

POLICY ON ASSESSMENT OF EXAM ELIGIBILITY – FOR DISPENSING OPTICIANS

Includes:

- **Policy and process information**
- **Application form**
- **Self-assessment form**

Background

The Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board is responsible under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act (Act) for registering dispensing opticians and for ensuring their ongoing competence and fitness to practise.

The Act provides that an applicant may be registered as a practitioner permitted to practise within a scope of practice if the applicant:

- is fit for registration by the Board in accordance with section 16; and
- has the qualifications that are prescribed, under section 12, for that scope of practice; and
- is competent to practise within that scope of practice.

Section 15(2) of the Act provides that the Board may also treat any overseas qualification as a prescribed qualification if, in the Board's opinion, that qualification is equivalent to, or as satisfactory as a prescribed qualification.

A qualification may be determined by the Board as any 1 or more of the following:

- 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.

The Board has accredited OptiBlocks, a New Zealand-based testing body associated with the Association of Dispensing Opticians of New Zealand (ADONZ), to examine overseas candidates who the Board considers may have the requisite knowledge and skill required to sit and pass the theory and practical examinations facilitated by OptiBlocks for the safe practise of optical dispensing in New Zealand. In order to assess candidate eligibility to sit the OptiBlocks examinations, the Board has implemented this policy which details what the requirements are to assess eligibility and how each application will be managed.

Process: assessment of eligibility to sit the theory and practical examinations

Information required

In order to assess whether an applicant has the requisite knowledge and skill to sit the OptiBlocks theory and practical examinations, the Board will need detailed information on the applicant's qualification, including:

- the course book or bulletin published by the qualifying institution relevant to the period when the course was completed;
- the official syllabus of each subject of the course including the hours of instruction, content and prescribed text books applicable when the course was undertaken;
- evidence of any other relevant formal education undertaken
- evidence of registration with any overseas body that regulates optical dispensing
- a detailed curriculum vitae including information on all positions held, the duration of those positions, and tasks undertaken in each position, which may be verified by the Board (any gaps in employment must be explained)
- any references from employers attesting to the applicant's skills and abilities
- any other information the applicant provides in support of their application.

Receipt of application

Upon receipt of an application, Board staff will determine whether the application is complete. In the event that the application is incomplete, staff will either:

- return the application to applicant (where the applicant has not completed the forms correctly), or
- contact the applicant for additional information (where required supporting documentation has not been provided).

Once all required information has been received, staff will process payment for the fee, and will refer the matter to the Board's Registration Committee. The fee will not be banked, and the Board will not consider an application, unless it is complete.

The Board will assess the information to determine if the applicant appears to have the requisite knowledge and skill to sit the OptiBlocks theory and practical examinations. In doing so, the Board will take into account factors such as:

- the processes by which the conferring training institution is accredited
- length of course of study
- subjects covered
- topics covered in the various subjects
- length and type of practical training
- a transcript of the applicant's results
- the quality of the applicant's experience in practice since qualifying
- any other relevant information.

From receipt of a complete application to notification of a decision, the process will take up to one month.

Qualification is found to be equivalent/satisfactory

If the Board determines that an applicant appears to have the requisite knowledge and skill to sit the OptiBlocks theory and practical examinations, the Board will advise the applicant of its decision. The applicant is then able to contact OptiBlocks directly about sitting the examinations.

If the applicant passes the examinations, notification will be sent to the Board by OptiBlocks and the applicant is then able to apply for registration with the Board.

Qualification is not found to be equivalent/satisfactory

If the Board determines that an applicant does not appear to have the requisite knowledge and skill to sit the theory and practical examinations, the Board will advise the applicant of the reasons for its decision, and of any relevant training options available to the applicant.

The Board may give the applicant guidance on the steps that the applicant would need to take in order to be considered eligible for registration with the Board.

Self assessment

Attached as Appendix 1 is a self-assessment form to assist prospective applicants in deciding whether to apply for assessment of their qualification. Applicants should answer all questions honestly and fully. The self-assessment is not intended to form part of the application process, and if submitted with the application, will have no bearing on the Board's assessment of the qualification.

The self-assessment form outlines the key competence requirements and standards that all dispensing opticians practising in New Zealand need to meet.

*Policy approved by the Board 29 January 2010
Revised 6 August 2015*

APPLICATION FOR ASSESSMENT OF EXAM ELIGIBILITY: FOR DISPENSING OPTICIANS*

***THIS FORM IS FOR PRACTITIONERS WHO WISH TO REGISTER AS A DISPENSING OPTICIAN IN NEW ZEALAND BUT WHO DO NOT HOLD A QUALIFICATION THAT HAS BEEN PRESCRIBED BY THE BOARD UNDER SECTION 12 OF THE HEALTH PRACTITIONERS COMPETENCE ASSURANCE ACT.**

The qualifications currently prescribed by the Board for registration within the dispensing optician scope of practice are:

- Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, awarded by the New South Wales Technical and Further Education Commission, or proof of eligibility to graduate from this course, and has submitted a completed and signed record of training book showing evidence of the completion of a minimum of 800 hours of optical dispensing practice over a period of no more than two years.
- Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, awarded by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, or proof of eligibility to graduate from this course, including completion of the required Edging and Fitting module, and has submitted a completed and signed record of training book showing evidence of the completion of a minimum of 800 hours of optical dispensing practice over a period of no more than two years.
- Fellowship of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians (FBDO) (UK).
- An optical dispensing examination approved by the Board.

Section 1: Personal and contact details

Title (*circle*): Dr/Mr/Miss/Mrs/Ms First/other names:.....

Family name/surname:

Previous names (*if any*) you have used:..... Date changed:.....
(please attach evidence of previous name(s))

Date of birth: day/month/year...../...../..... Country of birth:

Postal address:

Work phone:

.....

Cell phone:

.....

Other phone:.....

.....

Fax:

Postcode:

Primary email contact:

Section 2: Qualification(s)

Please provide details of the qualification(s) you hold.

Primary qualification:..... Conferring institution:.....

Country..... Date of qualification:.....

Other qualifications:..... Conferring institution:.....
(eg a pass in an examination, postgraduate study etc)

Country..... Date of qualification:.....

Section 3: Required documentation

Please note: Any documentation in a language other than English must be translated into English by an official translation service recognised by the government in the country from which the applicant is applying. The Board requires copies of the document in the original language and its translation.

This form must be accompanied by:

- the relevant certificate of qualification (original or certified copy)
- the course book or bulletin published by the qualifying institution relevant to the period when the course was completed (original or certified copy)
- the official syllabus of each subject in the course including the hours of instruction, content and prescribed textbooks relevant for when the course was undertaken (original or certified copy)
- a transcript of the applicant's academic results (original or certified copy)
- a detailed curriculum vitae of the applicant's relevant professional experience
- evidence of registration in the relevant scope of practice in any other jurisdiction (original or certified copy)
- any other information the applicant chooses to submit in support of their application, which may include references from employers, and evidence of other relevant formal education undertaken (original or certified copy)
- the relevant fee of NZD \$960.00 (non-refundable).

Section 4: Statutory declaration

Please note: This statutory declaration must be no more than six months old at the time the complete application is received by the Board.

PLEASE CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION CAREFULLY, BEFORE YOU SIGN.

1. All of the information provided with this application is true and correct in every particular and detail.
2. I will provide the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board with any such further information as it may require.
3. I understand that section 172 of the Act provides for a fine not exceeding \$10,000 and penalties for a person who knowingly makes a false declaration or representation to the Board.


I indicate this by signing below.


SIGNED BY: Name
(full name of applicant)	(signature of applicant)
DECLARED AT:	this day of.....20.....
IN THE PRESENCE OF ME:
(full name of witness)	(signature of witness)
Address (of witness):	

.....
 Occupation (of witness): Authority to take statutory declaration:.....
DECLARED AT: this day of 20.....

Section 5: Payment

The fee for assessment of a qualification under section 15(2) of the Act is \$960.00.

I enclose my cheque for **NZ\$**..... made payable to the name of
“Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board”
 Fee banked stamp: 

Please debit my *(please tick one)*
 MasterCard
 Visa
 the sum of NZ\$.....


Card number **Expiry date**

Cardholder's name.....Cardholder's signature.....

Section 6: Notes

All documents provided in support of this application must be originals or certified copies of originals.

Please note that original documents will not be returned.

A certified copy is a photocopy signed by a Judge, Commissioner of Oaths, Justice of the Peace, solicitor of New Zealand, notary public, commonwealth representative, or officer authorised to take statutory declarations in that country stating: **‘this is certified as a true copy’**.

Please post your application to: The Deputy Registrar Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board PO Box 9644 Wellington New Zealand	or courier to: Level 5 22 Willeston Street Wellington 6011 New Zealand.
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If you have any questions, please contact the Deputy Registrar on:

Phone: (64 4) 474 0704
 Fax: (64 4) 474 0709
 Email: Annette.McCoy@odob.health.nz
 Website: www.odob.health.nz

Appendix 1: Dispensing optician self-assessment - ability to meet standards of competence to practise as a dispensing optician in New Zealand

This document is not part of the application and if provided with the application will have no bearing on the Board’s assessment of eligibility to sit the OptiBlocks examinations. It is intended to provide applicants with an understanding of the competencies required to practise as a dispensing optician in New Zealand, and to assist applicants in determining whether they wish to apply to have their eligibility assessed.

It should be read in conjunction with the Board’s:

- Standards of Clinical Competence for Dispensing Opticians
- Standards of Cultural Competence
- Standards of Ethical Conduct for Dispensing Opticians.

All of these documents can be found at: www.dispensingopticiansboard/practitioners

Standards of Clinical Competence

	I received formal training and was examined in this area of practice	I do this work in practice	Examples of how I apply this skill and knowledge in practice.
Interprets optical prescriptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysis • appropriate measurements taken and adjustments made • provides advice on optical appliances 			
Dispenses optical prescriptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prescription/visual acuity is verified • fits and adapts optical appliance • dispenses and advises on contact lenses 			
Maintains records <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data is legible, secure, accessible, permanent and unambiguous • patient confidentiality is maintained 			

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Standards of Cultural Competence

	I have trained in or studied this	Examples of how I apply this knowledge in practice
Ability to apply principles of the Treaty of Waitangi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I understand the Treaty and its relevance to the health of Maori in NZ • I can demonstrate knowledge in differing health status of Maori and non-Maori 		
Demonstrates safe cultural practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • willing to communicate cross-culturally • practise acknowledging beliefs and attitudes may vary across cultures • does not assume all patients share the same world view • encourages safe cultural practice in the workplace • assists patients in obtaining cultural support or representation as appropriate 		
Reflects on own practice and values that impact on patients' cultural safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognises own beliefs, values and prejudices that may arise in relation to patients' ethnicity, age, culture, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation or disability • acknowledges when ability to provide care is inhibited by own personal attributes and seeks alternative means of attaining patients' cultural safety • validates own processes are safe, especially when advising trainees/colleagues 		

Standards of Ethical Conduct

	Examples of how I apply this knowledge in practice
Legislation and Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a working knowledge of the laws relevant to optical dispensing, and of Board statements and policies, and complies with all requirements. 	

<p>Responsibility to the consumer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consumer's interest is paramount • consumer's trust should never be abused • consumers have the right to be treated without discrimination • consumers have the right to be provided with sufficient information in a manner that they understand in order to make informed decisions • consumers are advised and referred appropriately when their needs are beyond the scope of the dispensing optician 	
<p>Standards of care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only practises in those areas in which is trained and competent • maintains high standard of skill and knowledge through continuing education • ensures comprehensive, accurate, up to date clinical records are kept and that appropriate privacy provisions are maintained • provision is made for continuity of an appropriate standard of care during absence from practice • ensures all non qualified staff are aware of their legal and ethical obligations 	
<p>Advertising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advertising is not misleading or deceptive, and is capable of verification. 	