

ACO Launches Advanced CL Cert

The Australian College of Optometry has launched a post graduate level Certificate in Advanced Contact Lenses (ACO-CACL) for practising optometrists.

The College has engaged presenters from across Australia and the UK to deliver a range of topics including current information on soft and hard lenses, lens fitting and special lenses. Presenters include Professor James Wolffsohn, Associate Professor Richard Vojlay, Jessica Chi (National President CCLS of Australia), Dr. Adrian Bruce, (ACO Lead Optometrist Contact Lens) and more.

Offering a flexible, remote learning syllabus, the certificate features self-paced learning, online lectures, demonstration videos and e-learning materials. The practical feature of the course is a clinical experience placement within Australia and/or New Zealand. Optometrists from across Australia will study at their own pace, completing the entire course within the recommended six month time frame.

General Manager of Professional Development, Jolanda de Jong, said in-depth study is, "a great opportunity for optometrists who have a real interest in an area to gain an extensive understanding and field of expertise. Patients can see that their optometrist has been motivated to undertake study and is up to date with current best practise and knowledge. This will give them confidence that they are receiving the best care available."

Graduates will receive post-nominals upon completion of the full course and CPD points will be accredited (TBC). Visit www.aco.org.au, contact cpd@aco.org.au or phone (AUS) 03 9349 7477.

ACO-COT Graduates Recognised

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) has recognised its most recent Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics (ACO-COT) graduates and acknowledged Julie Purdie with its new outstanding performance award.

The May event acknowledged the dedication of 59 graduates who studied over three intakes in 2014 and 2015. Graduates completed the certificate from across Australia, New Zealand and China and some travelled from interstate and overseas to attend the celebration.

A father and son, Peter and James Merrington, graduated together, joining the 40 per cent of Australian optometrists to have endorsement for scheduled medicines.

General Manager, Professional Development and Membership Jolanda de Jong commended the work that all candidates had put in, noting that "the night is a really happy way of coming together and congratulating graduates in the spirit of collegiality, support and shared experience".

A new award was established last year to recognise outstanding performance in the Certificate. This award recognises the candidate who achieved the highest score across all assessments. The inaugural 2015 ACO Outstanding Graduate in the Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics award was presented to Julie Purdie (NSW).

Ms. Purdie commenced her study in the first course intake (February 2014) and graduated in May 2015. For most of the course she was on maternity leave with her third child. Ms. Purdie, who practises in Kurri Kurri, a small town of around 5,000 people located 30 minutes from Newcastle NSW, commented that she was lucky her baby was a good sleeper.

Ms. Purdie delivered an inspiring speech describing the suitability of the ACO-COT for



A/Prof Ian Gutteridge with award winner Julie Purdie.

optometrists from all walks of life. "I believe that this course suits all optometrists no matter what their location or situation is – the cost and time involved with traveling is all but eliminated, the flexible delivery means there is minimal impact on essential work or family commitments," she said.

"The course material is of an extremely high quality and is well presented in a systematic and clear manner by expert lecturers, and the clinical placements and even the exams can be done locally, once again reducing the cost and inconvenience of travel."

"The ACO-COT has improved almost every aspect of my work life. Now I am more confident in my knowledge and abilities, and I have a renewed enthusiasm for my work. Like most optometrists I have a strong desire to do the very best for my patients and this course has improved my ability to deliver this.

"I am now generally more interested in ocular pathology, current treatments and researching what the current standards are for particular clinical scenarios that crop up in my day-to-day practice."

"I enjoyed being challenged by the material that was new to me, and also by hearing more familiar topics updated with the latest information."



Graduates with Curriculum Committee Chair A/Prof Ian Gutteridge, Professional Development and Membership Coordinator Jolanda de Jong, Clinical Placement Supervisor Dr Nishant Gupta and ACO CEO Maureen O'Keefe.