



# Accreditation Standards for Optical Dispensing Programmes

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Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board

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## Preamble

The *Accreditation Standards for Optical Dispensing Programmes* (the Accreditation Standards) will be finalised and approved by the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB, the Board) (following consultation) pursuant to the *Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003* (the Act).

The Board's primary purpose is to protect the health and safety of the public by ensuring that dispensing opticians are competent and fit to practise. This responsibility is mandated to the Board under the Act.

The Accreditation Standards help to ensure that only suitably trained and qualified dispensing opticians can register to practise in New Zealand. The Accreditation Standards apply to all optical dispensing programmes that are prescribed programmes that enable graduates to apply for registration as dispensing opticians in New Zealand.

The Accreditation Standards comprise of six domains:

- Public safety
- Academic governance and quality assurance
- Programme of study
- The student experience
- Assessment
- Cultural safety.

Each Domain includes a standard statement that articulates the key purpose of the Domain. Each standard statement is supported by multiple criteria, which set out what is expected of a Board-accredited programme to meet each standard statement. The criteria are not sub-standards that will be individually assessed. When assessing a programme, the Board will have regard for whether each criterion is met but will take an on-balance view of whether the evidence presented by a programme provider / awarding body clearly demonstrates that a particular standard is met.

Articulated in the Accreditation Standards below is emphasis on providers / awarding bodies being able to demonstrate that learning outcomes address the required professional competencies for safe practice. Inherent to outcome-based education is focusing the programme on what it is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experience. In this case, provide all of the elements required for the delivery of safe optical dispensing care to health consumers.

New programmes and established programmes are assessed against the same accreditation standards, although the assessment may be varied according to the circumstances of the programme provider/ awarding body.

For queries related to these Standards contact the Board at [enquiries@odob.health.nz](mailto:enquiries@odob.health.nz).

Please note: These Accreditation Standards should be read in conjunction with the *Guidelines for Accreditation of Education and Training Programmes for Dispensing Opticians*.

Domain	Standard statement	Criteria
1. Public safety	1. Public safety is assured.	<p>1.1 Protection of the public and the care of health consumers is prominent amongst the guiding principles for the programme, clinical education and learning outcomes.</p> <p>1.2 Student impairment screening and management processes are effective.</p> <p>1.3 Students achieve the relevant competencies<sup>1</sup> before providing care to health consumers as part of the programme.</p> <p>1.4 Students are supervised by suitably qualified<sup>2</sup> and registered<sup>3</sup> dispensing opticians/optical dispensers and/or health practitioners during clinical education.</p> <p>1.5 Optometry practices providing dispensing qualification training have robust health and safety, consumer safety and quality and care policies and processes and meet all relevant regulations and standards.</p> <p>1.6 Health consumers consent to care by students.</p> <p>1.7 Students understand the legal, ethical, cultural and professional responsibilities of a registered dispensing optician.</p> <p>1.8 The programme provider / awarding body holds students and staff to high levels of ethical and professional conduct.</p> <p>1.9 Students are proficient in the delivery of basic first aid/life support and certification are current on completion of the programme.</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Relevant competencies – this refers to the Board’s clinical, ethical and cultural standards required for the delivery of the minimum, safe standard of care.

<sup>2</sup> Suitably qualified – Someone who has the abilities, formal qualification/s, relevant experience (optical dispensing and educational), skills and competencies to perform the role.

<sup>3</sup> Registered status –It is the Board’s preference that supervisors will be registered in their jurisdiction. However, the Board acknowledges that there are overseas jurisdictions where the profession is not regulated by law. Where this is the case, the Board’s expectation is that supervisors meet the criteria to be registered in New Zealand, were they to apply. A full definition can be provided by the Board’s secretariat on application.

Domain	Standard statement	Criteria
2. Academic governance and quality assurance	2. Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective.	2.1 Academic governance arrangements are in place for the programme and include systematic monitoring, review and improvement. 2.2 Students, consumers, internal and external academic, and professional peers contribute to the programme's design, management and quality improvement. 2.3 Mechanisms exist for responding within the curriculum to contemporary developments in clinical practice and health professional education.

Domain	Standard statement	Criteria
3. Programme of study	3. Programme design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required professional competencies.	<p>3.1 A coherent educational philosophy informs the programme's design and delivery.</p> <p>3.2 Programme learning outcomes address all the required professional competencies (clinical, cultural, ethical).</p> <p>3.3 The quality, quantity and variety of clinical education is sufficient to produce a graduate competent to practice across a range of settings.</p> <p>3.4 Learning and teaching methods are intentionally designed and used to enable students to achieve the required learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.5 Optometry practices providing dispensing qualification training are provided with clear direction regarding the required learning outcomes for each student to be able to perform all the 'on-the-job' tasks required for safe practice, including only registered health practitioners are authorised to sign off that the student is achieving the required learning outcomes. The consistency and quality of this external learning is monitored by the provider / awarding body.</p> <p>3.6 Graduates are competent in research literacy for the level and type of the programme.</p> <p>3.7 Students work with and learn from and about relevant optical and other health professions to foster interdisciplinary collaborative practice and cooperation in the delivery of health services.</p> <p>3.8 Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver their educational responsibilities.</p> <p>3.9 Learning environments and clinical facilities and equipment are accessible, well-maintained, fit for purpose and support the achievement of learning outcomes.</p> <p>3.10 Cultural competence is articulated clearly, integrated in the programme and assessed, with graduates equipped to provide care to diverse groups and populations.</p>

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Standard statement</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
		<p>3.11 The optical dispensing programme has the resources to sustain the quality of education that is required to facilitate the achievement of the professional competencies (clinical, cultural, ethical).</p> <p>3.12 Access to clinical facilities is assured, via formal agreements as required, to sustain the quality of clinical training necessary to achieve the relevant professional competencies (clinical, cultural, ethical).</p>

Domain	Standard statement	Criteria
4. The student experience	4. Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support.	<p>4.1 Course information is clear and accessible.</p> <p>4.2 Admission and progression requirements and processes are fair and transparent.</p> <p>4.3 Students have access to effective grievance and appeals processes.</p> <p>4.4 The programme provider / awarding body identifies and provides support to meet the academic learning needs of students.</p> <p>4.5 Students are informed of and have access to personal support services provided by qualified personnel.</p> <p>4.6 Students are represented within the deliberative and decision-making processes for the programme.</p> <p>4.7 Equity and diversity principles are observed and promoted in the student experience.</p>



Domain	Standard statement	Criteria
5. Assessment	5. Assessment is fair, valid and reliable to ensure graduates are competent to practise.	<p>5.1 There is a clear relationship between learning outcomes and assessment strategies.</p> <p>5.2 All required professional competencies are mapped to learning outcomes and are assessed.</p> <p>5.3 Multiple assessment methods are used, including direct observation by a registered health practitioner in a clinical setting with a patient or health consumers. Other assessment methods that may be used include simulated learning environments.</p> <p>5.4 Mechanisms facilitate a consistent approach to appropriate assessment and timely feedback to students.</p> <p>5.5 Suitably qualified and experienced staff, including external experts for final year, assess students.</p>

Domain	Standard statement	Criteria
<p><b>6. Cultural safety</b> (Applicable to New Zealand programmes seeking accreditation in New Zealand)*</p>	<p><b>6.</b> The programme ensures students are able to provide culturally safe engagement and appropriate care for Māori and Pacific peoples.</p>	<p>6.1 The programme demonstrates its commitment to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation document of New Zealand.</p> <p>6.2 The programme upholds both the Articles and Principles of the Treaty through its educational philosophy and delivery.</p> <p>6.3 The programme, staff and students understand the Māori perspective of health and wellbeing, their beliefs and cultural practices as it pertains to optical health in particular.</p> <p>6.4 Cultural understanding of Māori and Pacific peoples are integrated throughout the programme, clearly articulated in required learning outcomes (including competencies that will enable effective and respectful interaction with Māori).</p> <p>6.5 Clinical experiences provide students with experience of providing culturally safe care for Māori and Pacific peoples, and clinical application of cultural competence is appropriately assessed.</p> <p>6.6 There is a partnership in the design and management of the programme from Māori and Pacific peoples.</p> <p>6.7 The programme provider / awarding body promotes and supports the recruitment, admission, participation, retention and completion of the programme by Māori and Pacific peoples.</p> <p>6.8 The programme provider / awarding body ensures students are provided with access to appropriate resources, and to staff and the community with specialist knowledge, expertise and cultural capabilities, to facilitate learning about Māori health.</p>

Domain	Standard statement	Criteria
		6.9 Staff and students work and learn in a culturally appropriate environment.

**\* Note for overseas provider / awarding bodies:**

**Domain 6: Cultural Safety** – While it would be ideal for any provider / awarding body applying for accreditation to be able to fulfill this domain, the Board acknowledges that this is not practical or feasible for most overseas provider / awarding bodies. Therefore, while the Board will enquire generally with overseas provider / awarding bodies regarding the cultural safety content of its programme and associated learning outcomes, overseas provider / awarding bodies will not be required to achieve the above standard in order to have their programme accredited. Instead, graduates with the overseas qualification applying for registration in New Zealand will be required to undertake prescribed cultural safety education modules/courses in addition to their primary qualification in order to be eligible for registration.

Revision history			
Version 1	Drafted	Approved by the Board	November 2021

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The Board wishes to thank its fellow health regulators and accrediting authorities in New Zealand and Australia in developing these standards and the guidelines that accompany them. In particular, the Board is grateful to the Australian Dental Council and the Dental Council of New Zealand for permission to use their standards (2021) as the basis of this document.