

Doctor of Optometry - Statement of Inherent Requirements

School	Allied Health
Discipline	Discipline of Optometry
Course	Postgraduate Course Doctor of Optometry

Inherent requirements are abilities that students must possess to successfully complete the Doctor of Optometry course. These abilities are reflected in the achievement of the course learning outcomes and are necessary to fulfill the role of an optometry student, and to practice the full scope of optometry in Australia and New Zealand. They are based around providing safe, effective and professional patient care. Students must possess the cognitive, ethical, physical and mental capabilities (inherent requirements) required to participate in the intensive curriculum and to achieve the levels of competence at graduation required by The University of Western Australia (UWA). Students must have an ability to acquire high volumes of complex knowledge and skills, and apply these knowledge and skills in clinical settings for patient care. Students should possess a high level of problem-solving skills, exercise sound judgment and reasoning, and display appropriate situational interpersonal skills, professional behaviours and attitudes.

This document is prepared with direct references to the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ)¹ and the Optometry Board of Australia (OBA), which require all optometry graduates meet the prescribed professional competencies. This document is advisory and provides examples of outcomes that all optometry students must achieve to complete the course. A complete list of outcomes and assessments is available in the unit outlines and guidebooks and from individual teaching and learning activities. Achieving these outcomes could be challenging for students with certain disabilities who may require adjustments in teaching and assessment to accommodate their needs. Some of these disabilities may be permanent, but others may be temporary and occur during the course such as acute illnesses or injuries.

UWA is committed to making reasonable adjustments for students to compensate for disabilities impacting their participation in the program. Before being offered a place into the UWA optometry program, students with existing disabilities may be asked to provide independent medical and/or clinical assessments of the conditions and on the possible impact of successfully completing the program. The assessments would be treated in confidence with only those on the admissions committee and relevant School of Allied Health (SAH) management team (according to UWA governance and procedures) being given access to the information.

All enrolled students need to participate fully in all online and physical learning activities and to successfully fulfil the rigorous assessment (didactic and skill-based) components of the course. It is important that students with adjustments are still able to provide a primary duty of care to the patients in the clinical training environment. It is a requirement of the program that students will regularly perform clinical procedures on each other over the duration of their study.

UWA has enacted the following eight inherent requirements²⁻⁶ that an enrolled student must comply with:

1. Ethical Behaviour
2. Legal Compliance
3. Communication Skills
4. Behavioural Adaptability
5. Motor Skills (Mobility, Gross and Fine)
6. Sensory Skills
7. Cognitive Skills
8. Sustainable Performance

1. Ethical Behaviour
<p>Inherent Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaying ethical and professional behaviour in academic and professional settings, complying with relevant standards and codes of ethics of the health care profession. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Optometry Australia Code of Ethics b. Optometry Board of Australia Code of Conduct for Optometrists
<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with ethical and professional behaviour in academic and professional settings will bring about a safe and conducive learning environment for interactions between students and UWA academic and professional staff. This supports the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of everyone.
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the use of appropriate and ethical management skills for the wellbeing of patients.
2. Legal Compliance
<p>Inherent Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal compliance with Australian and WA Law, UWA Legislative instruments, professional regulations and/or scope of practice relevant to the profession.
<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the legal framework in the knowledge, understanding and compliance with Australian and WA Law, and professional regulations, is essential towards the clinical training of effective, professional, responsible and accountable optometrists, and fulfilling the legislated national law and professional registration requirements. For example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2010 (WA) b. Compliance with the UWA Information Privacy Policy and Guidelines, which complies with Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles. c. UWA (Student Conduct) Rules d. Optometric Competency Australia New Zealand (OCANZ) Standards¹ e. Optometry Board of Australia Entry Level Registration Standards (CompetencyStandards) f. OCANZ Accreditation Manual for Postgraduate Programs of Study in Ocular Therapeutics – Part 2 Standards (August 2013)
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the relevance of privacy and confidential information protection about patients under the legal requirements. • Having the necessary skills to communicate about the need to obtain informed consent for the care to be delivered to vulnerable and young patients.
3. Communication Skills
A. Expressive Communication Skills
<p>Inherent Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the standard required to communicate effectively, that provides clear, coherent and professional-level of knowledge sharing and outward delivery of patient-centric clinical information appropriate to the audience.

<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competency in expressive communication skills in academic learning and clinical settings are required to enable transparent and effective transfer of knowledge and information between students, academics, patients and health care professionals, resulting in trusting relationships. Communication skills can be in verbal, non-verbal or written formats.
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the ability for students to deliver coherent and logical communication (verbal, non-verbal or written) to academics required for the volume of learning.
<p>B. Receptive Language Skills</p>
<p>Inherent Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optometrists, like all health professionals, need to be able to internally evaluate abstract and conceptual meaning (with the elements of critical thinking skills), that provides a coherent understanding of knowledge received and making appropriate clinical decisions.
<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competency in receptive communication skills in academic learning and clinical settings are required to enable effective reception of knowledge and information, and to provide suitable interpretations to the transferred knowledge and information. Communication skills can be in verbal, non-verbal or written formats.
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to comprehend and contribute during tutorial, laboratory, seminar, clinical and placement discussions.
<p>C. Interpersonal Communication Skills</p>
<p>Inherent Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using verbal, non-verbal or written formats to communicate with others, including the ability to listen, display empathy, show respect, build rapport and gain trust to ensure meaningful and effective engagements in clinical and non-clinical settings.
<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong interpersonal communication skills in academic learning and clinical settings are desirable to provide trusting and highly effective working environment. Communication skills can be in verbal, non-verbal or written formats.
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing the necessary respectful communications with people of different gender, sexual orientations and age, and from diverse cultural, languages, religious, socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Ability to develop rapport with peers, academic and professional staff conducive to effective learning and working relationships e.g. PBL group learning seminars. Putting into practice the learned cultural competence, displaying the sensitivity and willingness to work with others in the diverse Australian educational and clinical settings.

4. Behavioural Adaptability
<p>Inherent Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaying flexible and adaptable behaviours to effectively manage fluid situations to maintain the required academic and professional standards and codes of conducts.
<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising behavioural adaptability is critical in managing emotional responses and behaviour in academic and complex professional environments, particularly in situations with heightened human emotions. Health care providers are required to work in culturally and socially diverse settings, and to manage challenging workplaces, tight timelines in clinical appointments and difficult patients.
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing own emotions and behaviour in the academic environment and clinical settings. For example, being empathetic and supportive when breaking bad news or remaining calm, open and receptive when dealing with conflicts or complaints. • Seeking personal and professional support (e.g. mental health first aid) when needed.
5. Motor Skills (Mobility, Gross and Fine)
<p>Inherent requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the required dexterity and effective tactile function, freedom of joint movements, strength and mobility to safety function and practice within the scope of optometry practice.
<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optometry requires the mobility, gross and fine motor functions to consistently deliver timely, safe and effective eyecare services to minimise the risk of harm to self and others, especially in a clinical setting. • It is a requirement of the program that students will regularly perform clinical procedures on each other over the duration of their study.
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to perform a full optometric examination on any gender or age, including detection of abnormalities by observation, measurement, manipulation and palpation, in an appropriate timeframe. • Moving seamlessly around the patient examination chair in the examination room without obstructions. For example, manipulating the phoropter for refraction, moving sideways or alongside the patient's line of sight while performing retinoscopy, and interchangeably placing and retrieving ophthalmic lenses while performing trial frame subjective refraction. • Demonstrate the use of a variety of complex ophthalmic instruments to take ocular measurements and observations. For example, holding a condensing lens in front of the patient's eye whilst simultaneously operating a slit lamp biomicroscope to examine the eye. In binocular indirect ophthalmoscopy, students are required to hold a condensing lens in an upright position (while the patient lies prone) to examine the retina. Fine motor skills are required for the delicate task of foreign body removal procedure.
6. Sensory Skills
<p>Inherent requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate level of sensorimotor skill requirements, including visual, auditory and tactile acuity, to physically manage patients within the optometry scope of practice.

<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eye care practitioners require visual, auditory and tactile acuity to consistently provide safe, efficient and effective eyecare in order to minimise the risk of harm to self and others.
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to instruct, perform, manipulate and interpret information from a range of essential and supplementary optometry clinical tests such as ophthalmoscopes, slit lamps, automated perimetry, corneal topography and optical coherence tomography.
<p>7. Cognitive Skills</p>
<p>Inherent Requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complex neural tasks of acquiring knowledge, process information, formulate, analyse, think critically and synthesise information to apply knowledge of the discipline, in order to meet learning outcomes and academic standards pertinent to the course. • Cognitive skills encompass cognitive, numeracy and literacy skills.
<p>Rationale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive skills, including maintaining focus, memory and attention to detail, are essential elements in the acquisition, interpretation and application of knowledge (in both the academic and professional settings).
<p>Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to receive, comprehend, interpret, formulate and synthesize existing and new information through the substantial volume of learning. For example, engaging in critical thinking skills through case presentations and research projects
<p>8. Sustainable Performance</p>
<p>Inherent requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to consistently perform the required eye examinations and complete given tasks in a timely manner with satisfactory outcomes, while maintaining consistency and quality of performance.
<p>Rationale</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Optometrists operate within an engaging environment where physical and mental endurance is a critical success factor when performing multiple tasks in a designated period of time, with the goal of providing safe and effective care. The wellbeing of students, academic and professional staff, supervising practitioners, and patients is essential.
<p>Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having the energy to perform multiple tasks with a level of concentration that ensures the capacity to focus on the activities until completion e.g. final year clinical placements. • Managing the assigned academic and non-academic substantial workload to deliver safe and effective eye care services in a timely manner.

Student Declaration:

I have read, acknowledge and understand the inherent requirements. I agree that I possess the abilities required for the successful completion of the UWA Doctor of Optometry course.

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sources of Reference

1. Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand - Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide for Entry-Level Optometry Programs Part 2 – Standards (1 January 2017)
2. University of Canberra – Bachelor of vision Science (Statements of Inherent Requirements)
3. University of Melbourne – Doctor of Optometry (Inherent Requirements)
4. University Technology of Sydney – Graduate School of Health – Orthoptics (Inherent Requirement Statements)
5. Medical Deans ANZ – Inherent requirements for studying medicine in Australia and New Zealand (July 2017)
6. University of Newcastle – Inherent requirements for Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program (JMP)