



# **POLICY FOR THE REGISTRATION IN THE SPECIALIST OPTOMETRIST SCOPE OF PRACTICE – OPHTHALMIC LASER SURGERIES IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

## **1. Policy purpose and background**

- 1.1. The policy applies to optometrists with the appropriate and relevant qualification/s seeking registration with the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB) in the Specialist optometrist scope of practice – Ophthalmic laser surgeries (the Specialist optometrist).
- 1.2. Please refer to the *Ophthalmic laser surgeries – Guidelines for New Zealand Optometrists*<sup>1</sup> .
- 1.3. An optometrist registered in the Specialist optometrist scope of practice – Ophthalmic laser surgeries (the Specialist optometrist) is authorised to perform specified ophthalmic surgical procedures below the mucous membrane or surface of the skin. Specifically, they are authorised to perform:
  - 1.3.1. neodymium:yttrium-aluminum-garnet (Nd:YAG) laser capsulotomy; and/ or
  - 1.3.2. neodymium:yttrium-aluminum-garnet (Nd:YAG) laser peripheral iridotomy.
- 1.4. Only Specialist optometrists are permitted to undertake the authorised procedures and must be in a collaborative relationship with a registered and practising ophthalmologist.
- 1.5. The prescribed qualification for registration is listed and described in the *Ophthalmic laser surgeries – Guidelines for New Zealand Optometrists*<sup>2</sup> .

## **2. The scope of this policy**

- 2.1. This policy applies to applicants (registered and practising optometrists) who:
  - 2.1.1. have successfully completed the relevant Specialist optometrist training, and
  - 2.1.2. are seeking registration in the Specialist optometrist scope of practice – Ophthalmic laser surgeries.
- 2.2. To be considered for training in this scope, an optometrist must:
  - 2.2.1. hold registration in the Optometrist scope of practice and not be subject to any conditions; and
  - 2.2.2. have worked in a hospital ophthalmology department for a minimum of three years with at least 400 hours in a relevant clinic.
- 2.3. This policy applies regardless of the date of the completion of their training.
- 2.4. Please refer to the *Ophthalmic laser surgeries – Guidelines for New Zealand Optometrists*.

## **3. Acronyms and abbreviations**

- 3.1. The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in this policy:

Aotearoa New Zealand	NZ
Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003	HPCA Act
Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board	ODOB

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.odob.health.nz/site/registration/specialist-optometrist>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.odob.health.nz/site/registration/specialist-optometrist>

## 4. Definitions and interpretation

4.1. The following definitions and interpretations are used in this policy:

Optometrist	A health practitioner with recognised qualifications registered with the ODOB, under the Optometrist, Provisional Optometrist or Specialist Optometrist scope of practice. An optometrist provides evidence-based comprehensive eye health and vision care in a professional, culturally safe, and ethical manner, in accordance with the <i>Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003</i> (HPCA Act) and ODOB standards. Optometrists conduct eye examinations, diagnose eye disease or other conditions, and prescribe optical appliances or medications for defects in sight or diseases of the eyes. An optometrist must be registered with the ODOB and hold a current practising certificate to practise in NZ. Optometrists are required to maintain their competence through a recertification programme to be allowed to keep practising.
Prescribed qualification	As defined in the HPCA Act which states a “prescribed qualification means a qualification for the time being prescribed under section 12 for a scope of practice.” In summary, section 12 outlines an authority must prescribe qualifications for each of its scopes of practice. These prescribed qualifications may designate one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• a degree or diploma from an educational institute ODOB has accredited,</li><li>• successful completion of a degree, course or programme accredited by ODOB,</li><li>• a pass in a specified exam or assessment set and approved by ODOB,</li><li>• registration with an overseas organisation that performs functions that correspond with those performed by ODOB, or</li><li>• experience in the provision of a health service of a particular kind.</li></ul>
Scope of practice	As defined in the HPCA Act which states a “scope of practice: a) means any health service that forms part of a health profession and that is for the time being described under section 11, and b) in relation to a health practitioner of that profession, means one or more of such health services that the practitioner is, under an authorisation granted under section 21, permitted to perform, subject to any conditions for the time being imposed by the responsible authority.”

## 5. Registration process in Specialist optometrist scope of practice – Ophthalmic laser surgeries

5.1. Applicants applying for registration as a Specialist optometrist are required to:

- 5.1.1. Complete the relevant application and pay the required registration fee (non-refundable). Please refer to the ODOB’s *Registration policy*.
- 5.1.2. Provide evidence of having successfully completed relevant training and/ or clinical experience, and competencies as detailed in the *Ophthalmic laser surgeries – Guidelines for New Zealand Optometrists*<sup>3</sup>.

## 6. Conditions on scope of practice or denial of registration

- 6.1. The ODOB may decline registration in the Specialist optometrist scope of practice.
- 6.2. The ODOB may include any conditions on the Specialist optometrist scope of practice where it is required to ensure the competent practise of the practitioner.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.odob.health.nz/site/registration/specialist-optometrist>

- 6.3. Without limitation, this may occur when the ODOB considers an increased level of reporting or surveillance is needed in the circumstances.
- 6.4. For more information see the *Conditions on scope, or Denial of registration* section in the *Registrations policy*.

## 7. Recertification – Specialist optometrist scope of practice

- 7.1. A Specialist optometrist will be required to meet the ODOB’s annual recertification requirements for this scope. Failure to meet this annual recertification requirements may result in the ODOB changing the health services the Specialist optometrist is permitted to perform or suspending their registration in the Specialist optometrist scope of practice. These restrictions would remain in place until the Specialist optometrist has satisfied any outstanding and ongoing requirements of recertification.
- 7.2. These restrictions may also apply to Specialist optometrists who do not maintain ODOB’s annual recertification requirements because:
  - 7.2.1. They hold non-practising status in Aotearoa New Zealand for 12 months or more or;
  - 7.2.2. They have not practised as a Specialist optometrist in Aotearoa New Zealand for 12 months or more.
- 7.3. The ODOB’s *Policy for Optometrists returning to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand* may be applied.

## 8. Related legislation, policies, and procedures

- 8.1. The ODOB’s *Registration policy*
- 8.2. *Ophthalmic laser surgeries – Guidelines for New Zealand Optometrists*
- 8.3. The ODOB’s *Policy for Optometrists returning to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand*.
- 8.4. The ODOB’s *Recertification policy*
- 8.5. The ODOB’s *Policy for Optometrists returning to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand*
- 8.6. The ODOB’s *Supervisor guidelines*.

Revision history			
Version	Changes	Approval date	Next review
v1	Drafted as a result of the ODOB’s 2022/2023 transformation programme that included a full review of key policies.	January 2024	2027