NECO

Center for Eye Care
New England
College of Optometry

NECO Center for Eye Care & Affiliated Sites

Residency in Low Vision Rehabilitation

PROGRAM COORDINATOR: Alexis G. Malkin, OD, FAAO (malkina@neco.edu)
SITE LOCATIONS: NECO Center for Eye Care-Commonwealth
Other affiliated sites in the Boston area
NUMBER OF POSITIONS: One
ESTABLISHED: 2019

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RESIDENCY IN LOW VISION REHABILITATION:

The residency's mission is to provide advanced optometric training and experience in the delivery of low vision rehabilitation care in varied health care settings. There is an emphasis on improved service delivery for patients with vision impairment with specialty clinics serving both geriatric and pediatric populations. Our vision rehabilitation service seeks to provide the most comprehensive rehabilitation available to our patients throughout Massachusetts and New England. Our service encompasses optometric rehabilitation including low vision rehabilitation, rehabilitation of patients with traumatic brain injury, care for patients with multiple disabilities and vision therapy.

GOALS:

- To provide intensive clinical training to strengthen the resident's expertise in the delivery of low vision services and vision therapy/vision rehabilitation. This will improve clinical decision making and will include the management of patients with a range of vision loss (mild/moderate loss through total blindness) and functional deficits (traumatic brain injury, binocular vision anomalies).
- To develop the resident's ability to be an active member of the health care team through effective decision-making, increased patient management responsibilities, and coordination of care within a multidisciplinary health care system.
- To instill an appreciation of the importance of scholastic contribution and commitment to life-long learning by encouraging participation in scholarly activities and research.
- To cultivate the resident's ability to communicate and teach as an optometric educator and reinforce their own learning through clinical preceptorship of optometry students and as a didactic instructor in low vision labs
- To expose the resident to scholarly and didactic activities that prepare them for professional careers with leadership roles in the areas of advanced vision rehabilitation including in education and research.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

Clinical objectives

- The program curriculum will provide the resident with direct clinical care for the first 3-6 months for the residency where they will have the opportunity to develop advanced low vision management skills including implementation of advanced testing techniques and fitting of specialty devices. Autonomy will increase during the second half of the program. The resident will learn to perform a comprehensive low vision history and patient assessment. This will include developing the analytical skills to tailor the history and exam for more complex and infrequently encountered conditions. The resident will have the opportunity to examine pediatric patients, geriatric patients, individuals with multiple disabilities and vocationally oriented patients during their clinical time.
- The resident will develop advanced rehabilitation management skills including fitting of bioptic telescopes, performing Goldmann visual fields and incorporation of prisms for managing hemianopia. As a resident in one of the highest volume low vision practices in New England, the resident will be exposed to a variety of complex conditions and will learn to manage these patients independently.
- The resident will supplement their optometric training with community observations. These will include: home visits with occupational therapy, attending orientation and mobility lessons, attending Carroll Center rehab classes and others.
- The resident will manage patients with low vision, traumatic brain injury, developmental disorders and binocular vision anomalies using techniques including lenses, prisms and vision therapy.
- The resident will accrue at least 700 patient encounters during the residency year.
- Through interaction and collaboration with staff optometrists, ophthalmology colleagues and other allied health providers, the resident will strengthen his/her understanding of optimal patient care and its relationship to good inter-provider communication skills within the community.
- The resident will have on call responsibilities at the NECO Center for Eye Care. Call will be taken for one week every five weeks (approximately).

Scholarship and research objectives

- The resident is required (in collaboration with the residency faculty) to prepare and submit an abstract to Resident's Day at the Annual Meeting of the AAO, to prepare and present one or more case reports, to give a formal presentation on a case or topic at the Annual NECO Spring Residency Conference, and to complete a manuscript of publishable quality due at the end of the residency year.
- The resident will attend local and/or national continuing education programs and professional meetings to stimulate scholarly activity.
- The resident will engage in a research project during the residency year. The resident will have the opportunity to join one of the ongoing projects in the low vision lab, or to independently develop a project that they would like to investigate. The resident will be required to join a project/develop a project by the end of the first 3 months to ensure adequate time for IRB approval, subject recruitment and data analysis if developing an independent project. The resident will be encouraged to submit their research to a scientific conference.

- The resident will be encouraged to attend the LV Business Meeting at AAO, the Low Vision Research Group Meeting at ARVO, and/or other similar networking events focused on advanced practice. These opportunities will allow the resident to engage with practitioners who are in leadership roles in the field of low vision both in research and in clinic. This will provide a foundation for the resident to contribute to the profession and to develop their career in low vision.

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- The resident will assist in the supervision of optometry students (more or less time dedicated depending on their interest level) during the residency year and will be a lab instructor (along with a NECO faculty member) for the low vision course in the fall semester. This will allow the resident to actively hone their teaching of technical information to supplement their clinical teaching. The resident will attend quarterly low vision journal clubs. They will be responsible for facilitating at least 2 of these meetings.

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES:

The residents are expected to be engaged in residency related activities for 40 to 50 hours per week. These activities include the following:

- Direct optometric patient care to include comprehensive low vision evaluations, binocular vision assessments and implementation of vision therapy plans. Direct care will occur at several of the following clinical facilities:
    - NECO Center for Eye Care-Commonwealth
        - Provides comprehensive low vision care as well as vision therapy/vision rehabilitation
    - Boston University Eye Associates/Boston Medical Center
        - Hospital-based low vision care with close co-management with ophthalmology
    - Perkins School for the Blind
        - Examining children with vision impairment as well as multiple disabilities
    - The Cotting School
        - Examining children with multiple disabilities
    - The Carroll Center for the Blind
        - Comprehensive low vision care in the setting of an immersive rehabilitation center
- Community observations with orientation and mobility instructors, teachers of the visually impaired, and other vision rehabilitation professionals
- Teaching activities to include laboratory instruction in the Low Vision Course and supervised clinical instruction in the clinic
- Scholarly activities to include an educational program that incorporates journal clubs, grand rounds; an independent research project, an original case report of publishable quality; and paper / poster presentations at the annual NECO Residency Conference and a national optometry conference.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Monday: Low Vision Patient Care 8-5
Tuesday: Individuals with Disabilities Patient Care 9-5
Wednesday: Low Vision Patient care 8-5 (75% of time); community observations 25% of time
Thursday: VT/TBI or Individuals with Disabilities Patient Care 9-4
Friday: Patient Care 8-5 (Primary Care) alternating with research time

The resident will have on-call responsibilities for one week out of every 4-5 weeks at the NECO Center for Eye Care. The resident will take call jointly with an attending clinician.

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY:

The residency will be one calendar year in length, beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

The resident will receive an annual stipend of $51,000. In addition, the resident will receive health care benefits, two weeks of paid vacation, five sick days, 5 days of conference time, no cost continuing education at the College, a $1000 travel stipend to an optometric meeting, and malpractice insurance coverage during residency activities at College affiliated sites.

CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF THE RESIDENCY:

- The resident is required to keep a detailed log of all program activities, which will be reviewed by the Program Coordinator and the Director of Residencies. The log will include patient demographics, services provided, and level of involvement in the care of the patient. The resident will also log non-clinical activities including community observations, continuing education, didactic experiences and others. The completed log must be submitted to the Program Coordinator every three months and at the end of the residency year.
- The resident is required to deliver patient care services at a satisfactory level at all clinical sites as determined by the clinical supervisors / preceptors.
- The resident is required to write a paper suitable for publication in a refereed optometric journal. The paper should be based upon a suitable clinical case or the resident's original research project. The initial draft of the paper is due April 1 to the Program Coordinator. The final paper will be due in June of the residency year.
- The resident will be expected to perform in a professional manner in the delivery of patient care services and to observe those properties of conduct and courtesies that are consistent with the rules and regulations governing each clinical facility at which the resident is assigned.
- The resident will be evaluated periodically by clinical faculty and informed of recommendations or suggestions made to enhance performance. Upon evidence of satisfactory performance in meeting all requirements of the program, the resident will be awarded a Certificate of Completion by the College.

- The resident will complete all NECO program and preceptor evaluations as required and in a timely manner.
- The resident must obtain a license to practice optometry in Massachusetts, as early as possible in the residency program, and no later than the last day of the residency year to be awarded a completion certificate.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Application instructions can be obtained from the Optometric Residency Match (ORMatch) at https://natmatch.com/ormatch/ or from Dr. Alexis Malkin, Residency Program Coordinator at malkina@neco.edu.

- Applicant must have earned a Doctor of Optometry degree from a school or college with an ACOE accreditation status optometry prior to the onset of the program year. Optometry school transcripts must be sent directly to the program coordinator.
- NBEO Scores
- A letter of intent describing the applicant's reasons for applying to the program and the applicant's goals for the residency year
- Three letters of recommendation
- Current curriculum vitae

Application deadline is January 29, 2027.

The residency application committee reviews all complete applications. Personal interviews are granted to those applicants who are determined to be strong candidates. Consideration will be given for virtual interviews.

NECO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

ACCREDITATION STATUS:

The Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) has granted NECO Center for Eye Care and Affiliates Residency in Low Vision Rehabilitation the accreditation status of “Accredited.” Accredited is a classification granted to an educational program indicating that the program generally meets the Standards for accreditation. For more information, see the ACOE’s website at www.theACOE.org or contact the ACOE at accredit@theacoe.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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