



Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board

Te Poari o ngā Kaimātai Whatu me ngā Kaiwhakarato Mōhiti

CONSULTATION – PROPOSAL TO AMEND A QUALIFICATION FOR REGISTRATION IN THE OPTOMETRIST SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Released: 21 August 2018

Submissions Due: 2 October 2018

Introduction

- 1 The Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (the Board) is charged under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) with ensuring that optometrists and dispensing opticians are competent and fit to practise when they apply for registration and on an ongoing basis. Section 118 of the Act requires the Board to prescribe the qualifications required for scopes of practice, and for that purpose, to accredit and monitor education institutions, degrees, courses of studies or programmes.
- 2 Section 13 of the Act sets out the principles the Board must be guided by when prescribing qualifications. These are:
 - the qualifications must be necessary to protect members of the public; and
 - the qualifications may not unnecessarily restrict the registration of persons as health practitioners; and
 - the qualifications may not impose undue costs on health practitioners or on the public.
- 3 Section 14 of the Act requires the Board to consult on its proposal to amend a prescribed qualification with:
 - people the Board considers able to represent the view of health practitioners or of classes of health practitioners registered with the Board;
 - organisations that the Board considers will be affected by the proposal; and
 - organisations whose members the Board considers will be affected by the proposal.

Background

- 4 In 2016, the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) received an annual report from the School of Optometry and Vision Science – University of New South Wales. The School indicated a proposed change from a dual bachelor programme to a bachelor/masters program to bring them into alignment with the structure of most Australian programs. A copy of the summary report from OCANZ is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 5 The OCANZ Accreditation Committee assessed the proposed changes and concluded that a *major change assessment* was required. A three person team was formed and they completed their report in October 2017. The assessment team was satisfied that graduates of the program “have the knowledge, skills and attributes to meet competency standards as entry level

practitioners in Australia and New Zealand and that they will be equipped with the necessary skills to maintain those competencies.”

- 6 OCANZ is satisfied that the Bachelor of Vision Science and Master of Clinical Optometry program substantially meets the OCANZ Accreditation Standards (see **Appendix 2**). On the basis of the assessment team’s report, the OCANZ Board agreed to accredit the program until December 2019. A full reaccreditation assessment can then occur, inclusive of a chance to meet the first cohort of graduates from the new program.
- 7 Having carefully considered OCANZ’s report of the major change assessment, the Board agrees that the Bachelor of Optometry/Bachelor of Science program provided by the University of New South Wales, currently accredited and prescribed as a qualification by the Board, should be **amended** to a Bachelor of Vision Science and Master of Clinical Optometry.

Proposal

- 8 The Board has, therefore, decided to consult on a proposal to **amend** the qualification provided by the University of New South Wales, accredited by the Board for registration within the optometrist scopes of practice, to the following:

“The applicant holds the qualification Bachelor of Optometry/Bachelor of Science awarded by the University of New South Wales before 2021, or the qualification Bachelor of Vision Science and Master of Clinical Optometry awarded by the University of New South Wales from 2018.”

How to have your say

- 9 If you wish to make submissions, please provide them in writing **by 5.00 pm on the 2nd of October 2018**. The Board does not guarantee that submissions received at the Board’s offices after that date will be considered.

Submissions can be sent to:

The Registrar
Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board
PO Box 9644
Wellington 6141

Email: Lindsey.Pine@odob.health.nz