



# Assessment Policy

## 1. Policy purpose and background

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide information regarding the assessment for registration of dispensing opticians in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ), if it is deemed necessary by the ODOB.
- 1.2. Section 15(2) of the *Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003* (HPCA Act) provides that the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB) may register an applicant within the optometry or dispensing optician scope of practice, if the applicant:
  - 1.2.1. is competent to practise within that scope of practice, and
  - 1.2.2. has the qualifications that are prescribed, under section 12, for that scope of practice, and
  - 1.2.3. is fit for registration.

## 2. The scope of this policy

- 2.1. This policy applies to international graduates from optical dispensing programmes and need to be assessed for registration with the ODOB.
- 2.2. This policy also applies to optometrists (registered or not registered with ODOB in the optometry scope) wanting to register within the dispensing optician scope of practice.
- 2.3. Refer to the relevant ODOB *Returning to practice* policy.
- 2.4. On some occasions the ODOB may use a third party to assess an applicant's qualification.

## 3. Acronyms and abbreviations

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

ADONZ	Association of Dispensing Opticians of New Zealand
NZ	Aotearoa New Zealand
Board	The governing Board of the Optometrist and Dispensing Opticians Board
COE	Competency in Optometry Examination
CODE	Competency in Optical Dispensing Examination
HPCA Act	Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003
OCANZ	Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand
ODOB	Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board

## 4. Definitions and interpretation

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

Dispensing optician (DO)	A health practitioner with a recognised qualification that is registered with the ODOB under the DO scope of practice. DOs interpret prescriptions for glasses and contact lenses, give advice to the patient in selecting spectacle lenses and frames (including their fitting). They can also teach how to use contact lenses and low
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	vision aids and dispense a prescribed optical appliance. It is illegal for a person to call themselves a DO unless they are registered with the ODOB.
Assessment and eligibility for registration of applicants with international optical dispensing qualifications	Evaluation of an applicant/candidate with international optical dispensing qualifications to assess whether they are eligibility for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice. The process includes an application for the assessment of qualification equivalence, a qualifications assessment, may include the requirement of successful pass a Competency in Optical Dispensing Examination (CODE). It may also include interviews, and implementing any other suitable evaluative measures as determined by the Board.
Assessment of competency in optical dispensing	One or more examination aimed at testing a Candidate's eligibility for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice. This includes the CODE, a theoretical and practical/clinical assessment aimed at evaluating the competency of a practitioner who may be eligible for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice.
Assessor (CODE)	An assessor is a senior practitioner and expert in their field of optical dispensing and optometry, responsible for assessing and measuring the learning of Candidates to determine whether they are eligible for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice with ODOB. The Assessor assesses whether the Candidate's competence is equivalent to an ODOB-recognised prescribed qualification that may lead to for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice with ODOB.
Candidate	A person seeking to undertake a CODE assessment with the purpose of determining whether they are eligible for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice with ODOB.
Health practitioner	As defined in the HPCA Act which states a "health practitioner or practitioner means a person who is, or is deemed to be, registered with an authority as a practitioner of a particular health profession". In this document, an optometrist and/ or dispensing optician registered with the ODOB.
International graduates	Graduates who hold an international (overseas) qualification and not a prescribed qualification of a particular scope of practice in NZ.
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 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.
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. Policy Principles

5.1 The assessment process must be based on the following assessment principles:

- 5.1.1. Fair: The Assessment processes, activities, conditions and marking provide equal opportunity for all Candidates to achieve.
- 5.1.2. Valid: The Assessment has a clear purpose and measures what it aims to measure. Assessment activities and assessor decisions reflect the knowledge, skills, and application of knowledge or skills required to meet the learning outcome at the appropriate professional or academic level (i.e., New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level).
- 5.1.3. Consistent: The Assessor judgements are reliable and accurate across all learners, regardless of who does the assessing or when the assessment occurs.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 The ODOB is responsible for the whole assessment process of an applicant/candidate with international optical dispensing qualifications to assess whether they are eligible for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice. The process consists with various components, although not all mandatory and will depend on the applicant's/candidate's evidence and as determined by the Board. This includes:
  - 6.1.1. the processing of the application for the assessment of qualification equivalence, the assessments of documents (portfolio), as well as a qualifications assessment. The ODOB may also appoint clinical/education assessors.
  - 6.1.2. the quality assurance and oversight of the Competency in Optical Dispensing Examination (CODE)
  - 6.1.3. conducting of interviews (if required), and
  - 6.1.4. any other suitable evaluative measures as determined by the Board.
- 6.2 The ODOB has a contracted third-party provider, ADONZ OptiBlocks Education Committee, that is responsible for conducting the CODE in accordance with ODOB's policies and standards. ADONZ contracts CODE assessors and moderators. There will be a minimum of two assessors per examination (one will be the moderator).

## 7. Format of assessment

- 7.1. Applicants/candidates are required to contact the ODOB office ([registrations@odob.health.nz](mailto:registrations@odob.health.nz)) to receive the *Application form for the Assessment of Qualification Equivalence*, and to learn more about the process before commencing with this process.
- 7.2. Each applicant's/candidate's assessment may vary but will include a formal qualifications assessment (portfolio) and if required, be asked to sit the Competency in Optical Dispensing Examination (CODE). The Gazetted fee for the administration of this assessment is \$906.00. Refer to the ODOB's fees page on its website ([www.odob.health.nz](http://www.odob.health.nz)).
- 7.3. The CODE is conducted by the Association of Dispensing Opticians of New Zealand (ADONZ) OptiBlocks Education Committee, on behalf of the ODOB. All costs associated with the CODE are determined by and paid to ADONZ. The applicant/candidate pays this directly to ADONZ.
- 7.4. The ADONZ OptiBlocks Education Committee makes its assessment, then present their findings to the ODOB's Executive Committee who makes the final determination (on behalf of the ODOB) on all the evidence presented.
- 7.5. This determination may be reviewed by the Board.

## 8. Assessors

- 8.1. An assessor is a senior practitioner and expert in their field of optical dispensing or optometry, responsible for assessing and measuring the learning of candidates to determine whether they are eligible for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice with ODOB. The assessor assesses whether the candidate's competence is equivalent to an ODOB-recognised prescribed qualification that may lead to for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice with ODOB.

## 9. Assessments

- 9.1. Candidates are rated “achieved”, or “not achieved” on each section of both the theory and practical/clinical component of the CODE.
- 9.2. Marking criteria are based on the ability of candidates to demonstrate sound clinical reasoning based on accepted optometry or dispensing optician theory, and to communicate this clearly. This may be mark-based assessments (e.g. 4/5, or 80%) or be competency-based (e.g. achieved/not achieved). The assessment methodology will be supported by relevant assessment material such as a memorandum (mark-based), or a marking or assessment matrix (competency based).
- 9.3. Refer to the ODOB’s *Clinical standards for optometrists*, and *Clinical standards for dispensing opticians*.

## 10. Final results and feedback

- 10.1. A summary of individual results for each section is included in the notification to candidates and will be sent within 15 working days of the examination. It may include the mark-based assessments or competency-based statements (achieved/not achieved), and the final examination result (pass, not yet competent or fail).
  - 10.1.1. Mark-based assessments require an 80% pass grade.
  - 10.1.2. Competency-based assessments require an “achieved” pass grade.
- 10.2. An overall examination result may be:
  - 8.1.1. A **pass grade**, meaning the candidate is competent and may be recommended as eligible for registration.
  - 8.1.2. “**Not yet competent**” (essentially a failed grade), meaning that the candidate does not yet meet the safe and competent standard of care, but the CODE assessor believes the candidate may meet the required level of competency with further upskilling in deficient areas of knowledge, skills or application. This is a recommendation, and not mandatory. If the candidate accepts the recommendation, they have 12 months to complete this and submit sufficient evidence to the ODOB for a final determination.
  - 8.1.3. A **failed grade**, meaning the candidate is not eligible for registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice.
- 10.3. Candidates may not request a copy of their written paper.

## 11. Inconclusive or disputed examination results

- 11.1. If both assessors are unable to agree on the final result of the examination, the ODOB will appoint a third assessor who will assess the evidence and provide a final examination result.
- 11.2. Candidates who disagree with the final result of an examination or process may request reconsideration of the result.
- 11.3. If a re-sit is required, the ODOB will endeavour to use two different examiners. Only one resit is allowed for candidates who have received a “not yet competent” result.

## 12. Failure to pass the examination

- 12.1. When applicants fail the examination, the ODOB will decline their application for registration and the process is closed.

- 12.2. The ODOB's Executive Committee will advise applicants that it intends to decline their application and inform them they have the right to make submissions under s20 of the HPCA Act. Prior to confirming the decision to decline their application, the ODOB's Executive Committee will consider any submissions received from candidate.
- 12.3. When applicants have failed the examination, but wish to pursue registration in the future, the ODOB will require them to lodge a new application for registration. They will also be required to pay the prescribed assessment application fees, and to resubmit updated application documentation, except for their qualification documents at that time.

### **13. Review of assessment result**

- 13.1. An examination candidate may, by written application to the Board, ask that that the Board review the CODE assessment result, based upon one or more of the following grounds of legitimate concern:

#### 13.1.1. Impairment

- a) A candidate may have been disadvantaged during the examination due to a temporary impairment, which occurred close to, or during the examination and which affected his or her performance. This may include situations such as illness or pressing domestic circumstances.
- b) Submissions claiming impairment must be lodged in writing within 3 working days of the examination.
- c) A submission must include details of the event that led to the impairment. Supporting documented evidence such as a medical certificate or letter from another person who can attest to the circumstances will be required. The event that caused the impairment must have occurred within the 4 weeks prior to the examination and must represent a serious and unexpected event.
- d) The Board will consider the appeal and determine whether the candidate was disadvantaged during the examination due to a temporary impairment, which occurred close to, or during the examination and which affected his or her performance.
- e) If the appeal is successful, the remedy will be determined at the discretion of the Board. Please note that an applicant's result will not be amended as the result of an impairment.

#### 13.1.2. Administration Procedures

- a) An examination candidate may consider that an incident, which occurred during the process of the examination, impacted on his or her performance in the examination.
- b) Review submissions must be lodged in writing within 3 working days of the examination.
- c) A submission must include details of the incident that led to the review of the outcome. The incident that caused the review must have occurred during the candidate's attendance at the examination centre.
- d) The candidate may request a review of the outcome on the ground of procedural fairness, but not on the grounds of the examiners' decision.
- e) The Board will consider the review and determine whether an incident, which occurred during the process of the examination, impacted on the candidate's performance in the examination.
- f) If the review is successful, the remedy will be determined at the discretion of the Board. The candidate's result cannot be amended as the result of a review.

- 13.2. All applications for review are considered by the Board on a case-by-case basis. Any submissions for consideration by the Board must be received within the prescribed timeframes. Submissions must be in

writing and addressed to the Registrar. A cost recovery fee may be charged, which is detailed on the Board website<sup>1</sup>.

- 13.3. Late appeals and requests for review will not be accepted.
- 13.4. Any decision made by the Board will be binding upon all parties.

## 14. Related legislation, policies, and procedures

- 14.1. Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) Examination page: <https://www.ocanz.org/examination/>
- 14.2. ADONZ OptiBlocks page: <https://adonz.co.nz/students/>
- 14.3. The ODOB's *Registration policy*
- 14.4. The ODOB's *Policy for the assessment and eligibility for registration of applicants with international optical dispensing qualifications*
- 14.5. The ODOB's *English language requirements and tests policy*
- 14.6. The ODOB's *Competence to practise policy*
- 14.7. The ODOB's *Fitness to practise policy*
- 14.8. The ODOB's *Policy for dispensing opticians returning to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand*
- 14.9. The ODOB's *Policy for optometrists returning to practice in Aotearoa New Zealand*
- 14.10. The ODOB's *Clinical standards for dispensing opticians*
- 14.11. The ODOB's *Standards for cultural competence and cultural safety*
- 14.12. The ODOB's *Standards for Ethical conduct.*

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

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.odob.health.nz/site/fees>