

STATEMENT ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR OPTOMETRISTS AND DISPENSING OPTICIANS

Background

The principal purpose of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act) is to protect public health and safety by ensuring that health practitioners are competent and fit to practise. Section 118 of the Act requires the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (the Board) to:

- review and promote the competence of optometrists and dispensing opticians (practitioners)
- recognise, accredit and set programmes to ensure the ongoing competence of practitioners
- promote education and training in the profession.

One of the key elements contributing to the maintenance of an individual practitioner's competence is participation in continuing professional development (CPD) activities.

CPD is a career long process which has become increasingly important for practitioners as knowledge and new areas of expertise develop. The Board requires practitioners' participation in CPD activities to assure the public and the Board that practitioners are up to date and have appropriately developed their knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis. To ensure ongoing participation in CPD activities the Board has set a recertification programme, under section 41 of the Act, for continuing professional development of optometrists and dispensing opticians.

Continuing Professional Development processes

The Board has established a range of processes to manage CPD requirements for practitioners, as follows:

1. The *Recertification Programme for Continuing Professional Development of Optometrists* and the *Recertification Programme for Continuing Professional Development of Dispensing Opticians* outline the Board's continuing competence requirements for practising practitioners, which involves participation in CPD activities.
2. The *Policy on Accreditation of Continuing Professional Development Activities for Optometrists* and the *Policy on Accreditation of Continuing Professional Development Activities for Dispensing Opticians* outline the process that course providers should follow to apply for accreditation of their course. A course must be accredited by the Board before CPD credits can be awarded to participants.
3. The *Policy on Optometrists Rejoining the Workforce* and the *Policy on Dispensing Opticians Rejoining the Workforce* assists the Board in ensuring that practitioners who have been out of practice are competent to practise upon return to the workforce.

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