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UFS·UV
DIRECTORATE FOR INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC PLANNING (DIRAP)
DIREKTORAAT VIR INSTITUSIONELE
NAVORSING EN AKADEMIESE BEPLANNING (DINAB)

08 May 2015

Qualification reference number: 8735

Authorised Qualification name: Master of Optometry (Coursework variant)

Directorate: Accreditation

Council on Higher Education

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Dear Colleagues

RESPONSE TO THE DEFERRAL OF THE HEQSF-ALIGNMENT AND ACCREDITATION

HEQSF review comment

"The programme design details do not correspond with the explanation in the application and the description in Question 1. Clarification is required."

Response

Although the UFS is still awaiting more clarity with regard to the comment above from the HEQC (submitted on 15 April 2015) this response is submitted, based on our interpretation of the comment. Should this response be inadequate, kindly allow for more time to prepare another submission.

This is a Master's Degree by coursework and mini-dissertation. In the original submission we stated that "curriculum changes were implemented to deepen the cognitive complexity of the modules to contribute to coherence in learning achievement and facilitate assessment criteria for comparability and thus articulation within the NQF". Because the submitted module status indicates that all modules were "unchanged" this statement should be clarified. The original module revision focussed on alignment with NQF level 9 competencies to ensure deepened and advanced knowledge. This revision did not result in significant changes to modules'

content, assessment or outcomes. However, after careful consideration of the curriculum in relation to the rationale and purpose of the programme for alignment, this revision is submitted. We are convinced that these changes do not result in more than 50% change of the original programme design (mere numerical changes). The total number of minimum credits for the programme remains at 180, with all modules still pegged at NQF 9. The programme is offered over two years. Summarised, the revision resulted in the following changes:

- The credit allocation was changed to correctly correspond to the notional time for each module as being currently offered. This was a mere numerical change and had no impact on the content, assessment or outcomes of the modules.
- This credit change includes the mini-dissertation: The credits were reduced from 100 to 60.
  Neuro-Optometry remains at 8 credits as this is an accurate credit-notional time ratio.
- The two research methodology modules (introduction and advanced) were combined into one module
- "Dissertation" in the original submission will be replaced throughout by "mini-dissertation or manuscripts"

Revised Programme design details:

Module name	**NQF Level**	**Year level**	**Credit allocation of module**	**Compulsory**	**Electives**	**Module Status**
Research methodology	9	1	20	Compulsory		unchanged
Advanced Contact lenses	9	1	20	Compulsory		unchanged
Low Vision	9	1	20	Compulsory		unchanged
Module on elective themes in Optometry (choice of suitable themes)	9	2	12	Compulsory		unchanged
Neuro-Optometry	9	1	8	Compulsory		unchanged
Treatment and management of Ocular Disease	9	1	20	Compulsory		unchanged
Binocular and Paediatric Vision	9	1	20	Compulsory		unchanged
Research project and Comprehensive dissertation	9	2	60	Compulsory		unchanged
	TOTAL		180			

Module outcomes

Module name	Programme Outcomes
Treatment and management of Ocular Disease	• advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry; • the capacity to interpret and integrate information from a variety of sources (such as patient presentation details, advanced diagnostic techniques, scientific, clinical and technical literature, and other healthcare professionals), in the development of the most appropriate patient management; • the ability and initiative to offer enhanced clinical services based on their in-depth study in Optometry; • an appreciation of the value of, and the ability to achieve, collaboration with other healthcare professionals as an effective means to aid clinical problem solving; • a detailed knowledge in the use and application of specific advanced diagnostic techniques;
Binocular and Paediatric Vision	• advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry; • the capacity to interpret and integrate information from a variety of sources (such as patient presentation details, advanced diagnostic techniques, scientific, clinical and technical literature, and other healthcare professionals), in the development of the most appropriate patient management; • the ability and initiative to offer enhanced clinical services based on their in-depth study in Optometry; • an appreciation of the value of, and the ability to achieve, collaboration with other healthcare professionals as an effective means to aid clinical problem solving; • a detailed knowledge in the use and application of specific advanced diagnostic techniques;
Research methodology (combined from Introduction to research methodology and Advanced research methodology	• an ability to evaluate and synthesize research from the scientific and clinical literature; • an advanced ability to evaluate and synthesize research from the scientific and clinical literature;
Low Vision	• advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry; • the capacity to interpret and integrate information from a variety of sources (such as patient presentation details, advanced diagnostic techniques, scientific, clinical and technical literature, and other healthcare professionals), in the development of the most appropriate patient management; • the ability and initiative to offer enhanced clinical services based on their in-depth study in Optometry; • an appreciation of the value of, and the ability to achieve, collaboration

	with other healthcare professionals as an effective means to aid clinical problem solving; • a detailed knowledge in the use and application of specific advanced diagnostic techniques;
Advanced Contact lenses	• advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry; • the capacity to interpret and integrate information from a variety of sources (such as patient presentation details, advanced diagnostic techniques, scientific, clinical and technical literature, and other healthcare professionals), in the development of the most appropriate patient management; • the ability and initiative to offer enhanced clinical services based on their in-depth study in Optometry; • an appreciation of the value of, and the ability to achieve, collaboration with other healthcare professionals as an effective means to aid clinical problem solving; • a detailed knowledge in the use and application of specific advanced diagnostic techniques;
Neuro-Optometry	• advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry; • the capacity to interpret and integrate information from a variety of sources (such as patient presentation details, advanced diagnostic techniques, scientific, clinical and technical literature, and other healthcare professionals), in the development of the most appropriate patient management; • the ability and initiative to offer enhanced clinical services based on their in-depth study in Optometry; • an appreciation of the value of, and the ability to achieve, collaboration with other healthcare professionals as an effective means to aid clinical problem solving; • a detailed knowledge in the use and application of specific advanced diagnostic techniques;
Module on elective themes in Optometry	• advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry;
Research project and Comprehensive mini-dissertation	• Advance their research skills to re-examine the basic sciences of Optometry in the context of the latest research. • the ability to plan, design and conduct a research project, and communicate the results • Produce a mini-dissertation

Rationale

Optometry practice in South Africa has evolved over the past 90 years culminating in the expansion of scope to include ocular diagnostics and therapeutics. This expansion of the scope necessitated the need to improve the profession through in depth clinical knowledge and also evidence-based practice. This Master's programme by coursework and mini-dissertation in Optometry offers the Optometrists the opportunity to develop in clinical knowledge and practice. The programme provides an understanding of the rationale behind patient management, research and offers the optometrists knowledge in the latest and most effective approaches for solving clinical vision science problems. This programme integrates the various areas of clinical sciences with practicals.

There is lack of Optometrists with postgraduate Optometry qualifications that are needed in the academic sector and optical laboratory sectors. Clinical research in Optometry and Visual Science is very scarce as most Optometrists are taught only for clinical practice in the undergraduate programme. This programme will provide the students with necessary advanced knowledge to be specialists in different fields of Optometry, as well as providing capacity for research.

Students will be Optometrists who are registered with the Professional Board of Optometry and Dispensing Opticians. The qualifying students will be able to be employed in the Optical industry and be consultants or researchers in the different disciplines of Optometry. In addition, the qualifying students can be Optometry educators or researchers in clinical sciences.

This is a further specialisation in Clinical Optometry after obtaining the basic professional degree. The qualification allows the qualifying students to progress in the Optometry career.

The students who will graduate with the clinical Master's Degree will be able to offer quality and comprehensive optometric services utilising the most effective approaches for solving clinical vision science problems and also to teach professional programmes that train eye care providers. There is a need for Optometrists to work in public sector together with Ophthalmologists in co-management of patients; this programme is geared to train such cadres for public sector also.

Programme purpose

The programme is to educate and train the Optometrists for the advancement of the Optometric profession through the development of knowledge at an advanced level. The qualifying Optometrists will be able to systematically and creatively, plan, design and conduct a research project, appraise analytical writing in his/her field of interest, make sound judgements using data and information at their disposal and communicate conclusions clearly to both Optometric and non-Optometric professionals, while providing the theoretic advanced knowledge. Another purpose is to prepare Optometrists to work in specialised optometric fields and also to advance in their career pathways.

Programme outcomes

At the completion of this programme in Optometry a student will have:

1. advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry;
2. A detailed knowledge in the use and application of specific advanced diagnostic techniques;
3. An advanced ability to evaluate and synthesize research from the scientific and clinical literature;
4. an appreciation of the value of, and the ability to achieve, collaboration with other healthcare professionals as an effective means to aid clinical problem solving;
5. The capacity to interpret and integrate information from a variety of sources (such as patient presentation details, advanced diagnostic techniques, scientific, clinical and technical literature, and other healthcare professionals), in the development of the most appropriate patient management;
6. The ability and initiative to offer enhanced clinical services based on their in-depth study in Optometry;
7. The ability to plan, design and conduct a research project, and communicate the results
8. Advanced their research skills to re-examine the basic sciences of Optometry in the context of the latest research

Competencies in the programme are aligned to with appropriate NQF level 9

The outcome of attaining advanced knowledge and skills in Optometry is aligned to the NQF level 9 since the successful students will practice at an advanced level and be able to use advanced technological diagnostic procedures in patient management. This programme will increase the student's ability to critical appraise literature and apply the information for improved patient management. The successful student will be able to deal with complex Optometry issues systematically and creatively; thus aligned with the Level 9 requirement of

advance problem solving. The ability to plan, design and conduct research and communicate results increases the scope of knowledge of the student and thus increases scholarship in Optometry.

Progression rules

A student will normally only be allowed to proceed to the second year of the programme if she/he has passed at least 75% of the first year modules registered including the research methodology module.

Assessment

Competency will be proved by demonstration of stated outcomes in order to comply with standards set by the University and the Faculty. Efficiency and competence in the achievement of stated outcomes and general performance in Optometry and as researcher will be assessed. Students will be required to offer proof of competency through various means, including portfolios, discussions, assignments, practical demonstrations and reflective papers (e.g. manuscripts for publication) which describe and comment on the practice and profession of Optometry. Skills will be assessed in clinical settings. The mini-dissertation will be assessed in accordance with the General Rules of the University.

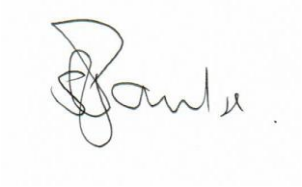
(b) Assessment in the programme will be based on an integrated and continuous assessment approach.

(c) Assessment in modules will be through negotiated or contracted work related to the student's own positions/role in Optometry. This may include components of peer assessment.

(d) The year one end assessment will comprise a written assessment, whilst in year two the research mini-dissertation will be assessed.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support. We trust that you will find this response adequate to validate this programme's accreditation and HEQSF-alignment.

Kind regards



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