

## Welcome

It is with great enthusiasm that I introduce the very first edition of the UWA Doctor of Optometry Newsletter. As the Foundation Head, I am thrilled to share the remarkable progress our team has made and the exciting future that lies ahead.

Over the past year, we have witnessed extraordinary growth within our discipline. Our team has expanded with the addition of brilliant new members, each bringing a wealth of experience and innovative ideas to our collective mission. This dynamic blend of talent has not only enriched our academic environment but has also enhanced the quality of education we provide. Our commitment to delivering high-calibre, cutting-edge training remains unwavering, ensuring that our OD graduates are equipped with the ophthalmic medicine knowledge and clinical skills to excel in the ever-evolving field of optometry.

One of the highlights of our program this year has been our ongoing collaborations with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations across various regions such as Darwin, Geraldton, Broome, and Bunbury. These partnerships have allowed us to deliver critical eye care services and education to underserved communities, making a significant impact on their health and well-being. The integration of culturally safe practice into our curriculum and the direct engagement with these communities exemplify our dedication to creating a more inclusive and accessible healthcare system. We are excited to announce that UWA Optometry will be hosting the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference in 2025. This national confer-

ence will bring together eye health professionals from across Australia and New Zealand to discuss and advance First Nations eye health. We look forward to fostering insightful dialogue and collaborative solutions to improve eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

As we look to the future, the potential for further advancements and contributions to the field of optometry is both exciting and promising. We remain committed to fostering innovation, expanding our reach, and continuing to build on our successes. Together, with your support and collaboration, we are excited to achieve great things.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. We look forward to sharing more updates and achievements in the months to come.

Warm regards,

Professor Garry Fitzpatrick



Garry Fitzpatrick  
Foundation Head



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## Note from Deputy Head and Course Director, Associate Professor Khyber Alam

Welcome to the University of Western Australia's Doctor of Optometry program, where our mission is to deliver exceptional education and clinical training that prepares the next generation of optometrists for success. As the Deputy Head and Course Director, I am proud to lead a program grounded in the principles of excellence, innovation, and comprehensive evidence-based patient care.

Our educational approach emphasises a rigorous curriculum that combines theoretical knowledge with practical application. We are committed to providing high-quality education across various metro and rural clinical sites, including Crawley, Midland, Geraldton, Broome, and Bunbury. We are deeply committed to making quality eye care accessible to all communities, including those facing significant barriers. One notable example of this commitment is our Refugee Clinic, an initiative designed to provide essential optometric services to individuals from refugee backgrounds. The Refugee Clinic operates in collaboration with Associate Professor Hessom Razavi from the Lions Eye Institute and other local community organisations to offer comprehensive eye examinations, treatments, and follow-up care to refugees who may otherwise struggle to access such services. The students are involved in all UWA affiliated eye clinics across the State. This diverse clinical experience ensures that our students gain exposure to a wide range of cases and environments, fostering a well-rounded skill set essential for effective practice.

We believe that exposure to different clinical settings is crucial for developing a deep understanding of patient needs and delivering personalised care. Our program is designed to support students in integrating theoretical learning with hands-on experience, guided by dedicated faculty and experienced practitioners. This comprehensive training model ensures that our graduates are not only proficient in clinical skills but also adept at navigating the complexities of real-world clinical practice.

I am particularly pleased to highlight the remarkable achievement of our inaugural graduating cohort in 2023, who achieved 100% employment upon completion of the program. This outstanding outcome is a testament to the high calibre of education and training we provide, reflecting the strong demand for our graduates in the professional arena. Our program's reputation is further bolstered by our

collaborations with leading national and international partners such as the Hanoi Medical University, Hanoi Eye Hospital 2 and Hai Yen Eye Care in Vietnam, LV Prasad Eye Institute in India, Houston University (US), and Northeastern State University College of Optometry in the United States. These collaborations enhance our curriculum, broaden our research opportunities, and keep our program at the forefront of optometric education. As a result, our optometry program is recognised as one of the most sought-after in the country, attracting top talent and producing graduates who will be highly regarded both domestically and globally.

Thank you for your interest in the UWA Optometry program. We are dedicated to shaping the future of optometry through excellence in education and clinical practice.



Khyber Alam  
Course Director

I am proud to lead a program grounded in the principles of excellence, innovation, and comprehensive evidence-based patient care



## On-Campus Learning Environment

The on-campus teaching staff at UWA's Doctor of Optometry program brings together a large range of professionals with a wide variety of clinical skills and diverse industry experience. This provides the students with the best possible, evidence-based, theoretical and clinical education combined with real-world practical experience.

Mrs. Lisa Jansen

**Teaching Philosophy:** Student-centred learning where students take ownership of their learning, and the teacher facilitates and supports their journey.

**Ideal Learning Environment:** An ideal learning environment is safe, inclusive, and collaborative, where students feel comfortable to ask questions without fear of judgement.

Ms. Clare Rossiter

**Teaching Philosophy:** Empowering students to actively engage with learning through a supportive and interactive learning environment.

**Ideal Learning Environment:** Wherever possible, I believe technology should be incorporated into the curriculum to promote engagement and interest.

Ms. Natalie Guillon

**Teaching Philosophy:** Support the learning journey of each individual to actively engage with curriculum, build confidence, and develop a strong foundational knowledge.

**Ideal Learning Environment:** Create a supportive and energised space, encourage questions and critical thinking, link theory and skills to practice, using videos and oversized props!

Ms. Pauline Xu

**Teaching Philosophy:** Guide with care, inspire with purpose, and empower with confidence.

**Ideal Learning Environment:** CARES = Collaborative, Active, Reflective, Engaging, Supportive.

Mrs. Dominique Jorgensen

**Teaching Philosophy:** Share your passion, keep it interesting, reflect often, and adapt quickly.

**Ideal Learning Environment:** An ideal learning environment is where students feel inspired, accepted, and comfortable enough to make mistakes and then learn from them without fear or shame.

Ms. Priscilla Ganesan

**Technical Services Contributions:** The Technical Services team plays a pivotal role in enhancing the student experience by ensuring seamless technological integration for clinical teaching purposes. We provide critical support for teaching, research, and clinical activities, supporting students and staff and contributing to an ideal learning environment.





## Student Experience

Central to the success of UWA Optometry's program is the student experience. The commitment to providing a safe, inclusive learning environment whilst still encouraging self-reflection and critical thinking is important to all UWA Optometry staff. Students currently in our OD program shared some of their thoughts on the program and facilities.

### Why did you choose optometry?

**Sarah Badaoui (OD2):** I have always been drawn to healthcare and optometry perfectly aligned with my longstanding interest in patient-centred care and the prospect of a gratifying and rewarding career.

**Jayden Simpson (OD2):** Optometry offers a unique blend of science, healthcare, and direct patient interaction and allows me to make a tangible difference in people's lives by helping them achieve and maintain good vision.

**Ruby Horn (OD2):** I was always interested in eye health and providing a healthcare service to those within my community.

**Lucie Anderson (OD2):** I have always wanted to work in healthcare, especially in a field where I could directly interact with patients and be a part of their long-term healthcare needs.

**Jarrod Watson (OD2):** I've wanted to work in healthcare since a young age. I want to improve people's quality of life and optometrists play an important role in achieving that.

**Jade Thompson (OD2):** I chose to study optometry because I've always been interested in eye health as vision is a crucial part of everyday life.

**Darcy Thompson (OD2):** I chose to study optometry as I am passionate about delivering holistic patient centred care

where we have the ability to detect signs of systemic conditions that are crucial in enhancing a patient's quality of life - not only by improving their vision.

**Samantha Chong (OD3):** Optometry combines my passion for preventative healthcare with my appreciation for retail fashion while meaningfully impacting patients' lives through vision care.

**Madison Lamb (OD3):** While completing my undergraduate studies in Biomedical Science I was certain of my passion for medical science and healthcare. After working in an optical practice, I knew optometry ticked (almost) all of my boxes and I knew it was the healthcare path for me!

**Olivia Stewart (OD3):** I feel that optometry offers the perfect blend of intellectual challenge and the chance to create real, positive change in people's lives every day.

### Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

**SB:** I'm eager to explore various opportunities within the profession and embrace the diverse experiences that come my way!

**JS:** I envision myself working in a clinical setting, where I will be advancing my skills as an optometrist. I plan to maintain strong connections with UWA Optometry, possibly through research initiatives, to enable me to contribute to the field's



progress. I'd love to work at the school one day!

**RH:** Working in a regional/rural optometry practice.

**LA:** Working in a clinic or hospital where I see a wide variety of patients and conditions. I'd also like to be involved in the creation and implementation of innovative ocular devices.

**JW:** I see myself in a clinic, working in close collaboration with other health professionals, performing quality patient care.

**JT:** I hope to be a practicing optometrist in either a private practice or potentially a hospital setting. I also hope to specialise in a field such as ocular disease or paediatric optometry.

**DT:** I envision myself practicing optometry in a private practice, and well-versed in managing a variety of different eye conditions. I am also interested in specialising in specific eye diseases such as glaucoma, or potentially mentoring younger students or new graduates in the field.

**SC:** In five years, I see myself as a clinician specialising in myopia control and contributing to the optometry field through research that advances optometric knowledge and clinical practice.

**ML:** In the next five years, I see myself exploring various specialties within optometry. I'm particularly interested in advancing my knowledge and skills in areas such as hard contact lens practice, paediatric eye care, and glaucoma.

**OS:** I might be overseas, bringing my expertise to a new environment, adapting to different cultures, and broadening my perspective on patient care. It's exciting that there are many opportunities out there for optometrists!

### What do you think of your clinical placement opportunities?

**JS:** The clinical placement opportunities have been incredibly invaluable. I had the privilege of delivering essential eye



“  
the clinical facilities, state-of-the-art equipment, and support from faculty staff, all contribute to enhancing the learning experience  
”

care to remote Indigenous communities in the Ngaanyatjarra lands, which was an experience that deepened my understanding of the unique challenges and needs in these areas.

**SC:** My clinical placements have been incredibly enlightening, particularly my experiences in regional WA (Geraldton) and overseas in Hong Kong. These opportunities have expanded my understanding of diverse patient needs and healthcare environments. In Geraldton, I visited remote communities to provide free eye tests, making a difference in those areas. In Hong Kong, I honed my skills in myopia control and paediatric care and improved my proficiency in Cantonese clinical terminologies.

**OS:** My clinical placement opportunities have been nothing short of fantastic! One of the highlights was my time at the LV Prasad Eye Institute in Hyderabad, India. It was an eye-opening experience where I witnessed a wide range of ocular conditions and advanced diagnostic and treatment methods, which enhanced my critical thinking and patient management skills. I was fortunate to experience a well-rounded mix of placements—international, rural, metro franchise, and metro independent practices—which has given me a comprehensive understanding of the field.

### What do you think of the clinical facilities on-campus?

**LA:** The new optometry building is amazing. I really like that there are rooms available for us to use for study and group meetings that only optometry students have access to.

**JT:** The clinical facilities, state-of-the-art equipment, and support from faculty staff, all contribute to enhancing the learning experience.

**ML:** The on-campus clinical facilities are outstanding. We have access to state-of-the-art equipment, the variety and quality allow for a comprehensive learning experience that prepares us for real-world practice.



## National & International Placement Opportunities

The UWA Optometry program aims to develop socially responsible graduates. The program provides opportunities for third-year students to conduct their clinical rotation in a diverse range of locations and settings, delivered in 4 blocks of 6-week rotations (24 weeks total) in a structured and supported way. Rotations are offered across overseas, interstate, and rural locations, as well as community optometrists across Perth's metro area. Students are required to complete at least one international or interstate rotation and one rural rotation. International and rural placements are underpinned with interdisciplinary care and cultural sensitivity training.

In 2024, international sites included Hyderabad (India), Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), and Hong Kong. In

2025 Mumbai at the Lotus Eye Hospital (Lotus College of Optometry) in India, Oklahoma, Boston and Houston in the United States, and Kampala in Uganda will be added to opportunities for student placement. In collaboration with University Departments of Rural Health, students are able to complete placements in the Kimberley's, Pilbara, Mid-West, and South West regions of Western Australia.

Associate Professor Khyber Alam and Mr Neilsen De Souza recently conducted a site visit to LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad and Lotus College of Optometry, Mumbai to review student placement exposures, as well as opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders in areas of research, education, and public health.

## UWA OD's First Cohort 100% Employment Success

In addition to traditional optometry training, the UWA program also focuses on developing new services within the public sector. This includes initiatives such as a public contact lens specialty clinic for pensioners and underprivileged individuals, as well as child eye health programs and aged care programs in collaboration with the state government. In terms of the future optometry workforce, the UWA program plays a vital role.

Previously, Western Australia relied on graduates moving from the east coast, leading to a transient workforce. However, with a high number of interstate graduates employed in WA in 2024, the UWA program is helping to address this issue and provide a more stable workforce for the future. In the inaugural graduating cohort of 2024, there were 40 graduates. All of these graduates were able to secure employment, with 100% employment rate. The UWA program

works with all optometry employers, ensuring that graduates have experience with all models of optometry and are well-equipped to succeed in their careers.

While the specific locations of employment for graduates are not tracked, the UWA program has seen many graduates stay in Western Australia to practice optometry. This is a testament to the quality of the program and the opportunities available in the state. As of early 2024, the program is thriving, with significant demand for enrolment. The program primarily attracts students from Western Australia, but international enrolments are also growing. With the establishment of the new teaching clinic, the Eye Health Centre of Western Australia, the program is set to continue its success, develop collaborative care clinics for complex ocular conditions and produce top-quality optometry graduates for years to come.



# Introducing the Eye Health Centre of Western Australia

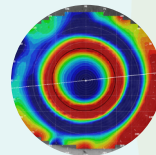
The Eye Health Centre of Western Australia (EHCWA) is a state-of-the-art, public-facing optometry and teaching clinic operated by the University of Western Australia's Doctor of Optometry team. We provide eye care services to the public, while training the Doctor of Optometry students and conducting clinical research that guides best practices. EHCWA offers comprehensive eye tests to the general public, mostly at no out-of-pocket cost to the patient.

In addition to our Primary Care Clinic, EHCWA currently runs Specialty Care Clinics that provide personalised care for eye health conditions that require specialised care. These services require a referral from a community optometrist, an ophthalmologist, or a general practitioner.



## Primary Care Clinic

Our comprehensive eye examinations are available to the general public at no out-of-pocket cost to patients. The consultations are carried out by OD2 and OD3 students under the close supervision of experienced optometrists.



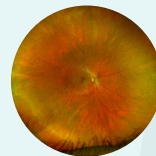
## Myopia Management

The myopia management service offers a variety of treatment options that have been shown through research studies to slow down the progression of myopia, including specialty glasses, contact lenses and eye drops



## Children's Vision Service

EHCWA offers comprehensive vision and eye health assessment for infants, young children, and primary school-aged children. Our paediatric clinic provides age-appropriate vision assessments performed by experienced optometrists in a friendly and safe environment.



## Ocular Pathology Service

The EHCWA Ocular Pathology Service examines and manages patients at risk of, or with existing eye conditions. An ophthalmologist may also be involved in the virtual review of your reports depending on your condition.



## CASA Eye Examinations

EHCWA offers aviation eye examinations conducted by our accredited optometrists to ensure pilots meet the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) visual standards for initial certification and periodic reviews, adhering strictly to CASA standards for Category 1, 2, and 3 licenses.



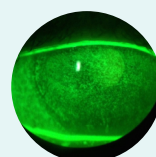
## Colour Vision Clinic

The EHCWA Colour Vision Clinic provides comprehensive assessments to diagnose and quantify colour vision deficiencies, which can be either inherited (present at birth) or acquired (developed later in life).



## Specialty Contact Lenses

Managed by highly experienced optometrists who have access to an extensive range of specially designed contact lenses, this service is for patients requiring complex contact lens care for eye conditions such as keratoconus, and post-corneal grafts.



## Dry Eye Service

EHCWA aims to be a state-wide referral centre for the diagnosis, and evidence-based management of dry eye disease. As well as receiving high-quality diagnosis and management including IPL, there is also an opportunity for patients to participate in the latest research on dry eyes.

## Introducing some of the EHCWA Clinical Staff

At the Eye Health Clinic of Western Australia we provide exemplary patient-centred care and unique teaching experiences for our OD students with the help of our exceptional teaching staff. Our students benefit from exposure to a broad range of skills whilst also improving access to eye health services for the general public.

### Dr. Wilfred Tang

**Areas of Interest:** Eye diseases and rural optometry.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Effective communications, knowledge sharing, and positive rapport.

### Mr. Mark Lucey

**Areas of Interest:** Anterior eye and dry eye.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Pass on practical and real-world experiences to students.

### Ms. Hannah Jackson

**Areas of Interest:** CASA eye examinations, comprehensive colour vision assessment, low vision care and ocular surface disease management.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Treat every patient experience as a learning opportunity.

### Ms. Elisse Higginbotham

**Areas of Interest:** Children's vision (including amblyopia and strabismus), adult binocular vision dysfunction, vision therapy, and myopia management.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Be curious. Learn from each other. Ask "what if?" and "why?"

### Ms. Han Trinh

**Areas of Interest:** Eyecare technology pertaining to the medical retina.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Reflection is important.

### Ms. Maggie Hong

**Areas of Interest:** General optometry.

**Teaching Philosophy:** To inspire self-directed learning and improvement.



### Dr. Jeremiah Lim

**Areas of Interest:** Glaucoma and retinal diseases.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Cultivating an environment where curiosity and evidence-based practice drive lifelong learning, empowering students to become adaptive and innovative leaders in optometry.

### Ms. Jingyi Chen

**Areas of Interest:** Delivering services that address equity issues for underserved patients including through our collaborative LEI InReach Vision clinic.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Learning is lifelong- maintain your curiosity and continue to be adaptable.

### Mr. Eden Kwok

**Areas of Interest:** Myopia management and anterior eye- corneal disease and contact lenses.

**Teaching Philosophy:** Teach by setting an example to follow and inspire others to achieve success.



## EHCWA's Weekly Refugee Clinic

Lions InReach Vision (LIV) is a collaborative eye care service provided by UWA Optometry and the Lions Eye Institute. The initiative was co-led by Associate Professor Hessom Razavi (with support from LEI) and Associate Professor Khyber Alam (with support from UWA). Commenced in 2022, LIV seeks to provide culturally safe, accessible and affordable eye care for patients who may face barriers to accessing mainstream services, such as patients from Indigenous, refugee or asylum seeker backgrounds.

Patients referred to the LIV are first seen at UWA Optometry's Eye Health Centre of Western Australia in Crawley. They are assessed by UWA faculty optometrists, including Ms Elisse Higginbotham and Ms Jingyi Chen, as well as UWA OD students, for comprehensive eye examinations and ancillary tests. Patients who require glasses are provided with these at no cost, through generous support from One Sight Foundation. Those requiring ophthalmology are referred to Dr

Hessom Razavi at the LEI's Midland Clinic, where they receive outpatient treatments that may include medical, surgical, laser and intravitreal therapies.

To date, the LIV has provided almost 900 patient consultations, and performed over 100 surgeries, over 200 intravitreal injections, 35 laser treatments, and dispensed over 100 pairs of spectacles. Indigenous patients have come from metropolitan Perth as well as rural and remote WA. Refugees have hailed from Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Ukraine, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, and other countries. Thirteen formerly blind patients have had sight restoring surgery. The clinics are coordinated by Dr Su Su Lin, who assists with appointments, and arranges interpreters. The service is being formally evaluated by Dr Marcel Nejatian, an ophthalmology registrar, for his MPhil degree at UWA under Dr Razavi's supervision.



## EHCWA's Admin Staff

With years of clinic management experience, EHCWA's administration team are here to help with patient, clinician, and referrer questions during the clinic's opening hours.



## ED'S SION



## 2024 NATSI Eye Health Conference

Earlier this year, UWA academics and students participated in the 2024 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health Conference held in Hobart, Tasmania. This conference provided a platform for our Indigenous students to share their firsthand experiences and perspectives gained through their involvement in our Optometry program.

Shaun Tappata, Senior Lecturer and Aboriginal Health Practitioner, alongside Associate Professor Khyber Alam, contributed to the conference by presenting on Indigenous-led collaborative care models initiated by UWA. Their presentation highlighted UWA's commitment to culturally safe and responsive healthcare practices, which align with the broader cultural safety pillars recognised in Western Australia and across Australia. These pillars are fundamental to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples receive care that respects and integrates their cultural values and practices.

Eric Dalgety, Aboriginal Health Practitioner and "renowned musician", along with Sophia Gerritsma, Academic Clinician, delivered a presentation highlighting the impact of the permanent eye clinic established within the Geraldton Regional

Aboriginal Medical Services (GRAMS). This clinic exemplifies the principles of cultural safety by providing tailored eye care services that are accessible and respectful of the local Aboriginal community's needs and preferences.

The innovative and collaborative approach adopted in delivering eye care and tertiary education was recognised with an award for its exceptional contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health in rural Western Australia. This accolade reflects UWA's alignment with its vision and values, which emphasise excellence in education, research, and community service, particularly in fostering equitable healthcare solutions.

We extend our gratitude to the WA Centre for Rural Health (WACRH) and GRAMS for their ongoing support and collaboration, which are crucial in advancing culturally safe healthcare practices and improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



their presentation highlighted UWA's commitment to culturally safe and responsive healthcare practices







## Rural Student Clinics

In Carnarvon, UWA students and supervisor Sophia Gerritsma set up an optometry clinic day in collaboration with the visiting ophthalmologists, who visit Carnarvon once a month. The goal of this clinic is to assist in triaging, seeing patients that can be managed under optometry, and doing relevant pre-testing for the ophthalmologists before their arrival. This helps to ensure they can focus on procedures and complex cases in the limited time they have for their visit.

In Mount Magnet, students consulted within GRAMS' (Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service) satellite clinic with Aboriginal Eye Health Coordinator Eric Dalgety and Sophia Gerritsma. The focus was on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander locals with diabetes, cataracts, and uncor-

rected refractive error. Many of these patients had been waiting 3-4 years for these eye tests, which are now easily deliverable through the collaboration with GRAMS and UWA Optometry.





## Northeastern State University Oklahoma College of Optometry: Advanced Procedures Training

In line with UWA's commitment to excellence in optometric education and practice, Associate Professor Khyber Alam, Ms Jingyi Chen, and Mrs Lisa Jansen recently undertook advanced procedures training at Northeastern State University College of Optometry in the United States. This advanced training was designed to enhance their proficiency in specialised optometric techniques, including laser therapies of the anterior segment, injections, and other office-based surgical procedures.

The training program at Northeastern State University College of Optometry is renowned for its comprehensive curriculum that focuses on advanced optometric procedures. The sessions included hands-on workshops and theoretical lectures on:

- *Laser Therapies of the Anterior Segment:* Covering topics such as advanced techniques for managing anterior segment disorders using laser technology, including photocoagulation and laser iridotomy. These skills are crucial for treating conditions such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.
- *Injections:* The training covered various injection techniques for administering medications and managing ocular conditions.
- *Office-Based Surgical Procedures:* The program included practical training in minor surgical procedures performed by optometric physicians, enhancing participants' ability to perform these procedures safely and effectively within an office setting.

The insights and skills acquired from this advanced training will significantly enrich the student experience in the UWA Optometry program in several ways. A/Prof. Alam, Ms Chen, and Mrs Jansen will carefully consider the integration of the latest techniques and best practices from their training into the UWA curriculum. We hope this will provide students with up-to-date knowledge and practical skills in advanced ophthalmic procedures, preparing them for a wide range of clinical scenarios and collaborative care efforts.



In the near future, the knowledge and expertise of the UWA faculty will be shared with students through workshops, seminars, and hands-on sessions. When introduced, it is anticipated that this knowledge sharing will facilitate a deeper understanding of advanced procedures and their application in clinical settings, thereby improving students' confidence and competence. The advanced procedural knowledge will also support ongoing research initiatives at UWA. Faculty members will be better equipped to contribute to research on the efficacy and safety of new ophthalmic techniques, ultimately benefiting both students and patients.



## Introducing some of our Researchers

Being in the top 100 universities in the world, and the only Western Australian university in the Group of Eight, it's unsurprising that UWA Optometry has attracted some of the brightest minds in optometry research. Our researchers have specialised knowledge in fields such as ocular immunology and retinal health that allows research to be a key focus.

Professor Allison McKendrick | Chair of Optometry Research

**Areas of Interest:** Improving assessments for diagnosis and management of eye and vision disorders.

**Highlighted Project:** The Individualised Perimetry Progression Observations in Glaucoma Study (IPPOGS) – a three year longitudinal study in collaboration with the LEI.



Associate Professor Holly Chinnery

**Areas of Interest:** Corneal and ocular immunology.

**Highlighted Project:** Developing protocols to collect functional in vivo confocal microscopy data to measure corneal immune cell behaviours in people.



Dr. Jason Charng

**Areas of Interest:** Structural and functional assessments of the retina, in preparation for gene therapy.

**Highlighted Project:** Exploring the utility of pupil function as a marker of retinal health.



Dr. Hamed Niyazmand

**Areas of Interest:** Myopia, anterior eye/corneal disorders, paediatric eye disorders.

**Highlighted Project:** Effect of internal and external mechanical pressures on axial length in myopes and emmetropes.



Dr. Zahra Tajbakhsh

**Areas of Interest:** Ocular surface diseases and the identification of novel biomarkers to predict, diagnose, and monitor the treatment of both ocular and systemic diseases.

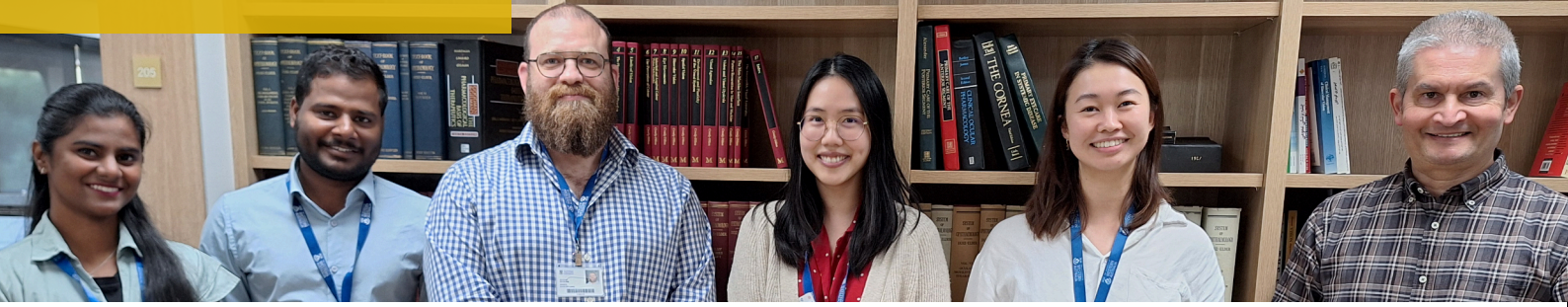
**Highlighted Project:** Effect of contact lens on corneal immune cells using in vivo confocal microscopy.



### Interested in joining the team?

The Lion's Eye Institute is currently looking for a **Research Assistant** to join their Corneal and Ocular Immunology department. Visit [lei.org.au](http://lei.org.au) for more information.





## Introducing some of our PhD Candidates

The PhD candidates are working together with our esteemed researchers on projects related to glaucoma, inherited retinal disorders, vision loss, anterior eye diseases, refractive errors, health economics, health and medical education, public health, and general clinical translational research.

Mr. Gavin Swartz

**Research Topic:** Residual higher-order aberration in rigid lens correction of the irregular cornea.

**5-Year Plan:** As I'm part-time, hopefully completing my thesis.

Ms. Amy Lim

**Research Topic:** Investigating how communication and clinical decision making skills are taught and assessed in optometry curricula.

**5-Year Plan:** Five years wiser and continuously learning new things.

Ms. Jingyi Chen

**Research Topic:** Our project explores how the eye care workforce can be equipped to meet the needs in rural and remote Australia.

**5-Year Plan:** I would love to be working in the public health space and contribute to research that focuses on improving patient healthcare outcomes.

Mr. Benjamin Lee

**Research Topic:** Developing optometrist role in falls prevention management.

**5-Year Plan:** It is hard to tell where I will be but will see where life takes me.

Mr. Kowsigan Magesan

**Research Topic:** Exploring Structure-Function Relationships in Glaucoma with Higher Resolution Visual Field Testing.

**5-Year Plan:** I envision myself working as an academician in a reputed university after completing my PhD.

Mr. Eden Kwok

**Research Topic:** Characterising pupil light reactions in different types of retinal and optic nerve disease.

**5-Year Plan:** Hopefully finishing my PhD and working as a clinician and research academic.

Ms. Maanasi Mahalingam

**Research Topic:** Impact of glaucoma on visual function under low luminance conditions.

**5-Year Plan:** I envision myself having successfully completed my PhD and having established a strong foundation as an independent researcher and academician.

Mr. Mark Fonseka

**Research Topic:** Can an algorithm that uses OCT structural data to bias search parameters in perimetry detect early glaucoma more effectively than standard automated perimetry?

**5-Year Plan:** Part-time research.

Ms. Han Trinh

**Research Topic:** Artificial intelligence in inherited retinal diseases.

**5-Year Plan:** Still learning. With more cats.



# Researching with Cylite's Hyperparallel OCT™

## Research



Cylite's HP-OCT, image supplied.

UWA Optometry PhD Candidate Gavin Swartz's research exploring residual higher-order aberrations (HOAs) in rigid lens correction of the irregular cornea is now complemented by the addition of a novel device to help better understand the influence of the contributing ocular structures.

The hyperparallel OCT (HP-OCT) has been generously loaned to our department by Cylite, Australia's only OCT manufacturer for the ophthalmic industry. Conceived, designed and manufactured in Melbourne, the HP-OCT improves upon the imaging capabilities of spectral-domain OCT (SD-OCT) in capturing detailed and accurate information about anterior ocular structures. While SD-OCT utilises a single beam that scans across the eye to create an overall image, the HP-OCT employs a microlens array to split this single beam into multiple beamlets with a 16 x 9 mm area captured simultaneously. This enables the generation of highly accurate scans of the anterior segment for an area up to 16x16 mm.

The research team is excited to explore the applications of this device which is also capable of imaging the retina.



## UWA Optometry and LEI at ARVO 2024

A team of researchers from UWA Optometry attended the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO) meeting in Seattle in May 2024, along with colleagues from the Lions Eye Institute. ARVO is the premier scientific meeting in our field globally, and was attended by more than 11,000 researchers.

We were very proud of the achievement of two of our students, Amy Menage and Alyssa Kinkaid, who had abstracts selected for presentation at the meeting. Both were supported by travel awards from the Lions Eye Institute.

Eye Health Centre of  
Western Australia

# Primary & Specialty Optometric Eye Care



Our services include:



General Eye Examination



Dry Eye Assessment &  
Management



Cataract Assessment &  
Referral



Diabetic Eye Examination



Red Eye Assessment &  
Management



Myopia Treatment



Children's Vision



Low Vision

Located near UWA Campus with on-site parking



(08) 64 88 74 29



39 Fairway, Crawley, WA 6009



[ehcwa.com.au](http://ehcwa.com.au)



[info@ehcwa.com.au](mailto:info@ehcwa.com.au)