraph 1.4) the MOptom (IP) programme has an approved deviation in relation to this regulation, whereby SCQF Level 11 modules in Year 5 of the programme have an overall pass mark of 50%, with candidates being required to obtain a mark of no less than 45% in each element of coursework and examination for these modules.

² Please refer to the [GCU Qualifications Framework](#) for the minimum credits required for each level of award and the Programme Handbook for requirements on any specified or prohibited module combinations for each award.

³ Requires completion of the following modules: "Independent Prescribing: Prescribing Safely and Effectively" and "Learning and Experience in Practice".

2. The GCU University Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes allow students to be compensated for failure in up to 20 credits, as long as certain criteria are met (paragraph 13.2.7). In line with GOC requirements, the MOptom (IP) programme has an approved exception to this regulation that precludes automatic compensation from being applied in relation to any module.
3. The MOptom (IP) is a registrable qualification, allowing graduates to register with the GOC as an Optometrist and to join the GOC's specialty register of Independent Prescribing Optometrists. Modules across all levels of the programme have been designed to include elements that relate to clinical and/or professional practice and, as such, students are expected to attend all scheduled module activities. The MOptom (IP) programme has a programme-specific regulation whereby any student who has unauthorised absences that result in attendance below the specified attendance threshold in any module (as specified in the Module Handbook), may be required to retake that module with attendance prior to proceeding to the next level of the programme. Students with unauthorised absences in more than one module may be required to withdraw from the programme. Students must also meet the requirements for "satisfactory completion" of the practice-based learning (clinical placement) modules in Year 5 of the programme (including completion of a required minimum number of placement hours/ weeks), details of which are provided in the Programme Handbook and relevant Module Handbooks (NB under GOC requirements, students must complete a minimum of 48 weeks/ 1600 hours of patient-facing clinical experience). Failure to achieve "satisfactory completion" may require additional placements to be undertaken.

In addition to the GCU Assessment Regulations noted above, this programme is subject to Programme Specific Regulations in line with the following approved Exceptions (Case 235 + 236):

4. The *Learning and Experience in Practice* module has an exception from the typical 1 credit = 10 hours of student learning guidance. As a result of this exception, while the module activity hours total 1714, the module is assigned 90 credits.
5. Several modules feature practical assessments which are exempt from the 2 day post-submission window eligibility of the Fit to Sit policy. Details are provided in Module Handbooks.

Case 248

6. The *Learning and Experience in Practice* and *Independent Prescribing: Placement* modules (both Year 5) are exempt from the Fit to Sit declaration process. This applies specifically to the following assessment components of both modules: *Satisfactory Completion of Placement* and *Clinical Portfolio*.

Case 257

7. The MOptom (IP) programme (undergraduate integrated Master's) uses bespoke criteria to determine eligibility for Merit/Distinction awards:

- (a) Merit i) overall credit-weighted average of the modules used in the calculation, as specified below, within the range 65% to 69%, and ii) passed all modules (irrespective of module level) undertaken in the final stage of the award at first attempt.
- (b) Distinction i) overall credit-weighted average of the modules used in the calculation, as specified below, equal to 70% or greater, and ii) passed all modules undertaken at the level of the award at first attempt.

Calculation of overall credit-weighted average:

- Overall credit-weighted average of SCQF Level 11 modules (150 credits) X 30%
- Overall credit-weighted average of SCQF Level 10 modules (120 credits) X 50%
- Overall credit-weighted average of SCQF Level 9 modules (120 credits) X 20%

* Where a module has been passed at a second or subsequent attempt, the pass mark for the module, rather than the actual mark awarded, will be used for the purposes of the calculation.

Note that the Programme has an alternative exit award (*Master of Optometry*) which is achieved at the end of Year 5 on completion of 600 credits, but not the additional 30 credits (from MMB530350 *Independent Prescribing: Placement*) required to achieve the final Programme award (*Master of Optometry with Independent Prescribing*). Calculation of Merit/Distinction awards for this alternative exit award will be carried out as above, but the 30 credits for MMB530350 (*Independent Prescribing: Placement*) are excluded.

VERSION CONTROL (to be completed in line with AQPP processes)

Any changes to the PSP must be recorded below by the programme team to ensure accuracy of the programme of study being offered.

<i>Version Number</i>	<i>Changes/Updates</i>	<i>Date Changes/Updates made</i>	<i>Date Effective From</i>
1.0	New programme. Programme Specification forms part of documentation for Programme Approval.		
2.0	Update to include approved exceptions (Case 235 + 236)	4 th November 2024	4 th November 2024
3.0	Update to include approved exceptions (Case 248)	8 th September 2025	8 th September 2025
4.0	Update to include approved exception (Case 257)	10 th July 2026	10 th July 2026