Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

1	**Programme Title**	Vision and Strabismus
2	**Programme Code**	OPHT01
3	**JACS Code**	Not applicable
4	**Level of Study**	Postgraduate
5a	**Final Qualification**	Master of Medical Science (MMedSci)
5b	**QAA FHEQ Level**	Masters
6	**Intermediate Qualification(s)**	Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), Postgraduate Certificate
7	**Teaching Institution** (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	**Faculty**	Medicine, Dentistry and Health
9	**Department**	Oncology and Metabolism
10	**Other Department(s) involved in teaching the programme**	None
11	**Mode(s) of Attendance**	Distance learning plus 2 residential weekends, virtual tutorials and an Introductory day or teaching for ORT 6022
12	**Duration of the Programme**	3 years part time
13	**Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body**	British and Irish Orthoptic Society for modules ORT 6022 ORT 6011and ORT 6033
14	**Date of production/revision**	March 2017

15. Background to the programme and subject area

The MMedSci in Orthoptics by distance learning was developed in 1998/1999 as the first and only Master's degree designed specifically for orthoptists. The course was renamed 'Vision and Strabismus' in 2009 following Health and Care Professions Council guidelines that only courses leading to initial qualification should include the professional name. It is appropriate that we offer a part time Master's course at a time when orthoptists are looking for opportunities for learning beyond registration.

One of the criteria for 'Consultant Orthoptist' posts is the possession of a higher degree. This gives orthoptists with Master's degrees access to posts they would otherwise not have been eligible to apply for. Some posts require orthoptists to work at 'Masters' level. One way of demonstrating this is to follow the MMedSci programme.

A Master's qualification will enable the holder to participate more effectively in continued professional development activities within a department and be of benefit to the whole department, not just the individual.

This is a post-registration Master's qualification allowing orthoptists or professionals working in eye-care related fields to develop their knowledge for continuing professional development and does not qualify students to practise as orthoptists on completion. Two of our modules (Stroke, ORT6011 and Low Vision, ORT 6022) are accredited with the British and Irish Orthoptics Society for clinical practice, so that Orthoptists who pass these modules become accredited clinical practitioners in these areas of specialty. An application is in process for Exemptions ORT 6033 to also become accredited for clinical practice by the British and Irish Orthoptic Society.

International students are accepted on the programme as long as their initial qualification is deemed equivalent to those in Britain.

Students who are not orthoptists (home or International) but have a degree in a related area (e.g. Optometry) are welcome to apply for the course, but it must be understood that this course does not qualify them to practise as an orthoptist.

16. Programme aims

1. To provide an academic postgraduate course enabling practising orthoptists and professionals in eye-care related fields to further their academic studies in Orthoptics.
2. To develop the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.
3. To develop critical appraisal skills and encourage their application to all areas of clinical practice and education.
4. To facilitate and encourage the academic development of the profession and to support the wider development of research in Orthoptics and related subject areas.
5. To increase awareness of the role that research can play in strengthening the knowledge base of the subject area.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
K1a	current theories and practises relating to vision, ocular motility and strabismus. In depth knowledge and understanding of concomitant and incomitant strabismus with reference to clinical practice and recent literature.
K1b	advanced practice in the area of Stroke, by enhancing knowledge and developing a comprehensive understanding of issues surrounding Stroke, including the multidisciplinary approach.
K2a	physiological mechanisms by which general disease processes may affect the eyes. Knowledge and understanding of the mechanisms by which particular diseases affect visual function and ocular motility or,
K2b	visual impairment and it's management, appreciating the multidisciplinary and holistic approach to low vision service provision, enabling Orthoptists / Eye care professionals to become competent low vision practitioners.
K3a	developmental processes involved in normal and abnormal visual function including contrast sensitivity, plasticity, anomalous development, colour, motion detection and functional specialisation within the visual cortex.
K3b	advanced practice in the area of the exemption listed prescription only medicines, by enhancing knowledge of the pharmacokinetics and actions of these medicines; enabling Orthoptists registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council to register as qualified to sell, supply and administer these medicines for any condition within their scope of practice.
K4	specific defects of vision and ocular motility.
K5	current research and relevance of this with respect to clinical practice.

Skills and other attributes: graduates will be able to:	
S1	critically evaluate published materials.
S2	identify research topics, construct hypotheses and apply appropriate research methods for their study.
S3	demonstrate effective written and oral presentation skills.
S4	be effective in time management.
S5	find information and learn independently and demonstrate effective I.T. skills.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

- prescribed reading followed by self assessment exercises
- case studies
- problem solving exercises
- reading and critical evaluation of published research

- practical workshops and demonstrations
- case discussions
- journal discussions
- lectures
- project work

These teaching methods relate to the objectives of the programme in that they will provide the student with the appropriate tools by which they can develop the knowledge and skills stated in the objectives. The use of a wide range of teaching methods will maximise the learning outcomes and encourage the students to consider the importance of a varied approach. The relationship between theory and practice will be stressed throughout the modules and critical appraisal skills encouraged.

Tutors know whether the students are developing the necessary skills and knowledge stated in the objectives by considering the completed programme journal work, marking the written and oral assignments and examining student evaluations of each individual unit and complete module of the course. Personal tutorials on the residential weekends allow discussion of progress.

Translation of learning outcomes into teaching and learning activities:

Skill S1 is delivered in the programme by a lecture on critical appraisal of literature during the first residential weekend and group discussions of specified literature on the following residential weekend. Journal article appraisal assignment, completion of literature appraisal sections of course journal throughout Modules 1, 2 and 3 and continuing appraisal of literature during written assignments all develop skill S1.

Skill S2 is delivered in Module 4 (Research Methods) and developed further in the final year research project. Activities include introductory lectures on the second residential weekend; completion of the exercises and activities in the programmed text (forming the course journal), production of a research protocol which is then used as the base for the research project which is carried out in year 3.

Skill S3 is developed throughout the programme. Written presentation skills are developed through tutor appraisal and feedback of both written assignments and presentations. Good practice regarding written assignments is given as a lecture during residential 1, as is good practice with respect to oral presentation skills. Students give one oral presentation of a clinical case, at the end of Module 3.

Skill S4 develops over the programme. Some students start the programme as better time managers than others but all improve as a result of working through the course journal in the time recommended/allowed and completing assignments by specified deadlines. The importance of effective time management is discussed during the first residential weekend and suggestions offered as to the best ways of managing time available. All students are working as clinicians in addition to studying, so effective time management is vital to success.

Skill S5 also develops as the programme progresses. Students start with very varied IT skills and this is discussed at the first residential weekend. IT skills are developed through word processing assignments, email communication with course staff and each other, use of databases for literature searching and use of spreadsheets and data analysis packages during the final research project. By independently researching information and literature for assignments they become effective at finding information (whether electronically or otherwise). As distance learners, students become used to learning independently, supported by course staff.

The two residential weekends give a valuable opportunity for lectures, discussions and workshops and for students to meet one another.

Residential 1 consists of 2 days at the very beginning of the programme and is used to introduce programme materials and methods, provide information on assignments and present information on literature appraisal, presentation skills, referencing methods and literature searching. A group discussion of journal articles also takes place. It gives the students a vital opportunity to meet one another and programme staff before they go home and begin studying on their own. Each student has a short personal tutorial with one of the course tutors.

Residential 2 consists of 2 days at the end of year one (end of Module 2) and beginning of year two (Module 3). Each student also has a personal tutorial with one of the course tutors, giving an opportunity for discussion of progress so far. Lectures and workshops are given which introduce concepts and activities relating to both Module 3 and Module 4 and the idea of the forthcoming research project (Year 3) is also presented.

At the end of Module 1 and Module 3 when no residential weekend takes place, students are offered a virtual tutorial in which they can connect with one another and their course tutors, engage in learning and teaching and ask questions. At the beginning of the third year of study students meet or have personal communication with their assigned research project supervisor.

Student support:

udents are supported whilst they are distant from Sheffield by notices on Minerva and email communication from the course director and course secretary. All students are assigned a personal tutor who is a member of staff from the Academic Unit who teaches on the MMedSci course. Resources are also supplied to students via Google drive and tutorials given using Adobe Connect software. If the course director has not had contact with a student for half a semester she initiates email contact. All students are encouraged to contact the Academic Unit whenever they want to and experience shows that they do so. Some students who are in full time clinical posts find it difficult to contact the department in office hours. If this is the case the course director is happy to speak to students by telephone at home in the evening by prior arrangement.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Coursework submission in the form of a 'programme journal / reflective diary'

Assesses skills S1,S2, S3 (written), S4 and S5

All exercises and work completed at home has to be sent to the programme director by a specified date in order to check that the work has been completed to a satisfactory level. Modules 1-4 all require the completion of work in the programme journal / reflective diary.

Assessments

The following assessments contribute to overall marks.
Module 1 option (ORT6001): Critical appraisal of research paper (5 credits) – assesses K1 and K5 skills S1 and S3 (written) and S5 (IT skills); 3,000 word essay (15 credits) – assesses K1a, K4 and K5, S1, S3 (written), S4 and S5; Poster presentation (10 credits) – assesses K1 and K4, S3, S4, S5.

Module 1 option (ORT 6011): Critical appraisal of research paper (5 credits) – assesses K1 and K5 skills S1 and S3 (written) and S5 (IT skills); 3,000 word essay (15 credits) – assesses K1b, K4 and K5, S1, S3 (written), S4 and S5; Poster presentation (10 credits) – assesses K1 and K4, S3, S4, S5.

Module 2 option (ORT6002): Written study relating findings in a chosen case to those expected from the literature (15 credits) – assesses K2a K4 and K5, S1, S3 (written), S4 and S5; Written report detailing local support networks for a named disease (15 credits)) – assesses K2a, K4 and K5, S1, S3 (written), S4 and S5

Module 2 option (ORT6022): Written report detailing local support networks (12 credits) – assesses K2b, K4, S1, S3 (written), S4 and S5. Reflective diary (6 credits) – assesses K2b, K4, and K5, S1, S3, S4 and S5. Clinical examination (12 credits) – assesses K2b, K4, K5, and S1 & S4.

Module 3 option (ORT6003): 3,000 word essay (15 credits) -) – assesses K1, K3, K4 and K5, S1, S3 (written), S4 and S5; Audio-visual presentation (In Sheffield or virtual) (15 credits) – assesses K3 and K4, S1, S3 (oral), S4,S5.

Module 3 option (ORT 6033): Patient information leaflet (8 credits) – assesses K3b, K4 and K5, S1, S3, S4 and S5. Reflective diary (6 credits) – assesses K3b, K4 and K5, S1, S2, S3 and S5, MCQs (6 credits) – assesses K3b, S4 & S5, essay (10 credits) – assesses K3b, K4 and K5, S1, S3, S4 and S5.

Module 4 (ORT6100): Design of research protocol (30 credits) – assesses K1, K5, S1, S2, S3 (written), S4 and S5; Literature based dissertation (PG Dip students only as an option to Mod 4) (30 credits) – assesses K5, S1, S3, S4, S5.

Final year Research Project – MMedSci students only (60 credits) – assesses K1, K5, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5.

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008)
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/The-framework-for-higher-education-qualifications-in-England-Wales-and-Northern-Ireland.aspx

University Strategic Plan
http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/strategicplan

Learning and Teaching Strategy (2016-21)
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/als/strategy

British and Irish Orthoptic Society

External Examiners

Student feedback

The international literature regarding Orthoptics

20. Programme structure and regulations

The programme is modular with 2 modules per annum in years 1 and 2. Each module contains 9-10 units that the student works through at home; completing exercises, reading papers and answering questions as they go along. These answers form the programme journal (or reflective diary), which must be completed by a specified date to a satisfactory level. Each Module also has specific assessed assignments with a pass mark of 50 for MMedSci and PGDip, on the 100 point scale. The final (third) year is spent doing a research project (pass mark 50).

In year 1 there is a choice for first module, studied in semester 1: Either ORT6001: Concomitance and Incomitance in Depth or ORT 6011 Stroke. In semester 2 there is a choice: ORT6002 Insight into Disease or ORT6022 Low Vision. In year 2, semester 1 there is a choice: Either ORT6003 Eye to Vision or ORT 60ŁŁ Exemptions. In semester 2 students study ORT6100 Research methods. Students undertaking the postgraduate diploma may opt for ORT6004 Literature based dissertation in place of ORT6100.

ORT6005 Research Project (equivalent to a further 2 modules) is studied in year 3 for the full MMedSci (total 180 credits). For the Postgraduate Diploma, study is normally over 2 years (total 120 credits), no research project is undertaken. For the postgraduate certificate study is normally over one year and 60 credits need to be obtained.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar.

21. Student development over the course of study

Year 1 - Introductory residential weekend to Year 1 and the course

Students enter the course with different backgrounds and abilities. The first residential offers help in study skills and provides information on what is expected of the student, where help can be obtained and how to approach the course and its assessments. This is reflected in the choice of a critical appraisal of a research paper, a skill which is built on throughout the programme. The exercises for the course journal also encourage students to develop in this area. The second assignment (essay) may be the first time for many years that a student has written an essay, feedback is detailed to help with future work and directs the students to areas where improvement can be made as well as highlighting good points.

Year 2 – Introductory Residential weekend to Year 2.

Module 3 (option Eye to Vision ORT 6003) ensures that the students have to use the skills gained in interpretation and analysis of literature as they work through this module, which is less clinically based and explores research elements related to the subject. As an alternative to this students may take a new module (ORT 6033 – Exemptions). . Module 4 provides the tools for this. For students not pursuing the masters' programme, the dissertation requires students to demonstrate and further develop skills.

Year 3 – Personal communication with assigned Research Project supervisor (MMedSci students only).

Throughout the programme these students have to manage their own time. For the research project this now becomes vital. Communication with local research and development units and their colleagues are necessary. The research project tests the wide range of skills as described above.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

Detailed information regarding admission to the programme is available at http://www.shef.ac.uk/prospective/

Academic Entry Requirements

Diploma of British Orthoptics, with subsequent clinical experience

Bachelor degree with honours in Orthoptics or other honours degree in eye-care related field, normally 2:1 or higher from a recognised institution*

Equivalent overseas qualification in Orthoptics

*Recognised level of award should satisfy UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) Band 10.

In addition

Normally one year's clinical experience following first degree.

International students will be required to have International English Language Testing System (IELTS) overall score of 7.0 (with minimum of 6.5 in each component). Applicants with a first degree taught in English will not generally be required to provide other evidence of English Language proficiency.

Selection

In line with the University's admissions policy (http://www.shef.ac.uk/postgraduate/info) applications will be considered on:

- "Achievement in awarded qualifications
- Predicted achievement in qualifications which are being studied
- Personal or supporting statement, for evidence of motivation and commitment to the subject area(s;) and the reasons for wanting to study at Sheffield
- References, for confirmation of academic potential and personal qualities"

Candidates offering less than the above academic qualifications or alternative qualifications will be considered on individual merit. Further study and clinical experience since qualification / graduation will be taken into account.

The suitability for a course may be demonstrated in a variety of ways and enquiries are welcome from those with non-standard achievements.

Applicants wishing to defer entry to next intake (normally 2 years) will be treated on an equal basis to direct entrants.

23. Additional information

The MMedSci (Vision and Strabismus) programme by distance learning provides practising orthoptists with a means to self- improvement and continuing professional development whilst maintaining their clinical posts. Throughout the programme students are encouraged to relate theory to their clinical practice and to draw upon their clinical expertise and knowledge.

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid.