

Early Career Optometrist Queensland Northern Territory (ECOQNT) Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Early Career Optometrist Queensland Northern Territory Committee (ECOQNT) has been established by the Board as part of OQNT's Governance Framework. Its purpose is to provide advice that guides Optometry Australia's (OA) endeavours to support early career optometrists in Queensland and the Northern Territory to grow professionally through the provision of continuing professional development and networking opportunities specifically targeted to the needs of early career optometrists. The Committee operates under the guidance of its Terms of Reference, the OQNT's Constitution, Committees of the Organisation By-Law, Board Charter, Delegation of Authority Framework and Governance Framework.

Function/Scope

The ECOQNT committee serves as a Committee of the Organisation, advising Optometry Australia.

Early career optometrists are defined as students and registered optometrists who are up to ten years from graduation.

Roles/Responsibilities

The committee's roles and responsibilities encompass:

- provide advice to OA on the current needs of early career optometrists;
- provide input into events for early career optometrists;
- contribute to the development and implementation of a strategy to engage students 'early' in their undergraduate studies
- develop and deliver a strategy to retain early-career optometrists as members of Optometry Australia; and
- advocate to early career optometrists the advantages and benefits of Optometry Australia membership.

The OQNT Board will provide strategic direction to the Committee to help them deliver on their roles and responsibilities.

Powers

The ECOQNT Committee is an advisory group and has been granted no decision-making authority.

Access to expert external and/or independent advice

Where necessary, the Committee has a right to access expert external and/or independent advice, at OQNT's expense, on any matters it is considering as part of its function. Any expense must be authorized by Optometry Australia prior to engaging the advisor.

Composition

OQNT members will be invited to join the committee, from time to time, as required.

The Committee will consist of at least five members appointed by the Optometry Australia secretariat. Diversity of membership is important, and the committee should include members who represent a range of sub-groups across all early career optometrists.

A Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed by the Optometry Australia secretariat.

OQNT Board members can be ex-officio on the committee.

Term of appointment

The term of the Committee members will be for two (2) years. Members shall be eligible for a maximum of two terms. The maximum term a committee member can stay on is four (4) years.

When the Chair retires, a vote will be held for a new Chair of the committee.

Committee members must resign from the committee if they:

- are no longer a financial member
- become an employee of the OA
- become a Board member of OQNT or OA
- for any reason as determined by the Optometry Australia CEO or the OQNT Board.

Frequency of Meetings

The Committee shall meet every 2 months and otherwise as required.

The Chair of the Committee may call meetings at any time to consider any matters falling within these Terms of Reference.

Generally, the Committee will meet by videoconference, but face-to-face meetings may be convened as necessary.

Individual communication with members will be required between meetings, and members are expected to be responsive.

Meetings are at a mutually agreed time.

Committee members must disclose interests and manage any conflicts in accordance with OQNT's Constitution and Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Reporting

The ECOQNT Committee outcomes may be presented to the Board in a report authorised by the secretariat.

Administrative support

The Optometry Australia CEO secretariat will provide administrative support for the Committee.

Record keeping and reporting

The Committee minutes and meeting papers will be retained in accordance with the Corporations Act and Committees of the Board By-law. All Committee files will be kept securely by Optometry Australia.

Budgetary support

As an advisory committee of OA, OA will contribute financial resourcing of ECOQNT events or other resources within the parameters of the budget. Optometry Australia will manage the ECOQNT budgeted expenditure to ensure expenses are not incurred without authorisation.

The committee may also work in conjunction with the secretariat to seek additional financial resourcing from external groups such as optometry equipment suppliers, insofar as this is in line with OA's policy on accepting external sponsorship to support operations.

Performance review

The Committee will conduct an annual self-assessment of its activities under these Terms of Reference and report any conclusions and recommendations to the Optometry Australia CEO.

Review

The Committee will review its Terms of Reference annually to provide assurance that it remains consistent with the Board's objectives and responsibilities and continues to reflect current processes.

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