

## **Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)** **Southern College of Optometry**

**Topic:** Contact Lens Acclimation, Reinforcement, and Integration for Third Years (CLARITY)

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### **Executive Summary**

The Southern College of Optometry recognizes the importance of proficient contact lens examination as a critical optometric skill. To enhance our students' capabilities and confidence in this area, the College has embarked on a Quality Enhancement Plan titled the Contact Lens Acclimation, Reinforcement, and Integration for Third Years (CLARITY). This initiative is closely aligned with our institutional mission to “educate the best possible healthcare providers” and supports our strategic priority of facilitating the transition from student to professional.

An all-inclusive committee comprising various stakeholders conducted an in-depth analysis of our existing educational program, leveraging previously collected assessment data. This analysis pinpointed clinical education in contact lenses as an area ripe for enhancement. Prior to CLARITY, our data indicated that third-year interns, from the classes of 2020 to 2023, engaged with an average of only 3.13 soft contact lens patients during their clinical year, a number incongruent with the frequency of this task in professional practice. Moreover, student feedback highlighted discomfort with this essential skill and a desire for improved proficiency prior to entering their fourth clinical year.

CLARITY enjoys robust support from our faculty, staff, students, and administrators. A preliminary survey showed an overwhelming 94.2% of the faculty endorsing the focus on contact lens education within the QEP. The program, coupled with comprehensive educational campaigns, has been well-received by the entire college community, particularly eliciting enthusiasm from our students.

The program has set forth explicit learning outcomes for our students, ensuring they can:

1. Select appropriate soft contact lenses based on a patient's medical and refractive history, as well as their visual requirements.
2. Evaluate and troubleshoot both fit and refractive issues to optimize comfort, visual clarity, and ocular health.
3. Demonstrate increased confidence in fitting and prescribing both spherical and toric soft contact lenses.

To achieve these objectives, CLARITY integrates an increased number of real and simulated patient encounters into the third-year curriculum. This guarantees that every graduate is well-versed in the program's competencies. The college has dedicated substantial financial and personnel resources towards developing these simulated patient encounters and ensuring sufficient patient availability to fulfill the program's aims.

Furthermore, CLARITY employs a comprehensive assessment strategy, including online modules, quizzes, patient encounter evaluations, tracking systems, and surveys to gauge students' self-efficacy. This data will undergo regular analysis to measure the program's effectiveness and to facilitate any necessary adjustments.