



The IOA recognizes national orthoptic programs based on the following requirements and criterion:

Requirement 1.0: The national orthoptic professional organization, including or in collaboration with regulatory bodies for the profession, has developed and approved a national entry competency profile/requirements for practice document. The national competency profile/requirements for practice document is used by educational programs as the framework for curriculum development and the development of didactic and clinical learning objectives.

Summary of criterion for 1.0

Criterion 1.1 The orthoptic program goals include reference to the orthoptic national competency profile for the profession.

Program goals can be multifaceted. They may reflect influences from the educational institution's vision, program expectations, government directives, professional association's directions, regulatory college's regulations, employer's needs, and others. All these influences contribute to program development and evolution.

Criterion 1.2 The orthoptic program has competency based learning objectives that encompass all orthoptic competencies specified in the national competency profile

The program develops competency based objectives and implements learning activities to ensure that all competencies required for the profession are taught. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviors specified in the national competency profile.

Criterion 1.3 The orthoptic program should enable students to attain the competencies specified in the national competency profile for the profession

The Program plan for student learning facilitates student success in the attainment of competencies. The student's path from the beginning of the program to the end is clear and logical. The choices made regarding overall length of the program, delivery mode(s), sequence of courses and practicum delivery (clinical rotations) optimize student learning and attainment of competencies within the particular context, mandate and restrictions of the program

Criterion 1.4 Orthoptic practice placements must be integral to the program.



The practice environment offers invaluable opportunity to apply and extend student knowledge developed in the programs studies and ensure professional competencies for entry to practice are attained. The process for orthoptic investigation and management includes orthoptic diagnostic testing, diagnosis, and orthoptic management. All students should be encouraged to interpret, analyse and use published evidence to support their clinical decisions. In addition the orthoptist needs to be able to work as part of an interdisciplinary eye care team and uphold the codes associated with orthoptic professional practice. These inter and intra-disciplinary skills are best practiced in the real world setting of clinical practice.

Learning experience in the practice environment are enhanced by opportunities for enquiry based learning, guided practice, observation and reflection guided by clinical educators. Clinical educators are senior, experienced orthoptists, who through their professional expertise, assist in student development and assessment of professional knowledge and skills.

Requirement 2.0 The program's resources are adequate to support student learning and attainment of orthoptic competencies

Summary of criterion for 2.0

2.1 Personnel with Relevant Qualifications

Program personnel have professional designations/qualifications that are directly related to the orthoptic discipline or subjects being taught. Assessors/preceptors during laboratory, clinical and practicum settings assess students only on competencies that are within their scope of practice (i.e. orthoptic clinical instruction is supervised only by orthoptists). In general, personnel supervising and assessing student performance must hold the same professional designation/credential as that sought by the student in the program. However, program personnel may have a higher credential related to the profession than the entry level orthoptist, for example, a PhD or Master in Orthoptics could teach and assess an orthoptic student attaining a bachelor's degree. In some circumstances, other qualifications may be appropriate. Specifically faculty with relevant qualifications to the topic being taught may be used for instruction on the following topics: anatomy and physiology, physical and visual optics, ophthalmic surgery, genetics, pharmacology, learning disabilities and community health

Criterion 2.2 Personnel with appropriate and current training

Didactic and clinical site personnel should be prepared for their roles as educators and engage in professional development to remain current with both professional and educational orthoptic practices. The educational institution should support professional development activities for its staff and faculty. Maintenance of clinical knowledge forms part of a faculty's professional development. Clinical professional development could include, but is not limited to:

- maintenance of competence (as required by orthoptic certification/regulatory bodies)
- clinical rounds and in-service sessions
- attendance/presentations at orthoptic workshops and conferences
- enrolment in profession-related certificate, diploma and degree programs
- return to clinical practice
- orientation to new equipment and procedures by industry
- contributions to orthoptic professional journals
- participation on orthoptic profession-related committees (e.g., national exam committee, accreditation teams)

2.3 Sufficient personnel

There should be sufficient qualified orthoptic personnel at each didactic site (classrooms and laboratories) to provide the required instruction, supervision and evaluation of student learning. Programs should work closely with clinical/practicum sites to ensure that sufficient orthoptic personnel are available at each clinical/practicum site to supervise and evaluate all students placed at the site.

2.4 Didactic learning resources

Program's didactic and laboratory equipment and resources should provide students with an opportunity to learn and practice orthoptic skills, attain required orthoptic competencies and prepare them for the actual practice setting of the profession.

2.5 Appropriate and equitable learning resources

Students should have timely, adequate and equitable learning opportunities that enable them to practice and attain required orthoptic competencies.

The didactic and laboratory components of the program should prepare students adequately for the clinical/practicum placement.

Clinical/practicum learning opportunities are in the actual practice setting of the profession (hospital, orthoptic clinical unit, orthoptic office, ophthalmology clinic).

The volume and variety of cases/procedures at the orthoptic clinical/practicum sites are appropriate and sufficient for students to practice and attain the required orthoptic competencies within the published length of the clinical education portion of the program. Rotations to different orthoptic clinical/practicum sites are scheduled when required for attainment of competencies and/or equitable learning opportunities.

Requirement 3.0 The program supports the student educational interest and protects their rights by providing students with accurate information on the orthoptic profession.



Summary of criterion for 3.0

Criterion for 3.1 Information is provided on the orthoptic profession including: the physical and psychological demands of the practice; the scope of practice of the orthoptist; the practice setting of orthoptic professionals; and the requirements for licensure/certification

Programs provide prospective students with information that enables them to make an informed career choice and allows them to be fully aware of the requirements of the profession. Information on the physical or psychological demands of the profession and the practice setting are communicated to the prospective student, as are the scope of practice of the orthoptist and the requirements for certification or licensure. Programs and their clinical sites ensure that students are asked to perform only procedures for which they have the required background knowledge and that are within the scope of practice of the orthoptist.