



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

# AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY CERTIFICATE IN OCULAR THERAPEUTICS

ACO-COT



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

The ACO is proud to continue delivering the Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics (ACO-COT) in 2022. The unique flexibility of the certificate has enabled many optometrists from across Australia and New Zealand to extend their skills and gain the rights to practice in ocular therapeutics. For many, it has not just increased their scope of practice – it has changed the way they approach practice, improved their retention of patients, and improved their job satisfaction.

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 Optometry Board of Australia (OBA) and the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB).

The ACO has a dedicated and passionate team who want to ensure their candidates become therapeutically qualified. The course is delivered by an expert team of presenters from universities and clinical practices across Australia and New Zealand. So if you haven't done so yet, consider enrolling in the 2022 course and change the way you practice!



# ACO CERTIFICATE IN OCULAR THERAPEUTICS (ACO-COT)

## INTRODUCTION

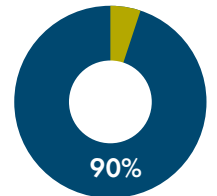
The objective of the ACO Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics is to ensure that graduates in Australia are suitably trained to prescribe or administer approved schedule 2, 3 and 4 medicines for the treatment of ocular conditions in the course of optometric practice. For graduates practising in New Zealand, this course ensures 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 the skills to adapt to changes in the scope of therapeutic practice.

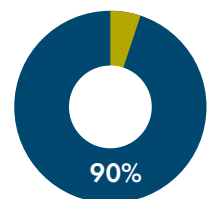
The course is accredited by the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ). Successful completion of the ACO-COT will enable scheduled medicines endorsement for registered optometrists in Australia and New Zealand, as recognised by the OBA and the ODOB. For further information refer to the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

## COURSE SATISFACTION SURVEY

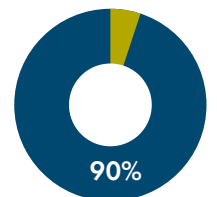
Were your expectations achieved?



How satisfied were you with ACO-COT?



Would you recommend ACO-COT to a colleague or friend?



A great way to offer a better service to your patients.

Gaynor Whitehead



## 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

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

**Professor James Armitage**, Professor of Optometry, Optometry Course Director and Head of Vision Science, School of Medicine, Faculty of Health, Deakin University

**Associate Professor Bang Bui**, Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of Melbourne

**Associate Professor Colin Chan**, Ophthalmologist, Vision Eye Institute, Sydney and Adjunct Associate Professor, Faculty of Health, University of Canberra

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

**Dr Heathcote Wright**, PhD FRANZCO, Glaucoma Lead, Director Melbourne Comprehensive Eye Surgeons and Sunbury Eye Surgeons, Cataract and Glaucoma Surgeon

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

**Ms Jane Trevaskis**, ACO Director Education, Membership and Marketing (ex-officio)



## 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;
- Personalised service – immediate and personal support as needed;
- E-learning materials;
- Online forums and networking opportunities – enjoy peer-to-peer learning and support;
- Written and oral assessments;
- No travel – the course can be done entirely from your own locale;
- Local clinical placements within Australia and/or New Zealand.

More detail is provided in subsequent sections of this course information brochure.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

To enter the course candidates must be a graduate of optometry. 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 ACO Education.

## 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, 16 hours of webinars and over 45 hours of self directed learning.**

## 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 placement providers are required to 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 (e.g. 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.



## ASSESSMENT

### Ocular Therapeutics 1: Didactic Course Assessment

Candidates must complete two 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.

### 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

### 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.



*It was a well-organised course that has prepared me to competently diagnose and effectively treat anterior ocular conditions*

**Shelley Brannigan**



## COURSE DURATION AND SCHEDULE

The ACO-COT commences on 11 April 2022.

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

Clinical placements should commence approximately 6 to 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>	Ocular Therapeutics 1: Didactic Online Course
<b>Week 11</b>	Exam 1: Part A
<b>Week 31</b>	Exam 2: Part B. Completion of Ocular Therapeutics 1.
<b>Week 32 &amp; after</b>	Ocular Therapeutics 2: Clinical Placements
<b>Week 56</b>	Oral Assessment period

**Note:** This schedule is 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.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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.



*The lecturers and the staff went out of their way to make sure that I attained a high standard.*

**John Evans**





## 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;
- Cost of repeat examinations (if required);
- Cost associated with the clinical skills assessment.

Course fees must be paid in full prior to commencement of the course. To be eligible for the Earlybird rate, full payment must be received by 17 December 2021.

### Fee Schedule

These prices are effective for courses commencing in 2022.

Course Fees 2022 (AUD)	ACO members (AU)	ACO members (NZ)	Non members (AU)	Non members (NZ)
<b>Earlybird:</b> Before 19 December 2021	\$9,661	\$8,778	\$10,209	\$9,272
<b>Paid in full:</b> After 19 December 2021	\$10,002	\$9,093	\$10,499	\$9,545

### ACO Membership

ACO Members have access to a range of complimentary and discounted education, in addition to supporting the provision of public eye care. Membership is an annual subscription (January to December). If you are currently not an ACO member and wish to benefit from the Member discount for ACO-COT, please submit your ACO Membership application with your ACO-COT application. Visit the ACO website for further information and a copy of the application form.



*Support was excellent. I had to get an extension on a case report due to issues that made me 'time-poor' and the ACO was very flexible in allowing me extra time to complete the necessary requirements.*

**Jelle De Bock**



## 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 4 weeks prior to course commencement, less \$300 administrative fee.
3. Fees will not be refunded for withdrawals received less than 4 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, 40 therapeutic CPD hours (including 5 interactive hours) in each of the two calendar years. Candidates who are registered to practice in New Zealand will be able to claim CPD points equivalent to 40 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 ACO Education.

Applications will be acknowledged via email within 3 business days. Please contact the ACO if you do not receive this acknowledgement. Course confirmations will be made approximately two weeks after receipt of the application.



*The timing and flexibility of self-directed learning were very helpful in my situation as a sole practitioner. Being able to study without leaving town was a huge bonus.*

**Stu Willats**



## COURSE ENQUIRIES

For information on the ACO-COT



[www.aco.org.au/  
certificate-in-ocular-therapeutics/](http://www.aco.org.au/certificate-in-ocular-therapeutics/)

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

ACO Education

Australian College of Optometry

374 Cardigan St, Carlton VIC 3053



+61 3 9349 7546



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



[www.aco.org.au/education](http://www.aco.org.au/education)

**NOTE:** Application deadline is 4 weeks prior to course commencement.

**Personal Details** *(as registered with AHPRA/ODOB)*

TITLE GIVEN NAME FAMILY NAME

PREFERRED NAME

DATE OF BIRTH GENDER  MALE  FEMALE  NON-BINARY  PREFER NOT TO SAY

POSTAL ADDRESS

TOWN/SUBURB STATE POSTCODE COUNTRY

PHONE MOBILE

EMAIL

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

TOWN/SUBURB STATE POSTCODE COUNTRY

I am registered to practice optometry in Australia or New Zealand.

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

My OA member 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:** Non-members are welcome to join the ACO to gain access to the member rate. Please include a membership form with your ACO-COT application. A membership form is available from [www.aco.org.au/members/](http://www.aco.org.au/members/) ACO annual membership runs from January to December (renewable annually). ACO-COT candidates who choose to pay the member fee must remain a member for the duration of the course.

**SEND YOUR APPLICATION TO:**

ACO Education  
374 Cardigan St, Carlton VIC 3053

Email: [acocot@aco.org.au](mailto:acocot@aco.org.au)  
Tel: +61 3 9349 7546

## 2022 Course fees

Applications received before 17 December 2021 are eligible for the early bird registration fee.

PAYMENT TYPE	AU (INC GST)	NZ (GST EXEMPT)
<b>EARLY BIRD</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> ACO MEMBER	AUD \$9,661	AUD \$8,778
<input type="checkbox"/> NON MEMBER	AUD \$10,209	AUD \$9,272
<b>IN FULL</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> ACO MEMBER	AUD \$10,002	AUD \$9,093
<input type="checkbox"/> NON MEMBER	AUD \$10,499	AUD \$9,545

I will complete ALL of ACO-COT in New Zealand

 NO

 YES

A full refund will be given for withdrawals received four weeks prior to course commencement, less \$300 fee. Fees will not be refunded for withdrawals received less than four weeks prior to course commencement (including payments by instalments).

Please select one of the following payment options.

- Option A:** my bank, building society or credit union account
- Option B:** my credit card account
- Option C:** EFT Payment

**OPTION A: 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 B: Credit card

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

CARD NUMBER                 CVV    EXPIRY   /

NAME ON CARD \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### OPTION C: EFT Payment

If you have selected this payment option, we will email you the EFT details upon receipt of your application.

### Your Responsibilities

- ensure any travel plans do not conflict with the course schedule
- 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
- ensure that before the billing day you have sufficient cleared funds available in your account

### 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 and repeat examinations.

NAME OF APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_