



WORLD COUNCIL OF OPTOMETRY

Advocacy | Education | Policy Development | Humanitarian Outreach

## World Council of Optometry (WCO) Launches Groundbreaking Competency Framework for Optometry

**ST. LOUIS, MO (March 20, 2024)**—The World Council of Optometry (WCO) is thrilled to introduce a revolutionary resource aimed at harmonizing the optometry profession and enhancing optometric education globally: the [WCO Competency Framework for Optometry](#). Developed with a vision to define optometry in terms of essential competencies required to engage effectively in the international eye care agenda, this framework marks a significant milestone in advancing eye health worldwide.

“Recent vitally important global reports such as the World Report on Vision and UN General Assembly resolutions have outlined the challenges facing eye care, the impact of vision impairment on the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the inclusion of addressing refractive error correction within universal health coverage. This urged WCO to revise its competency model to better prepare optometrists to meet the eye care needs of their communities.” – **Dr. Yazan Gammoh, WCO Education Committee Chairman**

“Optometry needs to be prepared to participate in multiple roles within health systems, and to work with others in the delivery of care. The competencies described in the framework give optometry opportunity to participate widely, potentially in leadership roles in teams.” – **Assoc. Prof. Peter Hendicott, WCO Immediate Past President**

### Elevating Optometric Education Worldwide

At the heart of the WCO's mission lies a commitment to supporting optometrists and championing eye health and vision care as a fundamental human right. Recognizing the diverse landscape of optometric education and practice across the globe, the WCO identified the pressing need for a unified global standard. The Competency Framework addresses this need by providing a comprehensive guide for developing core curricula for tertiary-level optometry programs.

### A Roadmap for Consistency

Divided into five essential domains—refractive error, visual function assessment, ocular health and diseases, public health, and professional practice—the framework outlines the competencies expected of optometry graduates. By establishing a minimum level of professional identity across all countries, it ensures consistency in optometric education and practice. Moreover, these competencies are aligned with the WHO Eye Care Competency Framework (ECCF), further reinforcing their global relevance.

### Addressing the Global Burden of Visual Impairment

With over 2.2 billion people worldwide suffering from vision impairment, the demand for qualified optometrists has never been more critical. The Competency Framework equips optometrists with the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities to fully participate in addressing this global burden. By guiding curriculum development and informing policymakers, it facilitates the recognition of optometry as a vital component of integrated, people-centered eye care.



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## **Shaping the Future of Optometry Education**

Adaptable to the unique needs of each country, the Competency Framework serves as a dynamic resource that transcends borders. It empowers educators, regulators, and policymakers alike to shape the future of optometry education and practice. Ultimately, it moves us closer to realizing the World Health Organization's vision of accessible, equitable eye care for all.

## **Join Us in Building a Brighter Future**

The WCO invites optometrists, educators, policymakers, and advocates to join forces in harnessing the transformative potential of the Competency Framework. Together, we can ensure that everyone, everywhere, has access to the quality eye care they deserve. Let us unite in shaping a future where optometry plays a central role in safeguarding vision and enhancing lives. For more information and to access the WCO Competency Framework for Optometry, please visit the WCO website's Resources page at <https://worldcouncilofoptometry.info/resources/>.

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## **About the World Council of Optometry**

The World Council of Optometry (WCO) is an international membership-based non-profit organization for individual optometrists, industry professionals, and optometric organizations that envisions a world where optometry makes high-quality eye health and vision care accessible to all people. Its mission is to facilitate the development of optometry around the world and support optometrists in promoting eye health and vision care as a human right through advocacy, education, policy development, and humanitarian outreach. To learn more, please visit [www.worldoptometry.org](http://www.worldoptometry.org) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

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