

Recent accreditation actions and decisions of the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE)

March 26, 2024

Consistent with Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) policy, the ACOE publishes the following information about accreditation and preaccreditation decisions:

- the type of program (professional optometric degree, optometric residency or optometric technician);
- the program's sponsor, and in the case of an optometric residency not sponsored by a school or college of optometry, the name of the affiliated optometric institution;
- accreditation status or action;
- the year of the next currently scheduled site visit; and
- the Council's summary of compliance with the standards, which specifies the Council's basis for any final decision. Updates to the summary of compliance will be published in subsequent reports of ACOE meeting actions when the ACOE determines that the standards are met.
- ACOE publishes on its website [information](#) regarding programs with “Accredited with Conditions” status and programs from which ACOE has withdrawn accreditation status or Preliminary Approval status.

[Definitions of pre-accreditation classification and accreditation status](#)

At its February 23-25, 2024 Winter meeting in Alexandria, Virginia, the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) took the following actions: (Note: Date in parenthesis is the date of the next currently scheduled evaluation visit to the programs. Depending on the outcomes of annual reports, progress reports, interim visits, substantive program changes and other significant events affecting a program, the Council may decide to schedule a full on-site evaluation visit before the original accreditation period is complete. The accreditation period is eight years for professional optometric degree, optometric residency and optometric technician programs.)

1. Preaccreditation Actions:

Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions College of Optometry, Professional Optometric Degree Program (2024). The program's preaccreditation classification of **Preliminary Approval** was continued, based on the Council's determination that the program has demonstrated it is developing in accordance with Council standards. The program is required to report on its progress related to recommendations to meet Standards I, II, IV, V, VI, and VIII. The Council will conduct a site visit in **2024**.

Summary of compliance related to compliance with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education 2017 Professional Optometric Degree Program Standards

Standard	Level of Compliance	Reason for Met in Part or Not Met
I. Mission, Goals and Objectives	Met in part	The program's plan to assess fulfillment of its goals and objectives includes inadequate measures and does not include graduation rate. (1.3)
II. Curriculum	Met in part	The program has not completed the development of courses and the curriculum map for the second and third professional years of the program. (2.1)

Standard	Level of Compliance	Reason for Met in Part or Not Met
		<p>The program lacks a plan to ensure clinic assignments are level-appropriate and provide each student with a sufficient quality and variety of patient encounters. (2.8)</p> <p>The program's patient log does not include diagnosis (2.8.1)</p>
III. Research and Scholarly Activity	Met	
IV. Governance, Regional Accreditation, Administration and Finances	Met in part	<p>The program does not comply with its Policy on Commercial Sponsorships by ensuring written agreements are in place that protect against influence from outside entities that may compromise the teaching, clinical, or research components of the program. (4.7)</p>
V. Faculty	Met in part	<p>The number of faculty members is insufficient, placing mission and goal fulfillment at risk. (5.1)</p> <p>The program does not publish a policy and procedure addressing faculty academic assignments. (5.5)</p>
VI. Students	Met in part	<p>The program does not follow its admissions policies and procedures with respect to acceptable prerequisite courses and the ranking of qualified applicants. (6.2.1)</p> <p>Policies included in the Optometry Student Handbook are not published in a manner accessible to all communities of interest. (6.6.1)</p>
VII. Facilities, Equipment and Resources	Met	
VIII. Clinic Management and Patient Care Policies	Met in part	<p>The program does not have updated executed Affiliation Agreements in place and the agreement template does not address contingencies in cases where an external affiliated clinic fails to provide the agreed upon clinical education. (8.1)</p> <p>The program has not established sufficient procedures to address risk management for students including liability protection and immunization practices that assure health safety. (8.2.8)</p> <p>The program does not ensure that the provision of eye and vision care services at the Eye Institute and at the affiliated external clinics are consistent with accepted and well-established health care standards such as clinical practice guidelines. (8.3)</p>

2. Initial Accreditation: None

3. Continuing Accreditation:

Classification of "Accredited" continued following a site visit:

A. Audie Murphy Memorial VA Hospital Residency in Ocular Disease with emphasis in Brain Injury and Rehabilitation, which is affiliated with University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry (2031). The program’s status of Accredited was continued, based on the Council's determination that the program has no deficiencies or weaknesses that compromise the educational effectiveness of the total program. The program fully meets the six standards for residency programs.

B. Omni Eye Services of Atlanta Residency in Ocular Disease, which is affiliated with University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Optometry (2031). The program’s status of Accredited was continued, based on the Council's determination that the program has no deficiencies or weaknesses that compromise the educational effectiveness of the total program. The program is required to report on its progress related to recommendations to meet Standards II and V.

Summary of findings related to compliance with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education 2017 Residency Accreditation Standards:

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Level of Compliance</u>	<u>Reason for met in part or not met</u>
I. Mission, Goals, Objectives and Program Improvement	Met	
II. Curriculum	Met in part	The program’s supervision policy does not require demonstrated clinical competency for the granting of progressively increasing responsibility. (2.3)
III. Administration	Met	
IV. Faculty	Met	
V. Residents	Met in part	The residents’ orientation does not include written information on the criteria for resident evaluation (5.3.10)
VI. Resources and Facilities	Met	

C. Omni Eye Services, New Jersey Residency in Ocular Disease, which is affiliated with Pennsylvania College of Optometry at Salus University (2031). The program’s status of Accredited was continued, based on the Council's determination that the program has no deficiencies or weaknesses that compromise the educational effectiveness of the total program. The program is required to report on its progress related to recommendations to meet Standards I, II, III, IV and V.

Summary of findings related to compliance with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education 2017 Residency Accreditation Standards:

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Level of Compliance</u>	<u>Reason for met in part or not met</u>
I. Mission, Goals, Objectives and Program Improvement	Met in part	The program does not assess the fulfillment of its objectives using documented measures. (1.4)

		All core faculty members are not evaluated by the residents at least semi-annually. (1.5.3) The program does not consistently implement modifications when indicated by program evaluations. (1.6)
II. Curriculum	Met in part	The residents' patient encounter logs are inaccurate. (2.2.1)
III. Administration	Met in part	The quality of clinical care provided by the residency faculty is not included in the quality assurance process. (3.5)
IV. Faculty	Met in part	Residency faculty members do not have sufficient time to educate and train the residents while in clinic. (4.3)
V. Residents	Met in part	The published list of completion requirements is inaccurate. (5.1.3)
VI. Resources and Facilities	Met	

D. Omni Eye Specialists of Denver Residency in Ocular Disease with emphasis in Refractive and Ocular Surgery, which is affiliated with University of Houston, College of Optometry (2031). The program's status of Accredited was continued, based on the Council's determination that the program has no deficiencies or weaknesses that compromise the educational effectiveness of the total program. The program is required to report on its progress related to recommendations to meet Standards II and V.

Summary of findings related to compliance with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education 2017 Residency Accreditation Standards:

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Level of Compliance</u>	<u>Reason for met in part or not met</u>
I. Mission, Goals, Objectives and Program Improvement	MET	
II. Curriculum	MET IN PART	The resident's patient encounter logs do not consistently include either diagnosis or the resident's level of involvement. (2.2.1) The program does not follow a written supervision policy that is competency based. (2.3)
III. Administration	MET	
IV. Faculty	MET	
V. Residents	MET IN PART	The program does not publish its nondiscrimination policy used in the process of selecting residents. (5.1.2) The program's publications provide inconsistent information with respect to program title and areas of emphasis, expected on-call responsibilities, program completion requirements, program start date, and resident teaching responsibilities. (5.1.3)

		The academic calendar does not include start and end dates nor does it include deadlines for program requirements. (5.3.9)
VI. Resources and Facilities	MET	

E. Optometry Center for Vision Therapy Residency in Vision Therapy Rehabilitation, which is affiliated with University of the Incarnate Word Rosenberg School of Optometry (2031). The program’s status of Accredited was continued, based on the Council's determination that the program has no deficiencies or weaknesses that compromise the educational effectiveness of the total program. The program is required to report on its progress related to recommendations to meet Standards III and V.

Summary of findings related to compliance with the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education 2017 Residency Accreditation Standards:

<u>Standard</u>	<u>Level of Compliance</u>	<u>Reason for met in part or not met</u>
I. Mission, Goals, Objectives and Program Improvement	Met	
II. Curriculum	Met	
III. Administration	Met in part	The residency faculty members do not participate in a documented clinical quality assurance process. (3.5)
IV. Faculty	Met	
V. Residents	Met in part	The program’s published completion requirement of one presentation is inaccurate. (5.1.3) The program’s academic calendar does not include the August 1 st deadline for passage of all NBEO parts (I, II, TMOD, and III) to apply for Texas licensure. (5.3.9)
VI. Resources and Facilities	Met	

Classification of "Accredited with Conditions" raised to "Accredited" following submission of progress reports:

A. Erdey Searcy Erdey Searcy Eye Group Residency in Ocular Disease, which is affiliated with The Ohio State University College of Optometry. The Council determined that the program’s progress in meeting the recommendations is sufficient to warrant raising the classification of “Accredited with Conditions” to “Accredited”. The program’s next site visit is scheduled for June 2030.

B. Ferris State University Michigan College of Optometry Professional Optometric Degree program. The Council determined that the program’s progress in meeting the recommendations is sufficient to warrant raising the classification of “Accredited with Conditions” to “Accredited”. The program’s next site visit remains scheduled for February 2025.

4. Reconsideration or Appeal of Adverse Action: None

5. Withdrawal of accreditation by ACOE: None

Definitions

Preliminary Approval: An ACOE classification that is equivalent to the USDE's preaccreditation classification. This classification indicates the professional optometric degree program has clearly demonstrated it is developing in accordance with Council Standards. The program has approval to begin student recruitment, selection and admissions, and to begin offering the program.

- The Council shall review the Preliminary Approval classification annually during each academic year of the program through written reports and/or evaluation visits as deemed necessary by the Council.
- The Council will conduct a final on-site evaluation visit to the program for the consideration of an accreditation status during the academic year in which the first class is expected to graduate.
- When the Council awards Preliminary Approval to a program or at any time during the Council's monitoring of a program holding Preliminary Approval status, the ACOE may issue recommendations or specify conditions for monitoring which must be attained to maintain the Preliminary Approval status.
- After an evaluation visit team conducts a formal on-site evaluation visitation, the team's evaluation report is submitted to the Council for its review.
- If the program is found to meet the Council's Standards, then the Council will grant an appropriate accreditation status.
- If the program is denied an accreditation status or if its Preliminary Approval status is withdrawn or expires, it must submit an updated teach-out plan (refer to ACOE Policy and Procedure "Teach-Out Process").

Accreditation Status: The ACOE may decide to grant one of the two following accreditation statuses to a program following adoption of the evaluation team report and recommendations. Accreditation status may be lowered or revoked if the Council determines that the program is not making sufficient progress on recommendations from the Council.

Accredited: A classification granted to an educational program indicating that the program generally meets the Standards for accreditation. This classification indicates that the program has no deficiencies or weaknesses that compromise the educational effectiveness of the total program. However, recommendations relating to marginal compliance with certain Standards, and suggestions relating to program enhancement may be included in evaluation reports.

Accredited with Conditions: A classification granted to an educational program with major deficiencies or weaknesses with reference to the Standards of accreditation that compromise the educational effectiveness of the program. This classification indicates that the accreditation of the program is in jeopardy. Programs with this classification will be required to submit progress reports and shall undergo a full evaluation visit within two (2) years for professional optometric degree programs, eighteen (18) months for optometric residencies, and one (1) year for optometric technician programs.

The ACOE Policies and Procedure Manual may be found in the [Accreditation Resources and Directories of Programs](#) section.