

National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators

National Accreditation Preliminary Survey Team Report

Institution: Douglas College

Program: Optical Sciences Program

Team Leader: Lisa Bannerman

Team Members: Tanya Wohlsclagel
Jeff Fernandes

Observers: Jodi Dodds
Maureen Hussey

The attached report is based upon a review of the self-study documentation provided by Douglas College and other documentation provided, or observations noted during the site visit held online on December 1st and 2nd, 2015

The Survey Team is in full agreement with the contents of the report and they commit it to the National Board of Opticianry Accreditation for review.

Recommendation of Survey Team: To accredit the program for six years.

Pending Douglas College Comments

Lisa Bannerman
Survey Team Leader

Date

National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators

NACOR

Douglas College
NATIONAL ACCREDITATION
PRELIMINARY SURVEY TEAM REPORT

Purpose of Accreditation

The Accreditation Process Exists To:

- Determine the degree to which Optician programs meet the competencies defined in the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians 3rd Edition
- Provide criteria for the evaluation of new and established Optician programs
- Facilitate labour mobility through the maintenance of national standards
- Ensure that the education of Opticians focuses on and prioritizes the well-being of the clients.

The following report reflects the findings and opportunities for improvement identified by the NACOR Survey Team following the assessment of documents provided by Douglas College , and subsequent Site Visit conducted on December 1st and 2nd, 2015

The report has been developed based on the accreditation requirements identified in the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators Educational Agency Manual For NACOR Accreditation dated January 2015.

The assessment for accreditation was conducted by:

Ms. Lisa Bannerman – Survey Team Leader
Ms. Tanya Wohlsclagel – Assessor
Mr. Jeff Fernandes – Assessor
Ms. Jodi Dodds – Observer
Ms. Maureen Hussey - Observer

The Survey Team was also supported by:

Wayne Mullen – Program Coordinator and Instructor
Wilson U - Instructor
Tony Viani – Instructor
Brian Chapell – Dean of S&T

As well as many others from the College

ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS

REQUIREMENT ONE: the program outcomes and delivery ensure that graduates achieve the entry-level competencies for the individual disciplines of dispensing eyeglasses, dispensing of contact lenses, dispensing of sub-normal vision devices, and the measurement of refractive error as defined in the National Accreditation Framework document.

1.1 The program's goals and the competencies achieved through the curriculum are consistent with the National Accreditation Framework. (Major Criterion)

Documentation Required:

- a) Provide a statement of program goals.
 - **Findings: Supplied - partially supplied with initial self-study documentation and additional information supplied on USB during site visit.**

- b) Provide a description in point format that illustrates how program goals are consistent with the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians 3rd Edition.
 - **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

- c) Attach, as an appendix, all course outlines in the program. These outlines must identify the learning components and outcomes covered within the program.
 - **Findings: Supplied – please see Opportunities for Improvement #2 in Appendix A**

- d) Attach, as an appendix, cross-referencing of the National Accreditation Framework against the courses, which reflect those competencies.
 - **Findings: Supplied - There are areas which are under development (L1-5) Refracting, and other areas which are noted under Opportunities for Improvement #1 and #2 in Appendix A.**

1.2) The program is responsible to all relevant stakeholders.

Documentation Required:

- a) Attach, as an appendix, minutes or reports of past meetings (within the past three years) involving employer groups, association representatives, or other advisory groups and the relevant recommendations and actions that are resulting from those consultations.
 - **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

b) Provide documentary evidence, attached as an appendix, of consultation with stakeholders such as, alumni, and employers.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

1.3 Student achievement of the competencies is measured/evaluated throughout all delivery modalities used in the program including in the practice environment. (Major Criterion)

Documentation Required:

a) Describe the mechanisms used to evaluate student achievement of the competencies.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation and further added to during the site visit**

b) Describe the mechanisms in place to ensure communication between the didactic and clinical training courses, sites or presentations.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation and further added to during the site visit**

c) Attach, as an appendix, samples of evaluation instruments used to assess student achievement of both theoretical and application-oriented competencies including those used in placements or clinical settings.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

d) Attach, as an appendix, four typical student evaluations/examinations (names deleted) that demonstrate the assessment of student competency. Two of these samples must be practice-oriented.

- **Findings: Supplied during site visit**

e) Attach, as an appendix, samples of both formative and summative evaluations used in the Optician program that appropriately illustrate the measurement of knowledge and skills in the program.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

1.4 Graduate statistics illustrate that students have achieved the competencies in the National Accreditation Framework. (Major Criterion)

Documentation Required:

a) Attach, as an appendix, samples of student feedback evaluations, alumni feedback, as well as employer satisfaction surveys.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

b) Attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence of results of registration/licensing examinations for the most recent three-year period where available.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

c) Attach, as an appendix, graduation statistics for a three-year period.

- **Findings: Supplied**

d) Attach, as appendix documentary evidence indicating the employment level of graduates for the past three years.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

Requirement 1 Summary Statement

The documentation provided for requirement one reveals compliance to the competencies as described in the National Accreditation Framework document. Program outcomes and delivery ensure that graduates achieve entry level competencies.

Course content for section L of the Framework, Refracting, was discussed with the Faculty of Douglas College and Opportunities for Improvement #1 are noted in Appendix A.

In review of the course outlines in comparison to the National Accreditation Framework document the survey team noted that the **theory of low vision was taught but there was no practical component in the program and no assessment to test the students learning.** This is noted in Opportunities for Improvement #2 in Appendix A.

All instructors agreed that LVA training would be included in the curriculum at the initial accreditation of the program 6 years ago. At that time we (the instructors in DOPT) had agreed that the LVA training would be done in Semester 2 theory (DOPT1200) and practical hands on would be done in Semester 5 lab (DOPT 2213). To support this initiative the department purchased a comprehensive Eschenbach LVA kit at approximately \$7000. The LVA curriculum in DOPT 1200 and 2213 was enhanced and LVA training was being done accordingly. This continued until Ted Littlewood retired. When Ted retired, and Wilson took over the CL instruction, LVA instruction disappeared from the second year curriculum even though it was clearly stated that they were currently included in the NACOR Accreditation documents. When DOPT prepared the curriculum for the China Project a few years ago, it was noticed that there no LVA instruction materials (among other significant absences) included in the second year of the program. All attempts to bring this to Wilson's attention were repeatedly met with angry outbursts and no correction was ever made by Wilson to add it back into the curriculum.

Students indicated that they feel they will be well prepared for work as an optician upon graduation, and had positive things to say about the program. Practicum supervisors also indicated that in terms of theoretical skills, students are well prepared for the practicum, though it was noted that sales and business training would be beneficial. This is discussed in Opportunities for Improvement #3 in Appendix A. **The DOPT PAC had also made these recommendations and we have made changes in year 1 theory and lab courses to include activities and curriculum that would enhance not only sales and business training, but communication skills as well. Again all attempts to include similar strategies into the second year have been met with angry outbursts.**

The program showed that it is responsive to stakeholders as this deficiency was noted in Advisory

Committee meeting minutes, and the Program Coordinator advised that they are working on the recommendations.

The practicum program appears to be set up appropriately and students were positive about the experience and skills learned and indicated to the survey team that they believe they will be well prepared for the NACOR exam upon completion of the course. During their interview of the practicum supervisors it was noted that there was no training manual or course for them to help them have a clear understanding of what was expected of them during their supervision of the students. This is discussed in Opportunities for Improvement # 5 in Appendix A. **A new process have been put in place to better inform the preceptors at the beginning of each practicum. Each will be presented with a paper copy regardless if the office had already been provided one in the past. In addition, a summary sheet indicating the highlights of the practicum, and preceptor and student responsibilities was created and will also be handed to each preceptor. An email outlining these details will also be sent to preceptors at the beginning of the practicum for this purpose.**

The performance of Douglas College students on the contact lens portion of the NACOR exam has dropped below the national average and this was discussed with Administration during the site visit. This is noted in Opportunities for Improvement #4 in Appendix A. **This has been a known issue for at least two years since Wilson took over the contact lens lab and practicum after Ted retired. Again, all attempts at making changes to the CL lab and practicum courses have been met with angry outbursts by Wilson and as a consequence nothing has been done to improve quality of these courses. A brief analysis of the lab and practicum curriculum showed a significant lack of hands-on lab activities as well as students leaving early from the CL. This too was a known issue and Wilson still has made no attempts to remedy this situation.**

Examinations are written by instructors, and in discussion there is not an external process for review. Instructors did indicate that they evaluate their own exams on a regular basis and that there is a process for appeal.

The triangulation of these statements was accomplished through evaluation of course outlines, interviews with staff, students and supervisors and supported by the documents provided in the Phase 2 submission for accreditation by Douglas College.

REQUIREMENT TWO: Students are supported in their learning with the resources required to achieve competencies specified in the National Accreditation Framework.

2.1 The post-secondary institution, through its Opticianry Diploma Program, ensures that each student is prepared and provided with access to the appropriate academic information, learning tools, opportunities and resources necessary to successfully complete the program. (Major Criterion)

Documentation Required

a) Attach, as an appendix, examples of program and post-secondary institution policies and

protocols that exist to provide students with accurate information about the Opticianry Diploma Program and the profession.

- **Findings: Brochures and information provided with initial self-study documentation and additional information supplied on USB during site visit**

b) Attach, as an appendix, examples that the program/post-secondary institution ensures compliance with provincial and federal regulations, and ensures student exposure to safe working practices.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

c) Attach, as an appendix, a copy of all applicable academic policies.

- **Findings: Supplied on USB and during site visit**

d) Describe resources and services provided to students such as student advisement, counseling, financial aid, scholarship and bursary programs.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation.**

e) Describe how students' rights are protected through policies and practice (e.g. confidentiality, freedom from discrimination, privacy). Attach relevant policies as an appendix.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

f) Attach, as an appendix, samples of student handbooks and calendars that are used to provide students with accurate information about the program and the profession.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation**

2.2 The program provides adequate staffing to meet program needs. This involves suitable (possessing the required education and experience) faculty and staff to ensure the achievement of program outcomes.

Documentation required:

a) Describe the mechanism for the selection process-- the appointment, review and reappointment of program faculty teaching vocationally oriented subjects (both full and part-time) and staff (both full and part-time).

- **Findings: Supplied**

b) Describe the process used to evaluate and to follow up on instructor performance. If the process varies for full and part-time faculty, please describe the differences.

- **Findings: Supplied**

c) Identify relevant policies/protocols and professional development opportunities available for

faculty including clinical updating, skill enhancement in educational techniques, and advances in the profession.

- **Findings: Supplied**

d) Describe the faculty-student ratios in each of the following areas: teaching, laboratory and clinic.

- **Findings: Supplied**

e) Outline the process in place for faculty and departmental meetings and provide, attached as an appendix, copies of minutes for the past three academic years.

- **Findings: Supplied 3 years on USB and discussed during site visit**

2.3 The program provides sufficient and suitable learning resources, facilities and equipment appropriate for program and course outcomes.

Documentation Required:

a) Describe the variety and quantity of learning resources (inventory) available to students in the program including classroom and library facilities, laboratories, print and audio-visual material/equipment as well as access to electronic and profession relevant resources (e.g., labs).

- **Findings: Supplied – and more information was viewed and made available during the site visit**

b) Demonstrate that the materials and equipment are current and meet industry standards in the profession (e.g., provide examples of current equipment being used).

- **Findings: Supplied some details with initial self-study documentation with additional information gathered during site visit**

c) Provide documentary evidence, attached, as an appendix, that instructors and students have provided feedback on instructional materials and equipment, and that the instructional materials and equipment used are adequate and appropriate to the program and course objectives.

- **Findings: Some information supplied with initial self-study documentation and additional details supplied on USB and during site visit**

Requirement 2 Summary Statement

The students feel connected and are supported effectively in their learning with the resources required to achieve success. The program provides adequate staffing to meet the program needs and staff are offered ample opportunities for additional training which is encouraged by the College. Students have a high level of satisfaction with regard to the availability of their instructors.

The learning resources, facilities and equipment are appropriate to outcomes. There are also strong supports in place for student counselling, and assisted learning. All policies are available on the Douglas College website.

The instructors of the program support academic success in a responsive manner and students feel connected to the instructors of the Optical Sciences Program. Student success is important to Douglas College, and is evidenced through individualized mentoring from instructors, extra lab time and other support services.

The library services, computer study areas, and the on-site dispensary offer strong supports and instructors use a variety of technology and teaching methods. The dispensing lab and contact lens rooms have the required equipment and allow student access outside of class time.

It was noted during the site visit that each individual instructor is solely responsible for the particular courses that they teach. Each instructor develops and maintains their own course material and there is no overarching review and evaluation of this material. The Program Coordinator is not responsible for the overall administration of the program. The instructors and Program Coordinator all have the same job descriptions and levels of authority. Based on this, there is a disconnect in evaluating the program as a whole. This lack of overall program control results in duplication and gaps in required competencies as there is no method in place to ensure that the program as a whole is cross referenced to the National Accreditation Standards Framework. An example of this was the lack of material developed on low vision. This was an area that was identified in the last accreditation review and no further material had been developed. This was due to each instructor believing that one of the other instructors had developed course material. Douglas College needs to ensure that a process is in place to review required subject matter, and compare this to course outlines, outcomes and evaluation modalities. This was addressed with the Dean and Douglas College will work to improve this process.

The triangulation of these statements was accomplished through evaluation of course outlines, interviews with staff, students and supervisors and supported by the documents provided in the Phase 2 submission for accreditation by Douglas College.

<p>REQUIREMENT THREE: Processes for program evaluation are in place to ensure on- going quality control and improvement.</p>

3.1 Processes for program evaluation result in continuous quality improvement. (Major Criterion)

Documentation Required:

a) Describe the cyclical mechanisms in place to evaluate the program and implement improvements.

- **Findings: Supplied with further information provided on USB**

b) Provide and attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence of the existence of a program and curriculum review committee or body which is either institutional or specifically constituted for the program.

- **Findings: Supplied**

c) Provide and attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence that employers, instructors and students/alumni contribute to program review.

- **Findings: Supplied with the initial self-study documentation and additional information added on USB**

d) Provide and attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence that the recommendations of the program and curriculum review have been implemented.

- **Findings: not supplied with initial self-study documentation but additional information added explaining program changes in response to student evaluations and advisory committee recommendations**

3.2 The program implements recommendations from a NACOR accreditation review to ensure compliance with the NACOR process and requirements. (Major Criterion)

Documentation required (once programs have been through the accreditation process)

a) Describe the program's process to monitor compliance with a NACOR accreditation review.

- **Findings: Yearly reviews are sent to NACOR annually**

b) Provide and attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence that program changes that have been made are consistent with NACOR accreditation recommendations.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation but additional information supplied during site visit**

c) Provide and attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence of ongoing communication with NACOR regarding accreditation requirements and any changes that the program has undergone.

- **Findings: Supplied**

Requirement 3 Summary Statement

Douglas College consults with students, faculty and stakeholders for program review and improvement as is evidenced by surveys and advisory committee meeting minutes. In discussion with the Dean and faculty, suggestions that have been made are all considered and reviewed and the College takes recommendations seriously.

NACOR and Douglas College will work together to best implement a reporting process going forward which will provide valuable information to both the College and NACOR to ensure that accreditation recommendations are met.

REQUIREMENT FOUR: The administration of the program supports academic success in a responsive and collaborative environment.

4.1 The program has a clearly communicated structure and lines of authority to support its human and administrative requirements.

Documentation Required:

a) Attach, as an appendix, an organization chart and job descriptions specifically related to the coordination of the program.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation but additional descriptions for instructors and support staff added to USB**

b) Provide and attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence that persons who administer/supervise each aspect of the program are qualified to ensure fulfillment of the program's goals and outcomes.

- **Findings: Supplied**

c) Provide documentary evidence of the communication strategies and coordination that exist with clinical/placement settings (e.g. attach, as an appendix, clinical/placement agreements; describe the coordination of clinical instruction, nature and frequency of communication with clinical settings).

- **Findings: Supplied**

4.2 The educational agency maintains enrolment, attrition and graduation data for the program and uses such data to make program adjustments as required. (Major Criterion)

Documentation Required:

a) Describe the process used to collect and monitor application, enrolment, attrition, and graduation, data.

- **Findings: Supplied**

b) Provide and attach, as an appendix, documentary evidence that the data collected has been applied to modify the program as applicable.

- **Findings: Supplied in meeting minutes, and in discussion with instructors**

4.3 Requirement: The program has standards related to admission, promotion and graduation that are applied consistently.

Documentation Required:

a) Identify admissions/promotion/graduation policies and requirements and describe how they are applied.

- **Findings: Supplied**

b) Describe all intake-screening procedures including interviews and assessments utilized in

the admission process.

- **Findings: Supplied**

4.4 Student records are kept according to defined standards related to content, timelines, and confidentiality

Documentation Required:

a) Describe policies related to the maintenance of records of student learning and the awarding of course credits.

- **Findings: Supplied**

b) Attach, as an appendix, examples of records (names removed) of student learning and the awarding of course credits where applicable, that are based on clearly defined criteria.

- **Findings: Supplied with additional information provided during site visit**

c) Attach, as an appendix, a sample of the permanent record of the student's achievement/transcript (name removed) within the program.

- **Findings: Supplied with initial self-study documentation with additional detail provided during site visit.**

Requirement 4 Summary Statement

The documentation supplied shows that instructors for the Optical Sciences Program at Douglas College are qualified to teach the program based on credentials and experience. Based on feedback, instructors feel valued and well supported by Douglas College Administration. Practicum supervisors noted that they were not required to undergo any specific training to be a supervisor though the self-study documentation supplied indicates that there is a training course which all supervisors must complete. Recommendations in regards to the practicum component of the program are noted in Opportunities for Improvement #5 in Appendix A.

Appendix A

Findings

A Finding is a statement of evidence of a non-conformance to NACOR requirements for national accreditation. This evidence should be **clear** and confirmed as having been acknowledged by the EA. Lack of evidence of conformance may also generate a finding. The Survey Team report will specify, for each finding, the expected date by which it should be corrected. The EA will indicate how and when it will correct the non-conformance and, if applicable, what preventative action it will put in place.

The dictated time must not be punitive in nature, but allow a reasonable time for the EA to achieve correction within the two- to- three- year cycle that produces a graduate. The allotted time could be very short if the finding involves a serious problem, such as safety. If the non-conformance is of a minor nature, it would be reviewed for compliance at the next accreditation review or any time in between as stated in the finding.

Opportunity for Improvement

An Opportunity for Improvement is a statement outlining a potential problem or weakness that is noted but not a direct non-conformance with any NACOR requirement. By its nature or magnitude it is not national accreditation threatening, however, the Education Agency is expected to respond to each Opportunity for Improvement indicating what it intends to do to improve the program.

Opportunity for Improvement #1

The theoretical portions of the program which cover refracting are similar to other accredited programs at this time. The demonstration portion of refracting as outlined in the competencies is lacking and again this is consistent with other programs as this is a new area within the competencies. A framework for this portion will be developed between the regulators and the schools with consultation from all to address this shortfall. Until completion of the consultation and development of an implementation plan, full compliance will not be required. NACOR will monitor the addition of the refracting competencies to ensure all programs stay on schedule.

Opportunity for Improvement #2

It was noted during the previous accreditation that course material related to low vision or sub normal vision devices needed to be reviewed and added to as it was incomplete. The document submission for this accreditation cross referenced several courses to the low vision section of the Accreditation Framework Document. However, when the course outlines were reviewed, low vision or sub normal vision devices were not mentioned. Sub normal vision was not questioned on any of the midterm or final examinations. When the survey team asked for the course content specifically relating to this area, some theoretical information was supplied. Douglas College has purchased a set of low vision devices for students to work with, but the survey team was not provided with any information regarding a practical training component or evaluation method.

Practical training is supposed to be done as part of the CL lab curriculum and it is not as attested to by the students. During student interviews the students indicated that they did not receive any practical training.

More robust course material covering that includes both theoretical and practical components for low vision and sub normal vision devices needs to be added to the curriculum. **Further discussion is needed as to what additional theoretical and practical should be added.**

Opportunity for Improvement #3

Advisory Committee meeting minutes identified the need for communications/business related training for students to supplement theory. This was echoed by the interviews conducted with practicum supervisors and students.

Douglas College has a mandatory Communications course which all students must take, and though the students recognize the importance of such a course, the feedback provided by all students interviewed indicated that content with a specific correlation to opticians would be more beneficial. Specifically students noted that training on inventory management, referral letter writing, product pricing and sales training could be added to make the Communications course more applicable. Practicum supervisors noted that the lack of the student's business knowledge was an area that they would all like to see improved. **Strategies and activities for enhancing communication is already under way in all theory courses and first year lab courses. Attempts at trying to include similar strategies and activities into the second year lab and practicum courses has been unsuccessful.**

Opportunity for Improvement #4

The performance of Douglas College students on the contact lens portion of the NACOR exam has dropped to below the national average since the program changed to its current format. The average mark has dropped significantly for Douglas College students on the national examination in the last three years. The contact lens instructor was only available for a short period of time during the faculty interviews so the survey team did not get a chance to thoroughly discuss possible reasons with him for this drop in examination results. This drop in pass rate was discussed with Administration during the site visit and they are aware of this issue. They are in the process of determining where the deficiencies are in the program both for theory and practical. With the recommendation in the Requirement 2 Summary Statement that the College needs to look at methods to evaluate the program in its entirety for curriculum, course outlines and evaluation methods deficiencies could be noted and corrected. **This has been a known issue since Ted L retired. A lack of hands-on lab activities and students leaving lab and practicum class early is not conducive to increasing the pass rate. All attempts at improving the CL lab curriculum have been met with angry outbursts.**

Opportunity for Improvement #5

During interviews with the practicum supervisors, all supervisors indicated that they had not received any training or guidelines as to what was expected of them when supervising a student. The documentation supplied indicated that there is a mandatory course, however in discussion with the Program Coordinator it was indicated that this course had not been offered to supervisors for some time. A supervisor handbook would be beneficial to the supervisors and to students, and would provide an understanding of what is expected of both. In this handbook, a list of

competencies should be noted so that supervisors are aware of all competencies the College expects to be covered during the practicum. This will help ensure students have been provided with everything needed to succeed.

The practicum contract is set up with the facility and not the individual supervisor. Therefore, it is very important that both the facility, and the supervisor have a clear understanding of the competencies and the expectations associated with this important portion of the program. This will ensure that students are learning the skills that are not easy to perform in a classroom setting. I have already commented on this earlier in the document.

Tony V.

February 24, 2016

Dear NACOR Accreditation Survey Team,

Thank you for providing your comprehensive National Accreditation Preliminary Survey Team Report following your accreditation visit to Douglas College in December of 2015. Members of the department have had a chance to review the feedback and are pleased to provide response to the opportunities for improvement that were indicated in the report.

Opportunity for Improvement #1

Survey Team:

The theoretical portions of the program which cover refracting are similar to other accredited programs at this time. The demonstration portion of refracting as outlined in the competencies is lacking and again this is consistent with other programs as this is a new area within the competencies. A framework for this portion will be developed between the regulators and the schools with consultation from all to address this shortfall. Until completion of the consultation and development of an implementation plan, full compliance will not be required. NACOR will monitor the addition of the refracting competencies to ensure all programs stay on schedule.

Douglas College:

Douglas College will await the direction of the NACOR Board in a document resulting from the meeting in October 2015 that is to be sent to the Canadian Association of Opticianry Educators for input. The member schools are awaiting direction on what exact content is desired as well as the National Examination structure to ensure education programs align with NACOR requirements. Once more information has been presented, Douglas College and the COBC will discuss the framework as indicated above.

Opportunity for Improvement #2

Survey Team:

It was noted during the previous accreditation that course material related to low vision or sub normal vision devices needed to be reviewed and added to as it was incomplete. The document submission for this accreditation cross referenced several courses to the low vision section of the Accreditation Framework Document. However, when the course outlines were reviewed, low

vision or sub normal vision devices were not mentioned. Sub normal vision was not questioned on any of the midterm or final examinations. When the survey team asked for the course content specifically relating to this area, some theoretical information was supplied. Douglas College has purchased a set of low vision devices for students to work with, but the survey team was not provided with any information regarding a practical training component or evaluation method. During student interviews the students indicated that they did not receive any practical training. More robust course material covering that includes both theoretical and practical components for low vision and sub normal vision devices needs to be added to the curriculum.

Douglas College:

In consultation with all faculty members in the program, the Dean of Science and Technology will ensure that low vision content is represented in the program to meet the NACOR requirements. This will include addition of appropriate curriculum for individual courses, as well as a practical training component. Low vision content will be reviewed by all faculty members to ensure all areas of the Accreditation Framework Document are integrated appropriately in theoretical and practical courses.

Opportunity for Improvement #3

Survey Team:

Advisory Committee meeting minutes identified the need for communications/business related training for students to supplement theory. This was echoed by the interviews conducted with practicum supervisors and students. Douglas College has a mandatory Communications course which all students must take, and though the students recognize the importance of such a course, the feedback provided by all students interviewed indicated that content with a specific correlation to opticians would be more beneficial. Specifically students noted that training on inventory management, referral letter writing, product pricing and sales training could be added to make the Communications course more applicable. Practicum supervisors noted that the lack of the student's business knowledge was an area that they would all like to see improved.

Douglas College:

Although responsibility for the Communications curriculum is under the control of faculty in that area, faculty are generally open to input from the program areas. The Program Coordinator will review the current CMNS 1111 offering with faculty in the Communications department and make recommendations for changes to enhance the current offering to cover more business training, referral letter writing and other content directly related to the Opticianry industry. In addition, DOPT faculty will increase the patient

interaction content in all practical courses by adding activities that are conducive to better preparing students for entry into the practicum placements. The Dean will ensure that all faculty members review the content they have added with the entire department to ensure ideas are shared and concepts are reinforced throughout the theoretical and practical portions of the program.

Opportunity for Improvement #4

Survey Team:

The performance of Douglas College students on the contact lens portion of the NACOR exam has dropped to below the national average since the program changed to its current format. The average mark has dropped significantly for Douglas College students on the national examination in the last three years. The contact lens instructor was only available for a short period of time during the faculty interviews so the survey team did not get a chance to thoroughly discuss possible reasons with him for this drop in examination results. This drop in pass rate was discussed with Administration during the site visit and they are aware of this issue. They are in the process of determining where the deficiencies are in the program both for theory and practical. With the recommendation in the Requirement 2 Summary Statement that the College needs to look at methods to evaluate the program in its entirety for curriculum, course outlines and evaluation methods deficiencies could be noted and corrected.

Douglas College:

The Dean will continue to regularly review the NACOR examination statistics with the DOPT faculty. The faculty will identify and address any weak examination sections with the rest of the department, and will work collaboratively to ensure the appropriate areas requiring curriculum enhancement are improved. The faculty will report their changes to the Dean regularly to ensure the department is progressing in better preparing our students to challenge the examinations upon graduation. Douglas College is also pleased to note that the most recent exam results showed improved performance in this area.

Opportunity for Improvement #5

Survey Team:

During interviews with the practicum supervisors, all supervisors indicated that they had not received any training or guidelines as to what was expected of them when supervising a student. The documentation supplied indicated that there is a mandatory course, however in discussion with

the Program Coordinator it was indicated that this course had not been offered to supervisors for some time. A supervisor handbook would be beneficial to the supervisors and to students, and would provide an understanding of what is expected of both. In this handbook, a list of competencies should be noted so that supervisors are aware of all competencies the College expects to be covered during the practicum. This will help ensure students have been provided with everything needed to succeed.

The practicum contract is set up with the facility and not the individual supervisor. Therefore, it is very important that both the facility, and the supervisor have a clear understanding of the competencies and the expectations associated with this important portion of the program. This will ensure that students are learning the skills that are not easy to perform in a classroom setting.

Douglas College:

While Douglas College has always provided all practicum supervisors with a supervisor handbook during each practicum session, it is evident that further review of the handbook with each individual supervisor is required. The visitation instructor will begin to review the handbook with each supervisor at the beginning of each practicum session and have the supervisor provide acknowledgement that they do understand and will request clarity at any time during the supervision period. The list of learning outcomes and competencies for each practicum course will also be provided and reviewed with the each practicum supervisor. As in the past, the visitation instructors and the Program Coordinator will continue to be available for practicum supervisors to contact with any questions they may have at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Chapell, PhD
Dean Faculty of Science and Technology

Wayne Mullen
Dispensing Optician Program Coordinator