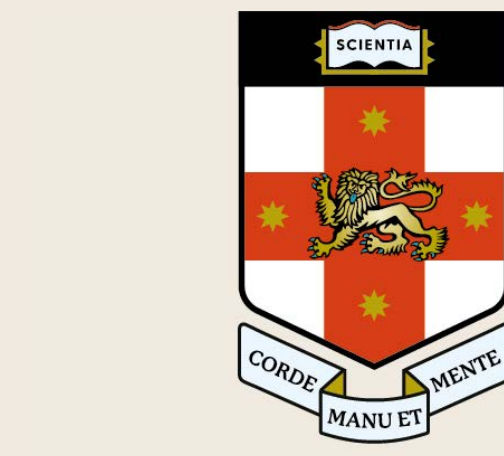


Timeline: 1931-2026

UNSW SCHOOL OF OPTOMETRY & VISION SCIENCE



UNSW
SYDNEY

1930s

1931: NSW Optometrists' Act passed. Part-time Optometry course at Sydney Technical College (STC) founded. William George Kett appointed part-time teacher.

1935: Four students completed the diploma course to be awarded Associates of STC (Optometry), Fellow of the Institute of Optometrists (ASTC, FIO).



Sydney Technical College, Mary Ann Street, Ultimo

1950s

1950: Josef Lederer became Head of Department (1950-75) then Head of School (1976-81). NSW University of Technology was founded and courses for Optometry conducted for STC. Conversion course to Bachelor of Science (Optometrical Science) founded. Optometry part of School of Applied Physics, Faculty of Science.



1952: Max Lang appointed part-time Lecturer.

1953: First graduates. Lederer Lens as low vision aid announced. First paper by an optometrist in Nature.

1954: George Amigo appointed full-time Lecturer.

1955: "Optometrical Science" deleted from the degree title. Josef Lederer introduces a logarithmic progression V/A chart.

1956: Josef Lederer awarded the first MSc at the same graduation ceremony for first Bachelor of Science (Optometrical Science) degrees.

1957: WG Kett awarded an Honorary DSc.

1958: New South Wales University of Technology renamed the University of New South Wales.

1959: Josef Lederer promoted to Associate Professor, the first professorial rank in Optometry in Australia.



N.S.W. UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY OPTOMETRICAL SCIENCE (1950-1953)

1970s

1970: MOptom course established. UNSW Department of Optometry moves from Ultimo to the Kensington campus.



Newton Building, Kensington Campus

1971: Brien Holden appointed Lecturer.

1972: First course in the use of diagnostic drugs established. Brien Holden granted NSW Certificate #1 for the use of diagnostic drugs in the practice of Optometry. Collaboration with Stewart House established. To date >150,000 NSW/ACT children examined.

1973: Graham Dick appointed Lecturer. Angela McCarthy appointed Professional Officer. Brien Holden established Optometry Vision Research Foundation (OVRF) to fund optometric research.

1975: Optometry became part of the National Health Scheme. End of patient benefits favouring the patients of Ophthalmology over those of Optometry.

1976: School of Optometry founded. Professor Brien Holden established the Cornea and Contact Lens Research Unit (CCLRU) at UNSW. Josef Lederer appointed Foundation Professor of Optometry (first full Professor in Optometry in Australia). The first mini computer (Interdata 7/16) is purchased by the School, supporting numerous staff and postgraduate researchers.

1978: Elijah Udovitch appointed as Director of Clinics.

1940s

1945: Josef Lederer appointed part-time teacher.

1946: 32 students enrolled to start (returned servicemen).

1947: Josef Lederer appointed first full-time teacher. WG Kett appointed to the Development Council of the NSW University of Technology. The Council drafted the legislation establishing the new university.

1948: First Optometry clinic opened, located at the top floor of the STC Building A in Ultimo. Optometry course enlarged from four to five years part-time.

1949: WG Kett appointed to the Council of the NSW University of Technology.



1960s

1960: Jack Alexander appointed Technical Officer.

1961: BOptom course implemented.

1962: Legal right to use diagnostic drugs in NSW (first in the world). Death of WG Kett.

1963: Diploma course discontinued. Bachelor of Optometry started. BSc discontinued. The first PhD in optometry in Australia and British Commonwealth awarded to George Amigo, supervised by Josef Lederer. NSW becomes first state to provide optometrists with access to diagnostic drugs.

1964: Master of Optometry course established. Five students complete BOptom.

1965: First BOptom graduation. Last STC diploma awarded. 230 graduates of STC since 1935.

1966: Jack Alexander appointed Lecturer. Graham Dick appointed Professional Officer.

1968: Double degree BSc BOptom offered as an option.

1969: Five students comprised the BOptom graduating class.

1980s

1981: Josef Lederer retires.

1982: Barry Collin became Head of School (1982-92).

1983: Precision Optics Laboratory disestablished. Becomes Electron Microscope Laboratory. School workshop disestablished. Consulting rooms changed from 6m to 3m rooms to allow more to be built.

1984: CCLRU premises officially opened by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education.

1985: CCLRU became the Institute for Eye Research. Established as an UNSW affiliate but an independent Research Institute. Diagnostic drugs become part of BOptom. Craig Stamp appointed as the first Staff Optometrist and first ORLAB Manager. First Apple Macintoshes and Apple laser printers acquired. ORLAB ISO/IEC 17025 accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities.

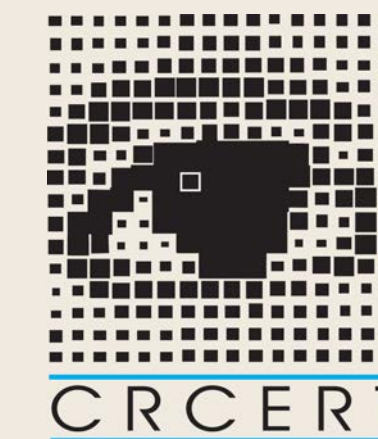
1986: MOptom course discontinued.



CCLRU staff members, 1984

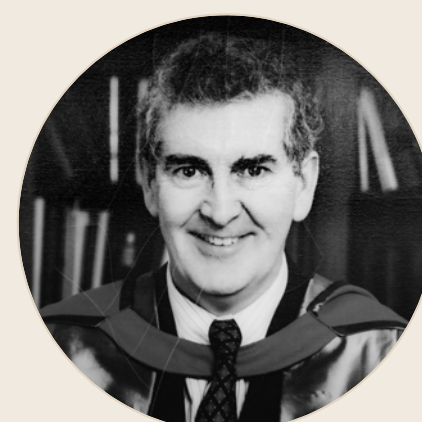
1990s

1990: Vision Education Centre founded. Two Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) applications from the school make it to the final shortlist of 10 nationally. Overseas preceptorship offered for the first time to students.



1991: Cooperative Research Centre for Eye Research and Technology (CRCERT) founded. First full-time Staff Optometrists (Kathleen Watt & Jennie Saunders). First full-time ORLAB Manager (Annette Hoskin) appointed in a partnership with Unisearch Limited. Hosted International Research Group on Colour Vision Deficiencies conference (now the International Colour Vision Society). Ocular therapeutics course from Pennsylvania College of Optometry conducted for local optometrists.

1992: Daniel O'Leary became Head of School (1992-98). New ORLAB rooms opened by the Minister for Science & Technology. School awarded one of the first round of ARC collaboration with industry grants.



1995: MOptom course reinstated as an articulated system with Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma and MOptom progressive options.



1996: Construction of Rupert Myers Building begins. School logo adopted as part of the fundraising effort.



1997: UNSW Science Faculties restructured. ORLAB logo adopted as an amalgam of the School and Unisearch Logos. Brien Holden received the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to optometry, contact lens research, and education.

1998: Stephen Dain became Head of School (1998-2006). As presiding member of Faculty Board, Helen Swarbrick becomes the first from the School to hold office in the Faculty.



1999: Silicone hydrogel contact lenses launched.

2010s

2010: Institute for Eye Research renamed the Brien Holden Vision Institute (BHVI). Masters of Community Eye Health commenced in collaboration with the LV Prasad Eye Institute (India). Optometry Association (NSW/ACT) supported the position of Clinic Development Manager at UNSW to support industry ready graduates. Clinic rebranding occurs.



2011: Commenced Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics in partnership with OA WA and OA SA. Optometry Clinic refurbishment completed: six new consultation rooms with equipment provided by BOC, Designs for Vision, Luxottica and Optical Manufacturers; new dispensing frame room supported by ODMA; new dispensary supported by lens manufacturers. Eye Research Group established as a clinical trials centre for the ophthalmic industry.



Mentors and leaders in Business Skills Course 2012

2013: Evidence-Based Optometry Consortium funded and established. 61% of graduates entered into regional or rural practice.

2014: Ocular Surface and Dry Eye Conference hosted at UNSW. Margie O'Neill recognised in UNSW Alumni Awards. Dry Eye clinics, gaol clinics and school screenings commenced.



Chris Henderson, Peter Fisher, Ian Sim & Robert Sheehy

2017: First Scientia fellows and Education Focused academics appointed. Optometry program changed from five-year dual Bachelors degree to three years Bachelors + two years Masters of Clinical Optometry; accredited in 2018. Education and exchange opportunities commenced with University of Makerere and University of Gulu in Uganda. Eye Clinic at the Asylum Centre Newtown established. Dr Ashik Mohamed Asafali named as the 2017 UNSW Young Alumni.

2018: 86% of all Optometry students undertook a four-week international placement hosted in USA, China, Vietnam, UK, Hong Kong. Expansion of School into East Wing Level 3, new optics and dispensing teaching labs and access to biological laboratory space. Formally opened in 2019.

2019: Lisa Keay became Head of School (2019-present). UNSW moves to Trimester Academic Calendar. New teaching space opened in Rupert Myers Building.



2020s

2020: Gateway Admissions Pathway and Program launched, target set for 25% of intake from low socio-economic status (SES) background or under-represented schools by 2027. Mission statement: "Advancing vision and eye health in society through world-class, innovative, multi-disciplinary education and research" adopted. Record research funding \$5.9M. Charles McMonnies stepped down after 40 years as Chair of the SOVS Visiting Committee and Craig Stamp appointed as new Chair.



Professor Lisa Keay, Scientia Professor Vlado Perkovic, Scientia Professor Fiona Stapleton AO, Professor Stephen Dain

2021: SOVS achieved #2 rank for Optometry research impact in the world. Graduate Diploma Orientation and Mobility first intake commences. SOVS moved from Faculty of Science to Faculty of Medicine and Health.

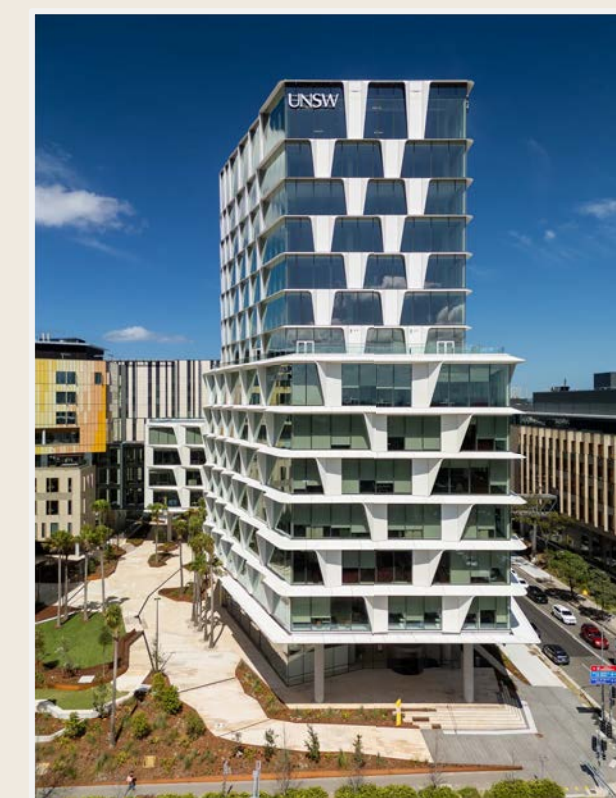
2022: Grants-in-aid launched to support students in later years of study to support placements costs and equipment purchase. SOVS named top institution in the world for contact lens research.

2023: Undergraduate Work Integrated Learning introduced - placements in ophthalmic industry and NGOs. Evidence Based Myopia Management Short Course launched in partnership with the Asian Optometry Congress. Dry Eye Disease Diagnosis and Management Short Course launched. Professor Fiona Stapleton appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia for services to Optometry research and teaching.

2024: Advanced Paediatric Eyecare Short Course launched.

2025: Microbiology Testing Laboratory receives NATA accreditation for testing of ultra-violet disinfecting agents. Optometry part of the three-week residential Indigenous Pre-Program in Medicine and Health. Centre for Eye Health closed after 16 years of operation on UNSW Campus - service delivery, research and over 1,000 placements for optometry students.

2026: Health Translation Hub Eye Clinic opened. Course re-design launched for Bachelor of Vision Science/Master of Clinical Optometry, updates in 2027 and 2028. Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics, re-launched as four standalone Professional Credentials. 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the School of Optometry.



Health Translation Hub