

# ISLRR VIEW

May 2021

*News from the International Society for Low Vision Research and Rehabilitation*

## Editor's letter

Michael Crossland, London, UK  
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I hope you have all heard about the second postponement of the next ISLRR conference. Vision 2020 became Vision 2020+1, which will now be Vision 2020+2 (this is better acuity, after all!) and will take place on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2022. Presenters should have received an email with details of what to do about abstracts which have already been submitted.

The good news is that the keynote speakers have all agreed to present in 2022, and we hope to see all of you then. Make sure you bookmark the new website – [vision2022dublin.com](http://vision2022dublin.com) – to keep in touch with all of the developments.

I'm sure by next year we will all be completely fed up with Zoom calls and Teams meetings, and meeting in real life will be fantastic!



## **New EU Project – 15 PhD studentships available!**

Bart Melis-Dankers, Amsterdam, Netherlands

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It is essential to know what visually impaired individuals can do with their residual vision in daily life activities, otherwise known as their 'functional vision'. Conventional ophthalmic tests (e.g. visual field tests) are able to detect the extent of a visual defect, but they yield little information about functional vision. This lack of appropriate tests impedes the optimal practice of diagnostics (in ophthalmic and neurological care, in particular of children and elderly), rehabilitation and classification (essential in sports competitions).

Our European MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE Innovative Training Network (ITN) OptiVisT aims to resolve this by:

- (1) gaining new Insights: i.e. a fundamental understanding of the visual demands of activities of daily living and sports;
- (2) developing solutions: i.e. creating new objective, inclusive and engaging tools for testing, training and augmenting functional vision;
- and (3) the Application of 1 and 2: evaluating the effectiveness of our new tools in diagnostics, rehabilitation and classification in practice.

Are you, like us, fascinated by vision, the brain and technology and consider it important to help visually impaired people? Do you have an inquisitive mind, and are you looking for a PhD position embedded in an international innovative training network in which you can develop your research, technical or clinical skills? Then consider applying with OptiVisT and join one of our 15 PhD projects. We offer PhD positions in academia, medical, technology and rehabilitation institutes, and high-tech companies.

See <http://www.optivist.eu/projects/> for more details.

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## **Bilingual Master's degree in Vision Impairment**

Walter Wittich, Montréal, Canada

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The Master's programme in Vision Impairment & Rehabilitation at the Université de Montréal has a number of distinguishing characteristics. First, it is one of three options within the Masters of Vision Science offered by the

School of Optometry – one of only two such schools in Canada. Second, it is the only programme in Canada that prepares professionals to work with the visually impaired population throughout the life span. Third, it is the only fully bilingual (English/French) programme in the world.

These three characteristics ensure that the program offers depth and breadth in the teaching of Low Vision Therapy (LVT/sight enhancement), Vision Rehabilitation Therapy for blind persons (VRT/sight substitution), and Orientation & Mobility (O&M) for both Anglophones and Francophones. The existence of the programme within the School of Optometry enables the inclusion of optometrists, trained as Low Vision specialists, as professors and mentors.

The Masters in Vision Impairment & Rehabilitation, with its 3 concentrations, was established and received its first students in the fall of 2016. However, Low Vision was the only new component. The other two evolved from a French graduate diploma programme that began in 2000 for O&M and 2004 for VRT students.

As of April 2021, 56 students have completed the programme (32 – LVT, 5 – O&M, 19 – VRT) and 24 students about to be admitted to the September 2021 cohort. 77.4% of our graduates are employed in the field, while 2 are pursuing PhD studies, 1 is working as a rehabilitation research associate, 1 switched to a Masters in another domain, 1 is currently in medical school, 1 is working in autism rehabilitation, and 1 awaits employment in a rehabilitation centre (closed due to COVID-19).

The Masters program in Vision Impairment & Rehabilitation has solid roots as well as fresh, new branches which will enable it to prepare professionals to offer quality services in Visual Impairment across Canada and around the world.

For detailed information & admission procedures, please contact our Graduate programme assistant (Phone: +1(514) 343-6325; email: [tgde@opto.umontreal.ca](mailto:tgde@opto.umontreal.ca)).

For more information see Facebook ([www.facebook.com/visionrehabilitation](http://www.facebook.com/visionrehabilitation)) or the YouTube Programme Orientation (in English): [tinyurl.com/ISLRRmontrealE](https://tinyurl.com/ISLRRmontrealE) (in French): [tinyurl.com/ISLRRmontrealF](https://tinyurl.com/ISLRRmontrealF)

## **Measuring visual acuity in tele-consultations**

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In the last issue of ISLRRView I wrote about some of the difficulties with testing visual acuity remotely. We had developed a home-printable visual acuity test at [www.homeacuitytest.org](http://www.homeacuitytest.org) which can be downloaded freely.

I am pleased to say that this chart has now been validated in a paper published in JAMA Ophthalmology – see [tinyurl.com/homeacuitytestJAMA](http://tinyurl.com/homeacuitytestJAMA)

Another great resource is Steven Dakin's online test for people using screens to measure their own acuity. This test is free of charge and can be found at [myacuity.org](http://myacuity.org)

ISLRR member Dave Lewerenz from the University of Colorado has also developed a screen-based test. He is happy to provide details on request – his email address is [david.lewerenz@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:david.lewerenz@cuanschutz.edu)

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## **News Needed!**

ISLRRview is your newsletter – please send any news you have: new courses, job adverts, details of your recent papers, questions, comments, or general news items about visual impairment. If it's related to low vision, you'll see it in print!

Please email me at [mcrossland@nhs.net](mailto:mcrossland@nhs.net)