

## Scopes of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians 2024

Pursuant to sections 11 and 12 of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act of 2003 (“HPCA Act”), the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (“Board”) prescribes one dispensing optician scope of practice, two optometrist scopes of practice, and one specialist optometrist scope of practice in laser surgery. Each scope of practice has associated prescribed qualifications, as described below.

### Notice

#### 1. Title and Commencement

(1) This notice is the *Notice of Scopes of Practice and Prescribed Qualifications for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians*, as set out by the Board.

(2) This notice comes into force on **10 October 2024**.

#### 2. Revocation

This notice replaces all previous notices of scopes of practice and qualifications prescribed by the Board.

### Scopes of Practice for Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians:

#### 1. Dispensing Optician Scope of Practice

A registered dispensing optician in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- a. is qualified to give advice and instruction in the dispensing of spectacle lenses, spectacle frames (including their fitting), contact lenses, and any other optical device intended for correction of a defect of sight.
- b. may perform the following delegated tasks in support of Aotearoa New Zealand registered optometrists or ophthalmologists who provide direct patient care:
  - operate diagnostic equipment, including but not limited to, automated visual field analyser, auto-refractor, non-contact tonometer, digital imaging devices, colour vision tests, standardised visual perceptual tests
  - administer pre-test questionnaires and obtain health information
  - instruct treatment plans
  - administer medicines under a Standing Order.

Delegated tasks performed by a dispensing optician must be under the supervision of an optometrist or an ophthalmologist (not necessarily direct supervision). The responsibility for ensuring the dispensing optician has the knowledge and training to perform the delegated task lies with the delegating health practitioner (optometrist or ophthalmologist), as does any interpretation, diagnosis, treatment outcome, and subsequent management of the patient.

### Prescribed Qualifications for Registration in the Dispensing Optician Scope of Practice

- i. Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, awarded by the Australasian College of Optical Dispensing\*
- ii. Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, awarded by the New South Wales Technical and Further Education Commission/TAFE Digital (TAFE/NSW) (between 17 January 2005 to 31 December 2024)\*<sup>^</sup>
- iii. Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing, leading to a Fellowship of Dispensing Opticians (FBDO) (United Kingdom pathway) awarded by the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) (between 13 January 2005 to 31 December 2024)<sup>^</sup>
- iv. Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing, leading to FBDO (Overseas pathway, for students outside the UK), awarded by ABDO (before 31 December 2024)\*<sup>^</sup>
- v. Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing awarded by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology along with completion of the “*Perform Edge and Fit*” module (between 31 May 2009 to 15 September 2022)\*
- vi. An alternative optical dispensing qualification approved by the Board.

\* In addition to obtaining the specified qualification, graduates must submit evidence demonstrating a minimum of 800 hours of post-qualification practical experience, as specified in the Board’s record of training book, completed within 2 years of qualification or within an alternative timeframe approved by the Board.

<sup>^</sup> Pursuant to sections 12(5) and 14(1A) of the Act, the Board gives notice to ABDO and to TAFE/NSW, as applicable, that the accreditation of the qualification has been revoked so that with effect from 31 December 2024, it will not be considered as a prescribed qualification for registration in the Dispensing Optician scope of practice. Those who attained the qualification prior to that date will not be affected.

## **2. Provisional Optometrist Scope of Practice**

A practitioner registered in the Provisional Optometrist scope of practice provides:

- evidence-based comprehensive eye health and vision care in a professional and ethical manner (excluding the prescribing of therapeutic medicines), in accordance with the HPCA Act; and
- works under supervision; and
- is in the process of completing Board-accredited training to prescribe therapeutic medicines.

Evidence of enrolment in a Board-accredited therapeutics course will be required at the time of registration in the Provisional Optometrist scope of practice. Requirements related to supervision, therapeutics qualification, and the time limitation on registration in the Provisional Optometrist scope of practice will be noted on practitioners' registration.

Registration in the Provisional Optometrist scope of practice is time limited, and will end:

- after three years, or
- after another period as specified by the Board from time-to-time, or
- on the successful completion of a Board-accredited therapeutics qualification leading to registration in the Optometrist scope of practice.

Practitioners may apply for registration in the Optometrist scope of practice once requirements related to the Provisional Optometrist scope have been fulfilled.

### **Prescribed Qualifications for Registration in the Provisional Optometrist Scope of Practice**

Applicants for registration in the Provisional Optometrist scope of practice must provide evidence of a pass grade in the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) Competency in Optometry Examination (COE).

## **3. Optometrist Scope of Practice**

A health practitioner registered in the Optometrist scope of practice provides evidence-based comprehensive eye health and vision care in a professional and ethical manner, in accordance with the HPCA Act.

The practice of optometry includes:

- a. prescribing any ophthalmic appliance, optical appliance, or ophthalmic medical device intended for remedial or cosmetic purposes or for the correction of a defect of sight
- b. assessing, diagnosing, treating, and managing conditions affecting the eye and its appendages
- c. prescribing medicines whose sale and supply are restricted by law to prescription by authorised prescribers
- d. reporting or giving advice in an ophthalmic capacity, using the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competence initially attained from the primary optometry qualification and built upon in postgraduate and continuing clinical education, wherever there could be an issue of patient health or wellbeing
- e. signing any certificate required for statutory purposes, such as driver licensing eyesight certificates; and
- f. holding out to the public or representing in any manner that one is authorised to practise optometry in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The practice of optometry goes wider than clinical optometry, and includes teaching, research, optometric or eye health management, in hospitals, clinics, general optometric practices and community and institutional contexts, whether paid or voluntary.

Clinical practice is defined as any work undertaken by an optometrist that relates to the care of an individual patient. Non-clinical practice is defined as any work undertaken by an optometrist that does not relate to the care of an individual patient.

### **Prescribed Qualifications for Registration in the Optometrist Scope of Practice**

Applicants for registration in the Optometrist scope of practice must satisfy all criteria in one of the following:

- i. hold a primary optometry degree from an educational institution, accredited by the Board for the purposes of registration in the Optometrist scope of practice in Aotearoa New Zealand\*\* or
- ii. hold a primary optometry degree from an overseas university and pass grades in both
  1. the OCANZ COE and
  2. a specified, Board-approved therapeutics qualification\*\* or
- iii. hold unconditional registration as an optometrist in Australia.

\*\* as published on the Board's website

#### **4. Specialist Optometrist Scope of Practice - Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries**

An optometrist registered in the Specialist Optometrist scope of practice - Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries is authorised to perform specified ophthalmic surgical procedures below the mucous membrane or surface of the skin. Specifically, they are authorised to perform:

- neodymium:yttrium-aluminum-garnet (Nd:YAG) laser capsulotomy and/or
- neodymium:yttrium-aluminum-garnet (Nd:YAG) laser peripheral iridotomy in an approved hospital setting.

The practice of optometry within the Specialist Optometrist scope of practice - Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries includes both:

- a. the practice of optometry, as described in the Optometrist scope of practice
- b. the surgical procedures described above.

#### **Prescribed Qualifications for Registration in the Specialist Optometrist Scope of Practice - Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries**

This prescribed qualifications for registration in the Specialist Optometrist scope of practice - Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries is an internship-based training programme. It requires applicants to:

- i. hold unconditional registration in the Optometrist scope of practice
- ii. have worked in a hospital ophthalmology department for a minimum of three years with at least 400 hours as a clinician in the relevant cataract and/or glaucoma clinic (as applicable); and
- iii. have demonstrated understanding and comprehensive knowledge of the specified areas of competence for the safe delivery of ophthalmic laser surgeries as published on the Board's website to the satisfaction of their supervising ophthalmologist
- iv. have satisfactorily observed the minimum required number of surgeries being performed by their supervising ophthalmologist as published on the Board's website, attested to by their supervising ophthalmologist
- v. have satisfactorily and independently performed the required number of surgeries under the supervision of their supervising ophthalmologist as published on the Board's website, attested to by their supervising ophthalmologist.

Dated at Wellington this 11th day of September 2024.

SUZANNE HALPIN, Registrar, Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board.