Who we are...

The World Council of Optometry (WCO) is an international optometric association founded in 1927.

- The WCO represents over 200,000 optometrists in more than 60 countries, through almost 300 Country, Affiliate, Corporate and Individual Memberships across six world regions.

We envision a world where high quality eye health and vision care is accessible to all people.
Organigram

WCO Six World Regions
Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, Latin America & North America

General Assembly
Supreme decision-making body made up of WCO country member representatives/delegates

Board of Directors
Made up of trustees nominated by each region plus the Executive Committee to establish policies/activities to fulfill WCO mandate

Executive Committee
Made up of WCO President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, Treasurer, Chair of the PHC, LRS, EDU, MEM & CSC committees and ensures the effective administration of the WCO

Standing Committees

- Public Health Committee
  Responsible for public health matters relating to eye care and optometry

- Legislation, Registration, Standards
  Assists member countries with legislation, registration and standards affecting the public and the profession

- Education Committee
  Facilitates the advancement and enhancement of optometric education worldwide

- Membership Committee
  Assists WCO with membership matters relating to Country, Affiliate, Corporate, Individual and Student Members

- Congress Steering Committee
  Organises world congresses in collaboration with host organisation(s)

Our 100 organizations within our network represent over 200,000 optometrists across six world regions.
What we do...

- Facilitate the development of optometry around the world
- Support optometrists in promoting eye health and vision care as a human right through:
  - Advocacy
  - Education
  - Policy Development
  - Humanitarian Outreach
Why we do it...

- An estimated **253 million** people live with vision impairment.¹
- **Over 80%** of all vision impairment can be prevented or cured.¹

- **36 million** are blind, **217 million** have moderate to severe vision impairment ¹
- **55%** of visually impaired people are women ²
- **1.4 million** children could benefit from vision rehabilitation ¹

¹ WHO, 2017  
² IAPB, 2017
Our Objectives

- Enhancement and development of primary eye and vision care by optometrists
- Promotion of high standards of education and practice while promoting international coordination of optometrists
- Provision of support to aid programs directed at providing eye and vision care to societies in need
- Promotion of the advancement and science of optometry
The “Why Optometry?” Document

Provides the case for delivering high quality, advanced and equitable eye health and vision care for patients worldwide

The Need for “Why Optometry”

There are significant challenges for eye health with increasing avoidable blindness and visual impairment, including:

- Insufficient competent healthcare professionals
- Uneven distribution of resources
- Inability to afford treatment
Strategic Plan 2017-2020
“Towards a better world – optometry’s role”


Emphasizes Optometry’s intrinsically important role in solving the global problem of Uncorrected Refractive Errors (UREs).

Fits with the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Plan 2014-2019, which aims to:

- Further improve eye health
- Reduce avoidable visual impairment
- Secure access for rehabilitation services
- Set up a global target to reduce the prevalence of avoidable visual impairment by 25 percent by 2019
Strategic Plan Goals

Our **VISION** is of a world where optometry makes high quality eye health and vision care accessible to all people.

Our **MISSION** is to promote eye health and vision care as a human right through advocacy, education, policy development and the promotion of sustainable eyecare services.
Strategic Plan Themes

**Theme 1** - Enhance optometric education globally for the benefit of patients and the profession.

**Theme 2** - Support the Maintenance and Development of Legislation, Registration and Standards for the benefit of patients and the profession.

**Theme 3** - Increase access to quality eye health and vision care by integrating optometry within the global public health community.

**Theme 4** - Leadership of the optometric profession globally.

**Theme 5** - Partnerships and strategic alliances.

**Theme 6** - Membership, Sustainability, Communication, Governance.
Global Competency-Based Scope of Practice Model

- Provides a vertical career ladder for individuals seeking to expand their scope of clinical responsibility
- Helps regulatory bodies guarantee practitioners’ competence to protect the public
- Acts as a stimulus for creating greater uniformity of optometric practice worldwide by being applied to teaching curriculums
The WCO recognizes that:

Optometric education and the practice of optometry have developed differently and at different levels around the world.

Optometric education is provided in major research universities and independent schools and colleges of optometry.

To meet present and future challenges, a change is needed in the way optometry approaches the delivery of eye care services delivery.
The WCO believes:

Optometrists should possess the skills and competencies to perform eye examinations, prescribe spectacles, diagnose and treat common eye problems, and refer more serious conditions.

The WCO also encourages and helps to develop optometric education and facilitates the reviews of education providers by external agencies.

Optometrists should be integrated within the eye care, and wider health care team.
WCO Major Achievements

In 2017, we celebrated 90-year anniversary through press releases, web postings, articles, a special logo and presentation.

Appointed a new Managing Director – Sue Chiles (previously with the American Optometric Association) and a Marketing Communications Specialist – Garryn Marlen.

Improved member, board and committee communication and engagement.

Launched new bi-monthly member e-newsletter, the WCO E-News.

Continued to provide letters of support for developing countries in response to various regulatory issues.
WCO Major Achievements


- Hosted the 2nd World Congress of Optometry in September 2017 in Hyderabad, India.

- Promoted conferences worldwide and addressed the issue of predatory optometric meetings/conferences.

- Continued our relationship with Our Children’s Vision, whose initial target is to provide eye care services to 50 million children worldwide by 2020.

- Continued to work with the regions regarding optometry practitioner mapping to determine manpower and education needs.
The Future – Looking Ahead

- Children’s vision
- Increase the recognition and scope of practice of optometry worldwide
- Increase membership
- Governance and our structural framework
- Finance reform
Our Strategic Partners

The WCO is committed to meeting global eye and vision care needs through collaboration.
WCO Member Benefits

**Access** to a worldwide optometric network

**Opportunity** to participate in WCO committees

**Be part of a global movement** to support the development of optometry

**Contribute** to setting and maintaining world standards of education and practice of optometry

**Support** the implementation of the WHO Universal Eye Health: A Global Action Plan 2014-2019
WCO Member Benefits

Contribute to the development of the WCO’s advocacy agenda

Access to high quality conferences and events

Promote your activities through WCO communications

Apply for funding from the WCO Fellowship Programme
Join Us

Already a member?

Invite your colleagues to join!

Not a member?

Now’s the time to become one!

Visit https://worldcouncilofoptometry.info/membership/join-wco/
WCO Member Materials Include:

- WCO Member Certificate
- WCO Logo
- E-News Subscription

- New Member Welcome Letter
- Personalized Membership Certificate
- Member Benefits List
- Your name on the WCO Website

- WCO Logo For Use in Promotional Materials
- E-News Bi-Monthly e-Newsletter
- Worldwide Networking Opportunities
- Opportunity to Participate in WCO Committees

To learn more, visit [https://worldcouncilofoptometry.info/membership/join-wco/](https://worldcouncilofoptometry.info/membership/join-wco/)
October 23rd-28th, 2019 in Orlando, Florida, USA

World Optometry Coming Together

ACADEMY

2019

ORLANDO

3rd World Congress of Optometry
Global platform where practitioners, students, researchers and educators share expertise and engage in the development of optometry’s future through clinical CE, research, education and public health, and focus on specific areas including the latest advances in optometry – vision sciences, research, optics and contact lens technology.

October 23rd-28th, 2019
Orlando, Florida, USA
Scientific Track:

- Rich and diverse information supporting the delivery of optometric care through Clinical research and development, including:
  - Symposia
  - Clinical workshops
  - Research presentations

Educator Track:

- Scientific research to support improved delivery of academic information for educators, including:
  - Improved delivery for didactics
  - Improved evidence for teaching clinical skills
  - Lectures, workshops and research presentations
  - Opportunity to advance the optometric education agenda across the world
  - Supports the sustainable development of highly needed human resources
The World Council of Optometry Offers the Following Opportunities:

- To attend the President’s Forum - convening major stakeholders, focusing on issues facing the profession
- To discuss the status of optometry globally
- To attend networking events featuring Orlando, Florida and tourists attractions

We hope to see you there!

For more information, visit www.worldoptometry.org
Thank you!

Together, we will do great things.