

Victorian Optometrists Training and Education (VOTE) Trust

TRAINING AND EDUCATION GRANTS 2012

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS 2012

APPLICATION FOR GRANTS 2012

Twelve applications were received for a 2012 Victorian Optometrists Training and Education (VOTE) Trust grant by close of applications on 30 July 2012.

The Grants Advisory Committee was pleased with the level of interest demonstrated by the number and diversity of applications. Six different organisations/individuals from two states were represented across the twelve applications received.

The income available for distribution by the Trustees was over \$20,000 for 2012/2013.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS 2012

Three projects have been awarded VOTE grants for 2012.

Teaching culture and sensitivity procedures through the use of videography
Mark Roth Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of Melbourne \$8,500
<p>Research and produce a high quality, high resolution video describing these procedures.</p> <p>Performing anterior eye culture and sensitivity testing is easy and straightforward. Yet most Australian therapeutically endorsed optometrists, apart from a few, are not comfortable from a clinical point of view, in performing these procedures. Even GP's are comfortable doing conjunctival swabs. Every therapeutics course describes these procedures in detail, and the OBA protocols and guidelines expect optometrists to know the indications for these tests and in certain circumstances they are mandatory prior to initiation of therapy.</p> <p>Generally the profession has managed this situation by simply not performing the tests and treating empirically without a plan B or referring out to an ophthalmologist /hospital eye clinic. Either centrally or in a rural environment, there are always scenarios where this is not ideal from a patient management perspective.</p> <p>Possible explanations for this situation may include :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1.The perception that labs will not do the test unless it is covered under Medicare (Labs are more than happy to process tests from optometrists)2.Even if the lab performs the test, the patient will be out of pocket (most patients are still financially better off to pay the lab fees as a non-Medicare item compared with further referral)3.The tests are difficult to perform4.The tests are difficult to interpret5.The tests are reserved for corneal specialists6.Optometrists have not been adequately trained7.Optometrists have never seen the tests performed8.Optometrists have never performed the tests themselves. <p>Proposal:</p> <p>Research and produce a high quality, high resolution video describing these procedures.</p> <p>Professionally filmed at a clinic or hospital setting using a combination of macro, wide angle and slit-lamp video. An accompanying detailed script will describe each test performed together with interpretation of results. It is envisaged that this video will have open access to both undergraduates and practising optometrists.</p>

Advancing cultural competency in optometry education

Mandy Truong, McCaughey Centre, Melbourne School of Population Health, The University of Melbourne
\$8,194

An investigation of how Australian optometry schools prepare optometrists for culturally competent practice.

Australia, and Victoria in particular, is a culturally and linguistically diverse community. Over 30% of Victorians were born overseas and 25% of households have two or more languages spoken. A large proportion of Australia's health workforce is also born overseas. Optometrists and their patients are often from different cultural backgrounds and may hold different understandings about eye care. A lack of awareness of cultural differences can result in miscommunication and misunderstandings during clinical encounters, which can lead to poorer health outcomes. Education and training in this area can assist health professionals.

A pilot study conducted in Victoria identified that cultural diversity was important in the clinical setting as it can influence how optometrists communicate and manage their patients. A key finding was that specific training and strategies to deal with culturally based differences in health beliefs and practices may be beneficial.

We propose to conduct a scoping study to 1) review how optometry educators in Australia teach and prepare their students to work with culturally diverse patients and 2) determine the demographic characteristics of current optometry students and obtain their views on cultural diversity. The newly formed Public Health Optometry Group (PHOG) has created opportunity for a collaborative approach and we have received agreement to participate in the project from the University of Melbourne and Deakin University. Information will be collected with surveys, and a comparative report will be disseminated to all schools. Participation in the study and feedback through the report will 1) raise awareness of cultural competency related issues, 2) provide a basis for future development of guidelines to advance cultural competency training, and 3) provide an opportunity for schools to share knowledge and strategies. This study will improve optometrists' ability to deliver care to culturally diverse patients, ultimately resulting in better eye care outcomes.

A Learning Management System (LMS) for ACO Australian Graduate Certificate of Ocular Therapeutics (AGCOT)

Mary Wilson, Australian College of Optometry
\$4,000

Development and implementation of LMS to facilitate the management and administration of the AGCOT.

The ACO is currently developing a postgraduate, remote learning course "the Australian Graduate Certificate of Therapeutics" (AGCOT). Course commencement is planned for late 2012. Once accredited by the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ), graduates will be able to prescribe specific medicines for treatment of ocular conditions in the course of optometric practice, with improved patient outcomes.

In Victoria, approximately 550 optometrists are not therapeutically qualified. The Optometry Board of Australia has indicated "it is committed to the profession moving to one that is therapeutically qualified". To date, over 150 expressions of interest have been received to undertake the course, with 75% of these from Victoria.

The AGCOT will offer a flexible style of learning involving: online lectures; live, interactive webinars; e-learning materials; an online forum and chat room; online assessments and local clinical placements. It will particularly appeal to optometrists in rural and remote areas and busy optometrists who cannot afford time off to travel.

The ACO is seeking VOTE Trust funding for the development and implementation of a particular open source LMS (Moodle) which is a widely used web application for creating effective, dynamic online learning sites. Through Moodle, candidates will be able to access AGCOT course information, online lectures, recordings of webinars and online forums. Moodle will also facilitate the course administration to accommodate candidate profiles including their assessment records and assessment tools, such as online assessments.

A grant from the VOTE Trust will fund: Moodle LMS installation and configuration; customisation; technical support and assistance with developing the course; training; hosting of the website for a year.

In summary, this project aligns closely with VOTE Trust grant purposes. Specifically, it relates to the advancement and fostering of the practice of optometry and related techniques, principally in Victoria, through education, to improve patient outcomes.