

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 20, 2023

SUBJECT: **Call for Comments on proposed revisions to Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE)**
(1) Professional Optometric Degree Program Standards, and
(2) Optometric Residency Program Standards

TO: Deans and Presidents of Schools and Colleges of Optometry, including proposed programs; Presidents and Chancellors of institutions that house Schools and Colleges of Optometry, including proposed programs; Externship Directors; Directors of Optometric Residencies; Supervisors of Optometric Residencies; Directors of Optometric Technician Programs; ACOE Consultants; AOA Board of Trustees, AOA Executive Director, AOA Management Support Team, and AOA General Council; Executive Committees and Directors of the ARBO, AAO, NOA, NBEO, and OEBC; AOSA Executive Director and AOSA Trustees; ASCO Executive Director; Executive Directors and Board Members of State Boards; Presidents and Executive Directors of State Associations; Director of the VA Optometry Service; Military and Public Health Optometric Service Chiefs; ASPA Members, Board and Executive Director; CHEA staff; Institutional Accreditors; USDE staff; Chronicle of Higher Education; any interested party

FROM: G. Timothy Petito, O.D., ACOE Chair

DIST: ACOE, Ms. Puljak, Ms. Wirth, Ms. Mohr, Ms. Martin, Ms. Anderson

The purpose of this memorandum is to invite interested parties to submit comments regarding proposed changes to the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education's (ACOE's) Standards for

- (1) Professional optometric degree programs, including those seeking the ACOE's Preliminary Approval status, and
- (2) Optometric residency programs.

At its June 21-24, 2023 Annual Meeting, the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) accepted both the draft optometric residency and professional optometric degree program Standards for distribution to the communities of interest for comment. The ACOE invites all interested parties to submit written comments concerning these proposed Standards by **September 3, 2023**. Please submit comments to accredit@theacoe.org.

The ACOE conducts a comprehensive review of its Standards at least every five years. The ACOE's current "Professional Optometric Degree Standards" were effective July 1, 2017, and the current "Standards for professional optometric degree programs seeking Preliminary Approval preaccreditation status" were effective January 1, 2019. The ACOE is developing a single set of accreditation Standards that address requirements for both currently operational professional optometric degree programs and proposed programs seeking the ACOE accreditation status of Preliminary Approval, which is a preaccreditation status and required for programs to recruit and enroll students and begin offering the program. The ACOE's current "Optometric Residency Standards" were effective July 1, 2017.

A summary of activities undertaken related to the comprehensive Standards review processes is presented in the following table.

Timing	Standards applicable to:	
	Professional optometric degree programs	Optometric residency programs
December 2021	Council launched a survey to the communities of interest to gather input on the criticality and clarity of the current ACOE Standards	
June 2022		Council launched a survey to the communities of interest to gather input on the criticality and clarity of the current ACOE Standards
October 2022	<p>ACOE hosted an Invitational Conference. Representatives of Schools/Colleges and of other stakeholder groups met to provide input on changes to the Standards</p> <p>A 'post conference' survey launched to collect feedback on the degree to which participants agreed with the recommendations from the Invitational Conference</p>	
January 2023	ACOE's Professional Optometric Degree (POD) Committee met to review and propose modifications to the Standards.	
February 2023	Council reviewed the draft and provided additional input. The ACOE accepted the draft to be distributed to the communities of interest in a call for comments	
March 2023	Draft Standards distributed to communities of interest in call for comments	
April 2023		ACOE's Optometric Residency Committee met to review and propose modifications to the Standards.
June 2023	<p>POD Committee reviewed comments from the communities of interest and revised draft Standards.</p> <p>Council reviewed the draft and provided additional input. The ACOE accepted the draft to be distributed to the communities of interest in a 2nd call for comments</p>	Council reviewed the draft and provided additional input. The ACOE accepted the draft to be distributed to the communities of interest in a call for comments

Following the collection of comments, both the POD and Optometric Residency Committees will convene to review comments regarding each applicable set of accreditation Standards. The POD Committee will develop a third draft and the Optometric Residency Committee will develop a second draft for presentation to the ACOE for its consideration at its Fall Meeting, scheduled October 27-29, 2023. At that time, the Council will consider whether each set of Standards is ready to be adopted, or if significant changes are made, additional draft(s) will be distributed with another call for comments.

The ACOE is committed to obtaining as much feedback as is useful in developing Standards that best reflect attributes of optometric educational programs designed to meet the needs of the public. When each set of Standards is adopted, the effective date(s) will be set and communicated.

Several high-level changes were made to each set of draft Standards and are summarized as follows:

- Intent statements have been added to each Standard to aid in interpretation.
- The protocol of italicizing terms that are currently defined in the ACOE Policy and Procedure Manual Glossary has been applied to the Standards. Comments are welcome on both the Standards and the Glossary definitions.
- Examples of Evidence have been modified to more clearly indicate the expectation that evidence supplementary to the Self-Study narrative is to be provided.
- The concept of Sub-Standards has been eliminated (from Standards I-IV) in order to clarify that programs must demonstrate compliance to each Standard and not combine or skip any.

The **ACOE greatly appreciates the work of its committees**. Both the **Professional Optometric Degree Committee** and the **Optometric Residency Committee** have devoted significant time, passion, and critical thought to improving educational quality.

The **Optometric Residency Committee** is chaired by Julie DeKinder, O.D., ACOE Vice Chair and Associate Dean of Academic Programs, Director of Residency Programs, and Clinical Professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis College of Optometry, and includes the following members:

- Diane Adamczyk, O.D., ACOE senior consultant, Director of Residency Education and Professor at State University of New York College of Optometry;
- Luanne Chubb, O.D., ACOE member, practitioner from King of Prussia, PA;
- Jacqueline Davis, O.D., M.P.H., ACOE member, Emeritus Professor of Clinical Optometry at The Ohio State University College of Optometry;
- Wesley DeRosier, O.D., ACOE senior consultant, practitioner from Park Hill, OK;
- Amy Grimes, O.D., ACOE senior consultant, practitioner from Tucson, AZ;
- Timothy Hug, O.D., ACOE former member and senior consultant, practitioner from Phoenix, AZ;
- Stephanie Messner, O.D., ACOE former chair and senior consultant, Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs at Illinois College of Optometry;
- David Reed, O.D., ACOE former member and senior consultant, practitioner from Churchville, MD; and
- Michael White, O.D., ACOE senior consultant, practitioner from Memphis, TN

The **Professional Optometric Degree Committee** is chaired by David Yang, O.D., ACOE member and practitioner from Cupertino, CA, and includes the following members:

- Ida Chung, O.D., ACOE senior consultant, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and an Associate Professor at Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry;

- Geoffrey Goodfellow, O.D., ACOE member, Associate Dean for Academic Assessment and Records at Illinois College of Optometry;
- Larry Henry, O.D., ACOE member, practitioner from Edmond, OK;
- William Miller, O.D., Ph.D., ACOE member, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry;
- Mark Swan, O.D., M.Ed., ACOE Consultant, Professor, Ferris State University Michigan College of Optometry; and
- Regan Michelle Welch, O.D., ACOE member, practitioner from Idabel, OK.

As chair of the ACOE, I served as an ex-officio member of each Committee and had the privilege of participating in Committee review and discussions.

The following information is available on the [ACOE website](#):

- (1) A copy of this **memorandum**;
- (2) **Professional Optometric Degree Program Standards** – a marked-up version of changes proposed to the Standards relative to those distributed in the March 2023 call for comments;
- (3) **Optometric Residency Program Standards** - A side-by-side comparison and crosswalk that summarizes changes between the existing Standards and the proposed Standards; and
- (4) **Glossary** – a marked-up version of the Glossary, applicable to both sets of Standards

The current Standards are available on the [ACOE website](#):

- [Professional Optometric Degree Standards](#) (effective July 1, 2017)
- [Standards for professional optometric degree programs seeking preliminary approval preaccreditation status](#) (effective Jan. 1, 2019)
- [Optometric Residency Standards](#) (effective July 1, 2017)

The Council welcomes and appreciates input from **any interested party** regarding the proposed Standards.