



1. Dispensing Optician Scope of Practice

A dispensing optician registered in the Dispensing Optician Scope of Practice is involved in the practice of the interpreting and dispensing of optical prescriptions and has a recognised qualification. This includes the giving of 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.

Practising safely within the Dispensing Optician Scope of Practice

It is the Board's prerogative as the Government-appointed regulator of dispensing opticians to define the practice of the profession (by way of the scope of practice), and to set the relevant qualifications and competence measures to practise. Only the Board can amend the scope of practice (in consultation with the profession and relevant stakeholders).

The principal purpose of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) is to protect the health and safety of the public. The Board will take very seriously any indication that a practitioner may be performing any task that is not within the scope, and will take appropriate action in accordance with the Act to ensure the protection of the public. Such action by the Board could include, amongst other things, referral of the matter to a Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) for investigation, and consideration of interim suspension of a practitioner's practising certificate or the imposition of interim conditions on their scope of practice. A PCC has the authority to lay charges against a practitioner before the Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal, which can result in very serious ramifications for a practitioner's livelihood.

Should you be contemplating undertaking any tasks that a dispensing optician would not ordinarily perform, or if you are unsure about whether any such task may be within the current scope of practice, you **must** contact the Board in the first instance to determine whether the task is within the scope of practice. The practice of the profession in other jurisdictions, and the views of others, may not always reflect the current scope of practice in New Zealand. When in doubt, contact the Board.