



Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board

Te Poari o ngā Kaimātai Whatu me ngā Kaiwhakarato Mōhiti

CONSULTATION – PROPOSAL TO AMEND A PRESCRIBED QUALIFICATION FOR THE DISPENSING OPTICIAN SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Released: 12 August 2019

Submissions Due: 20 September 2019

Introduction

- 1 The Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (the Board) is charged under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) with prescribing the qualifications for every scope of practice that the Board publishes in the *New Zealand Gazette*.
- 2 Section 12 of the Act sets out that the Board may designate any one or more of the following as qualifications for its scopes of practice:
 - a degree or diploma of a stated kind from an educational institution accredited by the authority, whether in New Zealand or abroad, or an educational institution of a stated class, whether in New Zealand or abroad;
 - the successful completion of a degree, course of studies, or programme accredited by the authority;
 - a pass in a specified examination or any other assessment set by the authority or by another organisation approved by the authority;
 - registration with an overseas organisation that performs functions that correspond wholly or partly to those performed by the authority;
 - experience in the provision of health services of a particular kind, including, without limitation, the provision of such services at a nominated institution or class of institution, or under the supervision or oversight of a nominated health practitioner or class of health practitioner.
- 3 An authority may at any time, by notice in the *New Zealand Gazette*, amend, revoke, or replace a notice issued under section 12 of the Act, prescribing a qualification. Before doing so, however, an authority must consult on such a proposal with:
 - people the Board considers are 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 2011, the Board received an application for accreditation of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)'s Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing as a prescribed qualification for registration in the optical dispensing scope of practice. Following review of the accreditation application and consultation with practitioners and stakeholders, in early 2012, the qualification was prescribed as a qualification for registration in the optical dispensing scope of practice.
- 5 At the time this qualification was prescribed, its approval was subject to applicants satisfying the following requirements:
 - the qualification must have been conferred on or after 31 May 2009;
 - completion of the 'Perform Edge and Fit' module as part of the qualification (which at the time was an elective rather than a compulsory module for the qualification); and
 - submission of a completed and signed record of training book confirming evidence of a minimum of 800 hours' practical experience as specified in the record of training book, within 2 years of qualification or a period otherwise approved by the Board.

These requirements were consistent with both the competencies required for safe practice as a Dispensing Optician in New Zealand at that time and with training delivered by other providers graduating students with the prescribed Certificate IV qualification.

Proposal

- 6 Since this qualification was prescribed in 2012, the practise of optical dispensing in New Zealand has evolved. There is a widespread use of patternless edgers and most lens fitting and edging is now performed at remote laboratories by "optical mechanics". The necessity for Dispensing Opticians to be specifically qualified in edging and fitting to be deemed competent to practise safely is no longer considered critical.
- 7 The Board therefore proposes to **amend** the prescribed qualification as follows (changes highlighted):

'The applicant holds the qualification Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing (conferred on or after 31 May 2009), awarded by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, or proof of eligibility to graduate from this course, ~~has completed the 'Perform Edge and Fit' module as part of the qualification,~~ and has submitted a completed and signed record of training log book showing evidence of completion of a minimum of 800 hours of practical experience as specified in the record of training book, within 2 years of qualification or a period otherwise approved by the Board.'

Summary

- 8 The Board has provided details above of the proposed amendment to the current prescribed qualification from RMIT, including the reasons for this proposed amendment. Stakeholders are now invited to provide submissions on this proposed amendment.

How to have your say

- 9 If you wish to make a submission, please provide this in writing **by 5.00 pm on 20 September 2019**. 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: registrar@odob.health.nz