

AN INSIGHT INTO REMOTE LEARNING FROM A LOCAL Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics (ACO-COT) – new online course



John Adam is a sole practitioner optometrist who is currently undertaking the remote learning online ACO-COT course run by The Australian College of Optometry. John is a sole practitioner with an optometry practice in Remuera, a central suburb of Auckland and has a specialty in contact lenses. He has found online learning to fit well with his way of life – particularly maintaining his golf interest and running his practice whilst upgrading his skills and ability to service the therapeutic eye care needs of his local community.

The Australian College of Optometry is grateful to John for sharing his experience with other optometrists and the ACO.

Why did you choose to become therapeutically qualified?

I feel Optometry is moving on to be Primary Medical Care for eyes. We need to have the equipment, training, experience and technical ability. To be relevant and useful to our aging community and with a shortage of Ophthalmologists, it will be imperative that Optometry takes a leading role in Eye Health Care as well as Vision Care. With that in mind, (although more than one person has asked why I haven't yet retired), I felt I needed the training and qualifications to recognise, diagnose and treat certain medical conditions associated with eyes. I also specialise in contact lens correction and appreciate the ability to prescribe if necessary for lens related issues, rather than sending people to the pharmacy to get OCT medication that I can't prescribe.

Why did you choose to do the Australian College of Optometry (ACO) COT?

I had looked at other options, but after talking to some who had studied in Auckland and Brisbane I felt that the ACO course was well suited to a sole practitioner who could study after work and have lectures online in the evening rather than having to take off valuable time from my business day.

Did you wait a long time to find a suitable course?

I waited a few years; my initial concern was "failure" and the time needed to complete the process; but other colleagues encouraged me and the ACO course has worked in well with my normal life, and I still have not missed out on too much golf!

What was your experience working and studying at the same time?

It worked well and the self-learning and study meant I could fit in the course around my work and family life. On a daily basis, I felt that the course made me more enthusiastic about work and meant I thought more closely about what I did and I feel it has made me a better Optometrist.

Did it make a difference that you studied from New Zealand?

The only negative aspect was the lectures associated with the legality of prescribing which were Australian centric otherwise there was no issue except the time difference became an issue at one stage with the difference with daylight saving starting at different weeks in the two countries and a couple of lectures being very late at night. Since John started his course NZ specific legal content has been added

For further information about the ACO-COT course please call 613 93497477 or email acocot@aco.org.au