

May 13, 2026

To Whom It May Concern:

The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) is the only accrediting body for professional optometric degree programs, optometric residency programs, and optometric technician programs in the United States and Canada. Both the U.S. Department of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation recognize the ACOE as a reliable authority concerning the quality of optometric education.

The ACOE requires programs to have a curriculum that prepares graduates to independently practice contemporary optometry. The ACOE adopted a formal definition for the term 'contemporary optometry,' which became effective in conjunction with the ACOE's 2025 Professional Optometric Degree Program Standards on January 1, 2025. The ACOE's definition of contemporary optometry is included in the [ACOE's Glossary](#) and referenced within the ACOE's [2025 Professional Optometric Degree Program Standards](#) (see Standards 1.3 and 2.1); both documents can be found on the ACOE's website, [www.theacoe.org](http://www.theacoe.org).

**Contemporary Optometry** - The evidence-based clinical practice of optometry as the primary healthcare practitioner of the eye and visual system who provides comprehensive eye and vision care. Contemporary optometry includes evaluation/diagnosis and treatment/management of refractive conditions, diseases of the eye and associated systems, and rehabilitation, normalization, and enhancement of the visual system. This definition includes performance of procedures that are allowable in at least 10% of states' scope of practice.

All professional optometric degree programs undergoing an accreditation review as of January 1, 2025, are assessed to accreditation Standards that require compliance with the ACOE's definition of contemporary optometry. In summary, all ACOE accredited programs are required to provide training in advanced procedures including minor lid procedures and optometric laser procedures within their curriculum.

If you require additional information about the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education or the accreditation process, please contact me at [spuljak@theacoe.org](mailto:spuljak@theacoe.org).

Sincerely,



Stephanie Puljak, M.S., M.B.A.  
ACOE Director

cc: Dr. Julie DeKinder, ACOE Chair