



**Optometrists
and Dispensing
Opticians Board**

Te Poari o ngā Kaimātai
Whatu me ngā
Kaiwahakarato Mōhiti



REGISTERING AS A DISPENSING OPTICIAN



The regulation of health practitioners in Aotearoa New Zealand is governed by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act). The Optometrist and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB) is one of many responsible authorities fulfilling the purpose of the HPCA Act.

ODOB's primary focus is to protect public health and safety. We do this by ensuring that optometrist and dispensing opticians are competent and fit to practise and this is achieved through various activities like registration, issuing practising certificates, setting standards and guidelines, accreditation, recertification, reviewing concerns, promoting education and training, etc.

WHY REGISTER WITH ODOB

The 'Dispensing optician' or 'Optical dispenser' titles are reserved for health practitioners registered in the Dispensing opticians scope of practice. These are protected titles and identifies you as a registered health practitioner.

There are many reasons to register with ODOB. Being registered:

- allows you to use the 'Dispensing optician' and 'Optical dispenser' titles
- can bring about career advancements over and above retail assistant positions
- provides assurance to the public around your qualifications and competencies
- encourages your ongoing learning and currency in clinical and technical advancements
- assures employers that all registered dispensing opticians have the same level of education and skills and can perform to the same expected clinical, technical, professional, cultural and ethical standards
- protects the public and therefore builds greater confidence in the relationships with your patients
- overall, promotes confidences in the profession, and
- allows access to the benefits of member associations like the Association of Dispensing Opticians NZ (ADONZ) which provides opportunities to network within the profession and access news around the profession, social events, educational workshops and conferences.

Scope of practice

In accordance with the HPCA Act, ODOB sets the scope of practice for dispensing opticians and prescribes the qualifications required for entry/ registration in the scope. You can find the definition of the Dispensing optician scope of practice and prescribed qualifications for the scope on our website (odob.health.nz).

Our website also provides:

- further clarification on the legal requirements around practising as a registered dispensing optician, and
- ODOB's standards for clinical competence, cultural competence and cultural safety, and ethical conduct required of dispensing opticians.

Registration

When you decide to register, you only need to go through the registration process with ODOB once.

During this process, we ask for information around:

- your qualifications
- evidence of your practical experience in optical dispensing (depending on your prescribed qualification)
- your English proficiency
- the verification of your criminal conviction history
- assurance of your mental and physical health (fitness to practise)
- your CV, and
- professional and character references.

If your registration is approved, you can then move on to obtaining and maintaining a current practising certificate.

To work as a dispensing optician in Aotearoa New Zealand, you must hold registration and have a current a practising certificate.

Once registered, you remain on the ODOB's register for life. Removal (cancellation) from the register can happen if you tell us you want to be removed; ODOB makes a decision to remove you due to competence, conduct or fitness to practise reasons (although rare); or if you do not respond to our notices around the revision of the register (s144 HPCA Act) within 6 months.



REGISTERING AS A DISPENSING OPTICIAN

Practising certificates and status

Annual Practising Certificate (APC)

You must have a valid practising certificate to practise as a dispensing optician. 'To practise' in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ) has a wide definition and includes clinical and non-clinical activities, like teaching, research, optical dispensing and eye health management.

All APCs are issued for the practising year of 1 April to 31 March the following year. Fees and the duration of an APC can differ depending on when and for what practising status you are applying for. Most applications will fall in the APC renewal cycle of February/March each year.

We send out reminders when the APC renewal applications are open or due. An APC application will require you to confirm what your practising intentions are for the upcoming year. It will also ask for updates on any actual or pending criminal convictions or disciplinary hearings, assurances about your mental and physical health and other self-declarations, your work history and contact details, and check your recertification requirements. We also use this opportunity to collect workforce information through a workforce survey.

Remember, an APC is your 'license' to work, so it is important that you apply for and renew your APC on time. **Practising without a valid APC is a serious offence.**

Practising status

Your practising status is published on the public register on our website. It shows whether you are practising as a dispensing optician or not.

You can apply to be:

- 'practising' – holding registration and have an APC, or
- 'non-practising' – holding registration but don't need/have an APC as you are not practising.

With a 'non-practising' status, you can choose if you want to keep logging CPD credits during that period or not. If you opt to do this, it will be voluntary and you will not be required to meet the ODOB's recertification requirements.

Recertification

To ensure that practitioners' skills are kept up-to-date and to monitor their competence throughout their careers, the ODOB implements a recertification programme.

For dispensing opticians, you will need to obtain a minimum of 20 CPD credits every 2 years, have a valid CPR/first aid certificate (checked annually at APC renewal), and will be randomly selected to undertake a self-audit (a reflection on your practise) every 4 - 8 years.

You can achieve CPD points in various ways including completing online courses, attending conferences, presenting at conferences or in teaching settings, do case presentations at peer review sessions, do clinical placements, etc.

For more information

Please contact our office:

Phone: [+64 4 381 9075](tel:+6443819075)

Email: enquiries@odob.health.nz

Address: Level 5, 22 Willeston Street,
Wellington 6011

Website: odob.health.nz



Please contact our office for advice
on **04 381 9075** or email
registrations@odob.health.nz

[odob.health.nz](https://www.odob.health.nz)

ODOB (MA-0001):Sept 2023