



World Council of Optometry (WCO) Releases Key Takeaways from 2025 Educators' Forum, Supported by EssilorLuxottica

ST. LOUIS, November 18, 2025— The World Council of Optometry (WCO) has released the official [Key Takeaways](#) document from its 2025 Educators' Forum in partnership with the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO). The Forum, held June 27 during WCO's 5th World Congress of Optometry, was supported by EssilorLuxottica, a 2025 World Congress Sponsor.

"Education is at the heart of advancing our profession and ensuring that quality vision and eye care are accessible to all," shared Olga Prenat, Head of Medical and Professional Affairs at EssilorLuxottica. "The Educators' Forum highlights the power of global collaboration to strengthen curriculum, support educators, and prepare future eye care professionals, optometrists, to meet evolving standards and patient needs. We are honoured to support the World Council of Optometry in driving this important mission."

The Educators' Forum Key Takeaways document spotlights global perspectives in optometric education and provides strategic direction for educators, institutions, and policymakers working to strengthen optometry's role in global health.

Highlights include:

- **Advancing a Global Standard:** The new [WCO Competency Framework for Optometry](#) introduces five competency domains to establish a global benchmark for outcomes from optometry education, aligning with the World Health Organization (WHO) [Eye Care Competency Framework](#).
- **Addressing Barriers to Progress:** Strategies to overcome challenges such as professional opposition, limited training opportunities, and the lack of legislative recognition of optometry.
- **Leveraging Technology:** The use of artificial intelligence (A.I.) and telehealth can expand access to optometry education and care, especially in underserved regions, but must be ethically integrated and professionally supervised to mitigate risks.

- **Preparing Future Graduates:** Emphasis on curricula that balance innovation with essential clinical skills and human-centered competencies such as empathy, trust-building, and clinical judgment that technology cannot replace.
- **Strategic Outlook:** Strong global standards, collaboration, and future-focused, outcome-driven curricula will reinforce optometry's role in health systems and advance both WCO's and WHO's vision of accessible, equitable eye care for all.

EssilorLuxottica's sponsorship was highlighted at the event by Dr. Nicolas Gilberg, who introduced the company's Leonardo Online Learning Management System—a platform available in more than 150 markets that provides accredited, evidence-based professional training. In addition, the company is partnering with WCO on the [Global Standard of Care for Presbyopia and the Aging Eye](#) and supports scholarships through collaborations with ASCO and other organizations.

“The 2025 Educators' Forum demonstrated the power of collaboration in shaping optometry's future. Through the commitment and support of sponsors such as EssilorLuxottica, WCO can continue to advance education, elevate standards, and support optometrists in meeting global eye care needs,” shared WCO Past President Prof. Peter Hendicott. “This Key Takeaways document reflects this shared commitment to preparing future optometrists to meet global health challenges.”

The [Key Takeaways](#) document is now available to the global optometry community on the WCO Resources page, presenting a pathway for optometrists to strengthen curricula, overcome systemic barriers, and ensure that optometry remains central to equitable, accessible eye care delivery. [Download the document here.](#)



Attendees at the 2025 World Council of Optometry Educators' Forum Held in Partnership with the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), 27 June 2025



WCO Past President Prof. Peter Hendicott (Australia) Speaks at the 2025 WCO Educators' Forum Held in Partnership with ASCO

Key Takeaways from the World Council of Optometry Educators' Forum Held in Partnership with the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO)

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Spotlighting global perspectives in optometric education, the World Council of Optometry (WCO) Educators' Forum on 27 June 2025 explored how adopting competency outcomes to lead development of curricula enables university programs to adapt to meet international eye care needs.

Advancing a Global Standard

- The new **WCO Competency Framework for Optometry** introduces five competency domains: Refractive Error, Visual Function Assessment, Ocular Health & Disease, Public Health, and Professional Practice.
- It establishes a **global benchmark** for minimum outcomes of optometry education, aligning with the WHO Eye Care Competency Framework, supporting global development and harmonization in optometry while recognizing national differences in health systems and legislation.

Addressing Barriers to Progress

- **Professional:** Resistance from within the profession, opposition from other health professions, inconsistent definitions of optometry, and varied scopes of practice.
- **Institutional:** Limited clinical training opportunities, resource gaps, and siloed education models.
- **Legislative:** Lack of recognition of optometry as an autonomous healthcare profession in many countries, as well as weak or absent regulatory bodies in some regions.

Proposed solutions included expanding interprofessional education, building clinical training partnerships with ophthalmologists, strengthening the evidence base through local research, and continuing to advocate for optometry's recognition.

Leveraging Technology: Telehealth & Artificial Intelligence

- **Benefits:** AI (artificial intelligence) and telehealth (the use of telecommunications technology to provide remote healthcare and education) can help expand access to training and simulations, generate cases with real-time feedback, and increase eye care equity, particularly in underserved regions.
- **Risks:** These technologies carry risks of high costs, overreliance on AI, and the potential to undermine critical thinking if not carefully managed.

AI and telehealth should be ethically integrated, professionally supervised, and used to enhance, not replace, clinical training and care.

Preparing Future Graduates

- **Future-Focused Optometry Education:** Educators must prepare graduates for practice 10+ years ahead, ensuring they are equipped to work at the maximum scope of optometry practice.
- **"Robot-Proof" Skills:** Alongside technology adoption, programs should emphasize human-centered skills such as empathy, trust-building, and clinical judgment that technology cannot replace.
- **Balance Innovation with Core Competencies:** While integrating new skills in AI and telehealth, curricula must also preserve essential optometric skills like refraction.

Strategic Outlook

- Stronger global standards and evidence will enhance recognition of optometry's role in health systems.
- Collaboration across professions, institutions, and countries is essential.
- Educators must ensure curricula are future-focused, adaptive, and outcome-driven to keep optometry central to global eye health delivery.

Taken together, these measures bring us closer to realizing the World Council of Optometry and World Health Organization visions of accessible, equitable eye care for all.



The mission of the World Council of Optometry is to advance and promote optometry, global eye health, and vision care through collaboration, education, and advocacy.

Learn more at www.worldoptometry.org

Key Takeaways Document PNG



World Council of Optometry Past President, Peter Hendicott



Dawn Mancuso, Executive Vice President/CEO, Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO)



Olga Prenat, Head of Medical and Professional Affairs, EssilorLuxottica

About the World Council of Optometry

The World Council of Optometry (WCO) is an international membership-based non-profit organization for individual optometrists, industry professionals, and optometric organizations, that envisions a world with high-quality, accessible eye health and vision care for all people. Its mission is to advance and promote optometry, global eye health and vision care through collaboration, education, and advocacy. To learn more, please visit www.worldoptometry.org or follow WCO on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

Media Contact

Allison Bartnick, Marketing and Communications Associate

World Council of Optometry

abartnick@worldoptometry.org