

Standards of Clinical Competence for Dispensing Opticians

In accordance with the Board's core functions under section 118(i) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act), the Board has set the following standards of clinical competence to be observed by Dispensing Opticians. These clinical standards are closely aligned with, and should be read in conjunction with, the Dispensing Optician Scope of Practice. These standards represent the entry-level competency requirements for Dispensing Opticians in New Zealand.

UNITS:		ELEMENTS:		PERFORMANCE CRITERIA (this is not an exhaustive list):	
1.	Interprets Optical Prescriptions	1.1	Analyses optical prescriptions	1.1.1	Consider previously dispensed prescriptions and identify any practical dispensing problems arising that might require the prescriber to review his or her specified parameters.
				1.1.2	Interpret prescriptions using an understanding of ocular errors, eye conditions and their correction.
		1.2	Measures inter pupillary distance	1.2.1	Inter pupillary distance should always be measured using a pupilometer or pupillary rule, or any contemporary technical device that is designed for performing this measurement to required standards.
				1.3	Takes relevant measurements to suit the design of an optical appliance (excluding contact lenses)
		1.3.2	Monocular centres must be measured when required by lens design.		
		1.3.3	Correct procedure should be applied with regard to measuring the height of monocular centres when dispensing all lens forms. Manufacturer recommendation must be taken into consideration for all lenses ordered.		

		1.4	Adjusts lens power to account for altered vertex distance (VD), base prism, vertical imbalance or spectacle lens design	1.4.1	Accurately calculate and adjust lens power to account for altered vertex distance (VD), base prism, vertical imbalance, and spectacle lens design.
				1.4.2	Accurately document any changes to the script due to any changes in vertex distance (VD), base prism, vertical imbalance and spectacle lens design
		1.5	Provides advice on optical appliances including lens types, frame selection, contact lens care and maintenance regimes	1.5.1	Assist client with frame selection by displaying thorough knowledge of frame features. Consider benefits and limitations of the various materials, shapes, cosmetic applications and costs. Take into account any specific requirements the client may have.
				1.5.2	Advise client regarding the selection of lenses available using an awareness of the latest lens designs and technology. Explain benefits and limitations of lens materials, treatments and tints. Account should be taken of the use of the finished appliance and safety factors. Full explanations of what can be expected from the final product should be given. Give advice on sun protection and related accessories.
				1.5.3	Order the optical appliance giving full and accurate information to ensure final product is exactly as specified for client.
				1.5.4	Discuss advantages and disadvantages of contact lenses and the related lens maintenance and eye care issues.
2.	Dispenses Optical Prescriptions	2.1	Verifies optical appliance matches the prescription as ordered using a focimeter, lensometer or by any other recognised means.	2.1.1	The finished lenses should be verified against the prescriber's prescription using a focimeter or similar instrument.
				2.1.2	Optical centers, segment heights, powers, addition, base curves, prism, centre thickness, max/min edge thickness should be checked against the prescriber's prescription order requirements and relevant standards as necessary.

			2.1.3	The lens thickness, tints, treatments and coatings should comply with Australian and New Zealand standards as well as being free from defects.
			2.1.4	Accuracy and quality of glazing should be checked including rimless and nylon fittings.
			2.1.5	Check to ensure safety eyewear meets safety standards and has the appropriate certification.
	2.2	Duplicates optical appliances using a valid prescription	2.2.1	Duplicate spectacles should be ordered according to details on file.
			2.2.2	Duplicate by verification of lens details using focimeter, or any contemporary technical device that is designed for performing this measurement to the required standards, such as calipers, lens measure, transmittance meter, as required.
	2.3	Verifies visual acuity	2.3.1	Visual acuity should be checked upon collection as per prescriber's findings.
			2.3.2	Advice should be given regarding adaptation issues taking into account any previously worn spectacles.
	2.4	Fits, adjusts and adapts optical appliances to the face (excluding contact lens)	2.4.1	Frames should be checked for defects and set up according to any previous instructions e.g. pantoscopic angle, temple length.
			2.4.2	Consideration should be made of any special requirements such as ptosis props, hearing aid adaptations or prosthetics. Use appropriate tools to complete adjustments.
			2.4.3	A follow up service of frame adjustments frame repairs and advice should be offered.
			2.4.4	Advice should be given on any relevant accessories that may be useful to client.
			2.4.5	Client should be coached in the proper use and maintenance of the appliance (cleaning cloths and solutions, storage, temperature).

		2.5	Dispenses contact lenses using a valid prescription (insertion and removal techniques).	2.5.1	Contact lens parameters including material, diameter and power should be checked against a valid prescription.
				2.5.2	Instructions should be given to client on insertion and removal techniques and proper handling and care of contact lenses.
				2.5.3	Client should have understanding of after-care requirements, wearing time and solutions.
				2.5.4	Limitations and adaptation issues should be discussed.
		2.6	Certifies a written script from Optometrist records	2.6.1	Duplicates a written script from the optometry records for spectacles
				2.6.2	Duplicates a written script from the optometry records for contact lenses.
				2.6.3	Signs the script and states the name of the Optometrist who prescribed the script.
				2.6.4	Writes name and Board registration number next to signature. It should be clear that the Dispensing Optician is not the prescriber and that the prescription is being signed on behalf of the prescriber.
3.	Maintains Records	3.1	Ensures that all dispensing data is documented in a legible, secure, accessible, permanent and unambiguous and timely manner.	3.1.1	All relevant data including dispensing details, pupillary distances, lens form type, treatments and any frame details must be accurately recorded.
				3.1.2	Any specific advice or recommendation given to a client should be recorded.
		3.2	Maintains confidentiality of patient records in accordance with the Privacy Act.	3.2.1	Records are kept in a readily retrievable and secure format in accordance with the Privacy Act 2020.
				3.2.2	All recorded information must be dated and complete.
				3.2.3	Handwritten errors or changes should be deleted with a single score-through (not obscured) and initialled.
4.	Communication	4.1	Communicates with the patient in an effective manner.	4.1.1	Takes into account the physical, emotional, intellectual and cultural background of the patient.
				4.1.2	Provides advice on optical eye safety and protection.

				4.1.3	Appropriately recommends and makes available subsidies to patients with entitlements.
				4.1.4	Identifies situations requiring emergency ophthalmic care and directs the client to an appropriate health care provider as required. ¹
				4.1.5	Understands and utilises different strategies to elicit information relevant to the visit from the patient and/or guardian. ¹
5.	Practice Management / Professional Responsibilities	5.1	Understands the principles of planning, establishment, development and maintenance of an optometric practice.	5.1.1	Understands practice staff roles and training needs.
				5.1.2	Maintains equipment in a safe, accurate state.
				5.1.3	Maintains personal and general safety, hygiene and comfort, including appropriate infection control measures.
				5.1.4	Schedules patient appointments according to the time required.
				5.1.5	Recognises financial obligations and reporting requirements.
		5.2	Understands the legal obligations involved as a registered health practitioner.	5.2.1	Understands and complies with the relevant legislation and standards.
6.	Delegated Tasks²	6.1	May perform delegated tasks in support of NZ registered Optometrists or Ophthalmologist. ³	6.1.1	Operate diagnostic equipment, including but not limited to automated visual field analyser, auto-refractor, non-contact tonometer, digital imaging devices, colour vision tests, standardised visual perceptual tests.
				6.1.2	Administration of pre-test questionnaires and obtaining of health information.
				6.1.3	Instruction of treatment plans.
				6.1.4	Administration of medicines under a standing order.

¹ 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 – A Dispensing Optician will need to have some underpinning knowledge of a variety of eye conditions in order to best direct the patient.

² These are tasks that are delegated to a Dispensing Optician by an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist, and which are done under the supervision of the Optometrist or Ophthalmologist (not necessarily direct supervision).

³ The responsibility for ensuring the Dispensing Optician has the knowledge and training to perform the delegated task lies with the delegating health practitioner (Optometrists or Ophthalmologist), as does any interpretation, diagnosis, treatment outcomes and subsequent management of the patient.

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