



AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF  
**OPTOMETRY**  
CLINICAL SERVICES • RESEARCH • EDUCATION

**COURSE  
INFORMATION**

# AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY CERTIFICATE IN OCULAR THERAPEUTICS (ACO-COT)



# AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY CERTIFICATE IN OCULAR THERAPEUTICS (ACO-COT)

**Under the guidance of an outstanding academic team, the ACO is offering this postgraduate certificate which will lead to a recognised qualification for therapeutic practice.**

## Features of the Certificate

- Of particular interest for rural and remote optometrists or the busy optometrist who doesn't have time for travel
- Flexible delivery involving online lectures, webinars, online forums, local exams and clinical placements
- An expert team of presenters from Universities and clinical practices across Australia and New Zealand, offering a range of topics including general principles of disease and ocular diseases and therapeutic management
- Cost effective

Further information is available from

[www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course](http://www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course)



**NOTE:** The ACO Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics is accredited by the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ). The ACO recognises and advises that this course is not an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) qualification and therefore may not be recognised by Universities as a pathway for further learning. Candidates who wish to undertake this course for the purpose of entry to an alternative course should seek the advice of the appropriate institution.

No responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted by the Australian College of Optometry for any loss or damage that may arise from any person acting on any statement or information contained in this publication and to the extent permitted by law, all such liabilities are expressly excluded.

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## ABOUT THE COURSE

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# ACO CERTIFICATE IN OCULAR THERAPEUTICS (ACO-COT)

### Introduction

**The objective of the ACO Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics** is to ensure that graduates in Australia are suitably trained to prescribe or administer approved schedule 2, 3 and 4 medicines for the treatment of ocular conditions in the course of optometric practice, and for graduates practising in New Zealand, that they are suitably qualified to prescribe or administer medicines for the treatment of ocular conditions in the course of optometric practice within their approved scope of practice.

The ACO-COT curriculum will facilitate the development of appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies to ensure graduates meet contemporary standards of therapeutic practice and are equipped with skills to adapt to changes in the scope of therapeutic practice.

The course is accredited by the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ). Successful completion of the ACO-COT will enable scheduled medicines endorsement for registered optometrists in Australia and New Zealand, as recognised by the OBA and the ODOB. For further information refer to the OBA “Guidelines For Use of Scheduled Medicines” [www.optometryboard.gov.au](http://www.optometryboard.gov.au) or [www.odob.health.nz](http://www.odob.health.nz)

**Note:** In Australia and New Zealand, optometrists may only practice therapeutically if they are registered optometrists and have scheduled medicines endorsement as recognised by the OBA or ODOB.

# ABOUT THE COURSE

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## ACO-COT Curriculum Committee

A senior academic team representing different states of Australia, New Zealand, Universities and eyecare professions has been appointed to form the Curriculum Committee. The role of this Committee is to ensure the course offers a robust academic program and monitors its delivery including quality of teaching and learning activities.

## Members of the Curriculum Committee

**Assoc Prof Ian Gutteridge** (Chair), Principal Teaching Fellow, Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of Melbourne

**Assoc Prof James Armitage**, Optometry Course Director, Head of Vision Science and Senior Academic Mentor, School of Medicine, Faculty of Health, Deakin University

**Dr Bang Bui**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of Melbourne

**Assoc Prof Colin Chan**, Ophthalmologist, Vision Eye Institute, Sydney and Conjoint Associate Professor, School of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of New South Wales

**Prof Erica Fletcher**, Professor and Reader, Department of Anatomy and Neuroscience, The University of Melbourne

**Mr Marcel Mihulka**, Director Education Division, ACO (ex-officio)

**Ms Maureen O'Keefe**, ACO Chief Executive Officer

**Dr Jonathan Ruddle**, Ophthalmologist, Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital and Royal Children's Hospital and Senior Fellow, Centre for Eye Research of Australia

**Dr Graham Wilson**, Ophthalmologist, Gisborne Hospital, Chelsea Hospital and Senior Lecturer, University of Otago, New Zealand

## Features of the ACO-COT

The ACO-COT is a remote learning course that will offer a flexible style of learning involving:

- Self paced independent learning
- Online lectures developed by a range of leading presenters
- Live, interactive online webinars
- e-learning materials
- Online forums and networking opportunities
- Written and oral assessments (undertaken locally)
- Local clinical placements within Australia and/or New Zealand

More detail is provided in subsequent sections of this Course Information.

# ABOUT THE COURSE

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## Entry Requirements

To enter the course, candidates must be a graduate of optometry. All training associated with obtaining an Australian or New Zealand degree in optometry are therefore assumed pre-requisites. As a minimum, candidates should be registered as an optometrist in Australia and/or New Zealand and have:

- A sound knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the eye and diseases of the eye;
- Experience with a full range of diagnostic techniques including gonioscopy and automated perimetry.

*Course enquiries from overseas applicants or optometrists with limited registration should be directed to the ACO Education Division.*

## Course Outline

The course is divided into two parts: Ocular Therapeutics 1: Didactic Online Course; Ocular Therapeutics 2: Clinical Placements.

## Ocular Therapeutics 1: Didactic Online Course

### (a) General Principles of Disease

This section of the course will outline the general principles of:

- Pathology;
- Immunology;
- Microbiology;
- Ocular pharmacology.

### (b) Ocular Diseases and Therapeutic Management

In this section candidates will gain an understanding of:

- The diagnosis and management of:
  - anterior eye disorders;
  - uveitis, scleritis and episcleritis;
  - glaucoma.
- Management and post-operative care of cataract and refractive surgery patients;
- Shared care and co-management with ophthalmologists;
- The legal aspects of prescribing and disease management.

Ocular Therapeutics 1 will involve approximately 50 hours of online lectures, 15 hours of webinars and 46 hours of self directed learning.

# ABOUT THE COURSE

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## Ocular Therapeutics 2: Clinical Placements

Candidates must undertake placements at eyecare facilities under clinical supervision. In this component of the course candidates will:

- Gain experience with a diverse range of primary eyecare conditions and presentations;
- Participate in the management of a variety of ocular conditions with experienced clinicians;
- Analyse diagnostic principles, discussion of treatment options and therapeutic plans in the clinical setting;
- Assess outcomes of management/treatment and modifications of management when the expected improvement does not occur;
- Consider systemic side effects from ocular disease management.

## The Organisation of Clinical Placements

**Clinical placements can only begin after successful completion of Ocular Therapeutics 1.**

A particular feature of this course is the option for candidates to identify convenient placements. This could be within a range of local or regional ophthalmology settings. It may be possible to supplement this by working in a busy therapeutic optometry practice. This model could benefit both the candidate and provider, capitalising on existing, or developing future, professional relationships at the local level.

In relation to the clinical placements, it should be noted that:

- Candidates are responsible for nominating their provider of choice and for any costs incurred.
- Candidates and their clinical supervisors will be provided with guidelines indicating the level of clinical therapeutic exposure that must be demonstrated for successful completion of the placement.
- All providers will enter into an agreement with the ACO.
- Clinical placements must be organised in consultation with the ACO.
- Prior to commencement of clinical placements, candidates must satisfy and comply with any local requirements (eg Police Check, Working with Children Check etc.) required by the eyecare facilities and relevant to State and Territory legislation. Any costs incurred as a result of these requirements will be at candidates' own expense.
- Clinical placements can only take place in Australia or New Zealand.

# ABOUT THE COURSE

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## Assessment

### 1. Ocular Therapeutics 1: Didactic Course Assessment

Candidates must complete 2 written examinations, comprising of multiple choice and short answer questions. Candidates must achieve an overall score of at least 65% to pass these examinations prior to commencement of clinical placements.

### 2. Ocular Therapeutics 2: Clinical Placement Assessment

A minimum of 50 hours of supervised clinical practicum is required for successful completion of the program. Candidates will be required to keep a log of conditions encountered and the treatment plans that were discussed and developed with the clinical supervisor. In addition, candidates must submit 3 written case reports on the therapeutic management of 3 patients encountered during clinical placements.

As part of their clinical placements, candidates are also required to demonstrate competency in a range of clinical skills essential in the scope of therapeutic practice. It is recommended that candidates who are inexperienced in these skills should practice and develop them prior to commencement of clinical placements. Candidates who fail to demonstrate satisfactory skills may need to undertake refresher courses.

**Candidates are responsible for arranging their clinical skills check-list to be signed off and for any costs incurred.**

A variety of skills will be assessed, including:

**Binocular indirect ophthalmoscopy:** Demonstrated proficiency to visualise the ocular fundus, including peripheral fundus lesions;

**Pre-corneal lens fundus examination:** Demonstrated proficiency to visualise the posterior pole (macula and optic nerve) and the vitreous;

**Gonioscopy:** Demonstrated proficiency to adequately assess anterior chamber anatomy and depth and to evaluate lesions and conditions.

### 3. Final Assessment

After successful completion of the didactic and clinical placement assessments, candidates will undertake an oral examination, via video link or face-to-face.



# ABOUT THE COURSE

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## Course Duration and Schedule

It is anticipated that candidates will complete the course within 12 months of commencement including assessments.

Clinical placements should commence approximately 6–7 months after course commencement. In exceptional circumstances candidates experiencing difficulties scheduling their clinical placements may request an extension of time to complete this component.

A tentative course schedule is provided below:

<b>Week 1</b>	Course commencement Ocular Therapeutics 1: Didactic Online Course
<b>Week 9–14</b>	Exam 1: Part A
<b>Week 30–36</b>	Exam 2: Part B. Completion of Ocular Therapeutics 1.
<b>Week 32 and after</b>	Commencement of Ocular Therapeutics 2: Clinical Placements
<b>Week 51–54</b>	Completion of Ocular Therapeutics 2: Clinical Placements
<b>Week 51–54</b>	Commencement of Oral Assessment period

*Note: This schedule provides an indication only.*

Candidates should check with the ACO for examination dates and times prior to making any leave or travel arrangements.

## Course Resources Included in Course Fees

Following enrolment and throughout the duration of the course, candidates will receive:

- A Course Handbook which will provide information and guidelines on all aspects of the course;
- Access to online lectures, lecture handouts, course notes and suggested reading lists;
- Access to live, interactive webinars. Candidates must participate in a minimum of 75% of webinars, however webinar recordings will also be made available for viewing at a later stage if candidates are unable to participate at the scheduled time, or wish to view them for revision purposes;
- The opportunity to communicate with other candidates and the Course Manager via an online forum;
- Assistance and support during business hours for access and utilisation of learning materials.

# ABOUT THE COURSE

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## Candidate Requirements

To participate in the course, candidates will need:

- An email address for communications with the Course Coordinator;
- Access to a computer – PC or Mac (refer to specifications below);

## Computer Specifications

As a guide, your computer will need the following minimum specifications:

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<b>Browsers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PC: Up-to-date version of Chrome, Internet Explorer or Firefox</li><li>• MAC: Up-to-date version of Safari or Chrome</li></ul>
<b>Operating Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• PC: Windows 7 and above</li><li>• MAC: Lion 10.7 and above</li></ul>
<b>Plug-ins/Software</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adobe Flash Player 10.2</li><li>• Adobe Reader</li><li>• Skype</li></ul>
<b>Internet Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fast and reliable broadband connection: 350kbps upload / 350kbps download</li></ul>
<b>Hardware</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keyboard and mouse</li><li>• USB Headset (oral exam only)</li><li>• Webcam (oral exam only)</li><li>• Speakers (either inbuilt or external)</li><li>• Microphone (preferably external)</li><li>• 1Gb RAM</li><li>• 6GB HDD</li><li>• 1GHz Processor (PC)</li><li>• 1GHz Intel Processor (Core 2 Duo) (MAC)</li><li>• 1280 X 1024 resolution display preferred (notebooks and net-books may operate on other resolutions)</li></ul>

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# ABOUT THE COURSE

## Fees

The course fee covers education materials, educator/tutor support and assessment marking where applicable.

The following are **not** included in the course fees and any costs incurred must be paid by the candidate:

- Supply of recommended and prescribed texts;
- Costs associated with clinical placements;
- Costs related to exams such as venue hire and/or invigilation;
- Cost of repeat examinations (if required);
- Cost associated with the clinical skills assessment.

Course fees can be paid either in full at a discounted rate or by 2 instalments. Final payment is required 6 weeks before course start date. To be eligible for the discounted rate, full payment must be received at the time of application. To be eligible for the Earlybird rate, full payment must be received by 15 December 2017.

## Fee Schedule

These prices are effective for courses commencing in 2018.

Course Fees 2018 (AUD)	ACO members (AU)	ACO members (NZ)	Non members (AU)	Non members (NZ)
Earlybird: before 15 December 2017	\$8,596	\$7,815	\$9,029	\$8,208
Paid in full: total fee paid at enrolment	\$8,910	\$8,100	\$9,361	\$8,510
Paid by instalments:	\$9,185	\$8,350	\$9,625	\$8,750
Instalment 1: At enrolment	\$6,154	\$5,595	\$6,449	\$5,863
Instalment 2: Six weeks before course commencement date	\$3,031	\$2,755	\$3,176	\$2,887

## ACO Membership

ACO Membership is an **annual subscription (January to December)** available nationally and internationally, which provides access to a wide range of on-line learning options. ACO members receive instant course fee discounts and are given access to other relevant resources and educational activities that can assist with therapeutic studies. In particular Membership provides a 75% discount on the optional annual Webinar Package (Therapeutics Webinars).

# ABOUT THE COURSE

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If you are currently not an ACO member and wish to avail yourself of the Member discount for ACO-COT, please submit your ACO Membership Application with your ACO-COT Application. Visit the ACO website for a membership application form.

## Withdrawal From the Course and Fee Refund

The following terms apply in relation to candidate withdrawal from the course and refund of fees:

1. Notification of a candidate's intention to withdraw must be made in writing. Confirmation of receipt of this notification will be provided by the ACO.
2. Candidates will receive a full refund for withdrawals received 6 weeks prior to course commencement, less \$250 administrative fee.
3. Fees will not be refunded for withdrawals received less than 6 weeks prior to course commencement.

## The ACO-COT and Continuing Professional Development Credits

On successful completion of the ACO-COT, candidates who are registered to practice in Australia will be able to claim CPD points for re-registration purposes, equivalent to 2 years of CPD requirements (ie 80T points). Candidates who are registered to practice in New Zealand will be able to claim CPD points equivalent to 60 CD points.

## Application Process

### Submitting a Course Application

Candidates wishing to apply for the ACO-COT should complete the attached application form and send it together with payment to the Education Division, using the details provided on the application form.

Applications will be acknowledged via email within 3 business days. Please contact the ACO if you do not receive this acknowledgement.

### Course Offer and Acceptance

Places in the course are limited and are allocated according to the order of receipt of **complete applications** including payment. Successful applicants will be notified via email.

Course confirmations will be made approximately two weeks after receipt of the application.

Should the course be oversubscribed, unsuccessful applicants will be placed on a waiting list and notified of a place if available at a later stage.

# ABOUT THE COURSE

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## Course Enquiries

For information on important dates, please refer to

[www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course](http://www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course)

For all other information regarding applications, selection criteria, course content or assessment procedures, please contact:

### Education Division

Australian College of Optometry  
374 Cardigan St, Carlton VIC 3053

**Telephone:** +61 3 9349 7477

**Facsimile:** +61 3 9349 7559

**Email:** [acocot@aco.org.au](mailto:acocot@aco.org.au)

**Website:** [www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course](http://www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course)

# Application for ACO Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics (ACO-COT)

**NOTE:** Application deadline is 6 weeks prior to course commencement. (Late applications accepted, subject to availability of places). For details of course commencement dates see [www.aco.org.au/professional-development](http://www.aco.org.au/professional-development).

## Personal Details *(as registered with APHRA/ODOB)*

TITLE	GIVEN NAME	FAMILY NAME		
PREFERRED NAME				
DATE OF BIRTH				GENDER <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE
POSTAL ADDRESS				
TOWN/SUBURB	STATE	POSTCODE	COUNTRY	
PHONE	MOBILE			
EMAIL				

## RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS *(must be supplied if different from above)*

TOWN/SUBURB	STATE	POSTCODE	COUNTRY
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I am registered to practice optometry in Australia or New Zealand.

My AHPRA/ODOB registration number is: \_\_\_\_\_

My OA registration number is: \_\_\_\_\_

## Previous tertiary studies

Please provide details below for all previous and current tertiary studies with your most recent or current qualification listed first.

NAME OF QUALIFICATION	NAME OF INSTITUTION	COUNTRY OF INSTITUTION	COURSE LENGTH (NO. OF YEARS FULL TIME STUDY)	YEAR COMPLETED

## Employment experience relevant to application

Please summarise your relevant employment history over the last five years, listing your current employment first.

EMPLOYER/PRACTICE	POSITION	DURATION

I am a member of the ACO  Yes  No

**I wish to join now** – I have attached my membership application form.

Note: If you are not a member but are applying for ACO membership, you can claim the ACO member rate for course fees if you submit your membership application form with this course application. A membership form is available from [www.aco.org.au/membership/join-the-aco](http://www.aco.org.au/membership/join-the-aco). Membership is for January to December (renewable annually). ACO-COT candidates who choose to pay the member fee must remain a member for the duration of the COT course.

## Course Fee Categories (for courses commencing 2018)

I wish to pay my ACO-COT course fees according to the following category (please tick one only):

**Note:** If you are not a member but are applying for ACO membership now, you can claim the ACO member rate for course fees, provided you submit both applications together. **Applications received before 15 December 2017 are eligible for the early bird registration fee.**

I will complete ALL of ACO-COT in New Zealand		
	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
PAYMENT TYPE	AU (INC GST)	NZ (GST EXEMPT)
<b>EARLYBIRD</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> ACO MEMBER	AUD \$8,596	AUD \$7,815
<input type="checkbox"/> NON MEMBER	AUD \$9,029	AUD \$8,208
<b>IN FULL</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> ACO MEMBER	AUD \$8,910	AUD \$8,100
<input type="checkbox"/> NON MEMBER	AUD \$9,361	AUD \$8,510
<b>BY INSTALMENTS</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> ACO MEMBER	AUD \$9,185	AUD \$8,350
INSTALMENT 1:	AUD \$6,154	AUD \$5,595
INSTALMENT 2:	AUD \$3,031	AUD \$2,755
<input type="checkbox"/> NON MEMBER	AUD \$9,625	AUD \$8,750
INSTALMENT 1:	AUD \$6,449	AUD \$5,863
INSTALMENT 2:	AUD \$3,176	AUD \$2,887

A full refund will be given for withdrawals received six weeks prior to course commencement, less \$250 administration fee. Fees will not be refunded for withdrawals received less than six weeks prior to course commencement (including payments by instalments).

### Please select one of the following payment options.

- Option A:** I enclose a cheque made payable to the Australian College of Optometry (fees paid by cheque must be paid in full)
- Option B:** my bank, building society or credit union account
- Option C:** my credit card account (a 2% credit card surcharge will be added)

**OPTION B: Bank/building society/credit union** (not available from overseas bank accounts)

NAME OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTION	
NAME(S) OF ACCOUNT HOLDER	
BSB NUMBER	BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER
ACCOUNT HOLDER'S SIGNATURE	DATE
JOINT ACCOUNT HOLDER'S SIGNATURE	DATE

### OPTION C: Credit card (a 2% credit card surcharge will be added)

DEBIT THE FOLLOWING CREDIT CARD WITH MY INDICATED COURSE FEES     VISA     MASTERCARD

CARD NUMBER	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	CVV	<input type="text"/>	EXPIRY	<input type="text"/>
NAME ON CARD	SIGNATURE		DATE					

## Your Responsibilities

- ensure that your existing account can accept direct debits (*check with your financial institution*)
- ensure that the authority given to us to draw on your existing account is consistent with the account authority or signing instructions held by your financial institution for that account
- ensure that before the billing day you have sufficient cleared funds available in your account
- advise us if the nominated account is transferred, closed or changed
- advise us in writing no less than 1 week before billing day if you wish to change your banking details

## Declaration and signature – Please tick all boxes and sign below

- I have read and understood the course information booklet attached to this form.
- I acknowledge that clinical placement must be undertaken in Australia or New Zealand.
- I declare that all the information I have submitted with this application is true and complete.
- I acknowledge that the submission of false, incorrect, incomplete or misleading information may result in cancellation of my enrolment or delays in processing.
- I authorise the Australian College of Optometry to make any inquiries necessary to verify the accuracy of the information supplied on this form.
- I acknowledge that I am responsible for the payment of all candidate fees and charges applying to my admission and study with the Australian College of Optometry. I have read and understood the fee payment and withdrawal rules.
- I acknowledge that I am responsible for any costs incurred that are not included in the course fees, including the costs associated with prescribed texts, clinical placements, invigilation and repeat examinations.

NAME OF APPLICANT

SIGNATURE

DATE

**How to lodge your application:** Send complete application form together with payment by mail to the Course Program Director (*details below*).

Before lodging your application, please ensure that you have done the following:

- Read the Course Information booklet attached to this form
- Ensure travel plans do not conflict with course schedule
- Provided correct contact details and registration number
- Indicated course fee category for fee payments
- Provided 'How to Pay' details
- Signed the applicant declaration
- Completed ACO membership form (*if applicable*)

### For further information please contact:

Education Division  
Australian College of Optometry  
374 Cardigan St, Carlton VIC 3053

**Phone:** +61 3 9349 7477

**Fax:** +61 3 9349 7559

**Email:** [acocot@aco.org.au](mailto:acocot@aco.org.au)

**Web:** [www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course](http://www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course)