



Optometry Council of
Australia and New Zealand

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Supplementary Information

The purpose of this document is to inform candidates about some of the key organisations and requirements related to practicing optometry in Australia and New Zealand. Candidates are not examined on the content of this document, but will need to be familiar with the information it contains in order to work as an optometrist in Australia and/or New Zealand.

AUSTRALIA

Optometry Board of Australia (OBA)

The OBA (the Board) registers optometrists and students; develops standards, codes and guidelines for the optometry profession; handles notifications, complaints, investigations and disciplinary hearings about optometrists; registers overseas trained practitioners who wish to practise in Australia; and approves accreditation standards and accredited courses of study.

The Board works under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), which came into effect on 1 July 2010. The Board's functions are supported by AHPRA (see entry below).

In order to practice as an optometrist in Australia you must be registered with the Board and maintain current registration (renewed annually). It is illegal to practice without registration, and doing so can result in prosecution and/or disciplinary action.

The Board produces Guidelines which describe the professional standards expected of registered optometrists. These Guidelines indicate appropriate professional conduct or practice and may be used in proceedings involving optometrists under the National Law. The Board has developed *Guidelines for use of scheduled medicines* under the National Law, which outline the Board's expectations in relation to the use of scheduled medicines by endorsed and non-endorsed optometrists.

Under the Board's *Code of conduct for optometrists*, optometrists have a responsibility to recognise and work within the limits of their competence and scope of practice. This includes ensuring they have the equipment, expertise and skills necessary to practice safely and effectively.

All of the OBA's policies, codes and guidelines can be found at <http://www.optometryboard.gov.au/Policies-Codes-Guidelines.aspx>

Website: www.optometryboard.gov.au

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

AHPRA supports the National Boards that are responsible for the regulated health professions, one of which is optometry. Under the National Law in Australia, many health professions are regulated by nationally consistent legislation under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS).

The primary role of all of the National Boards is to protect the public. The Boards set standards and policies that all registered health practitioners must meet. Each Board has entered into a health profession agreement with AHPRA which sets out the fees payable by health practitioners, the annual budget of the Board and the services provided by AHPRA.

Website: www.ahpra.gov.au

Medicare

Medicare is Australia's universal health insurance scheme. Introduced in 1984, its objectives are to make health care affordable for all Australians, to give all Australians access to health care services with priority according to clinical need, and to provide a high quality of care. Medicare provides access to free treatment as a public patient in a public hospital, free or subsidised treatment by practitioners such as doctors, including specialists, participating optometrists or dentists (specified services only).

All Australian residents and certain categories of visitors to Australia can claim Medicare benefits for services with participating optometrists. The Health Insurance Act 1973 contains legislation covering the major elements of the Medicare program.

Optometrists can choose to participate in Medicare, which provides benefits for eligible patients for clinically relevant eye health and vision examinations performed by participating optometrists. Optometrists need to have a location specific provider number for each and every location in which they practice. This is a Medicare identifier for you as a health practitioner. Not all eye examinations are eligible for Medicare benefits.

Further information:

- <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals>
- Medicare Benefits Schedule Book – Optometrical Services Schedule. This book provides information on the arrangements for the payment of Medicare benefits for optometric services by optometrists who undertake to participate in the benefit arrangements and by optometrists acting on their behalf. These arrangements operate under the *Health Insurance Act 1973* (as amended). Part 1 of this book contains an outline of the arrangements for optometric benefits and notes for the guidance of participating optometrists. Further information on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) can be located at www.mbsonline.gov.au. The Schedule in Part 2 shows the item number, description of service, Schedule fee and Medicare benefit payable in respect of the optometric items. Part 3 contains a copy of the Common Form of Undertaking for Participating.

Optometry Australia (OA)

Optometry Australia is a membership body representing about 90 per cent of Australian optometrists. Optometry Australia is a not-for-profit organisation. It comprises six state bodies NSW & ACT, VIC, QLD & NT, SA, WA, TAS, a national organisation, and a national board which acts as the organisation's governing body. The goal of Optometry Australia and its affiliated state-based membership bodies is to actively strengthen, protect and promote the profession of optometry and eye-health, on behalf of all optometrists.

For further information contact the National Office on national@optometry.org.au.

Website: www.optometry.org.au

Assessing Fitness to Drive

Austroroads is the association of Australasian road transport and traffic agencies. Austroroads' purpose is to improve Australian and New Zealand transport outcomes by: providing expert technical input to national road and transport policy development, improving the practices and capability of road agencies, and promoting operational consistency by road agencies.

Their publication "Assessing Fitness to Drive" contains medical standards to provide guidance to all health professionals including optometrists and driver licensing bodies on the health assessment of private and commercial drivers of heavy vehicles, light vehicles and motorbikes in Australia. The website provides information for health professionals, employers, heavy vehicle drivers, commercial drivers and private vehicle drivers.

Website: <http://www.austroroads.com.au/drivers-vehicles/assessing-fitness-to-drive>.

Visual standards

Optometrists need to be aware that many occupations and activities have their own visual standards – below is a list of some of the common bodies with specific requirements in Australia.

- Australian Defence Force – <https://www.defencejobs.gov.au/recruitmentCentre/default.aspx>
- Australian Federal Police – <http://www.afp.gov.au/jobs/minimum-requirements>
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority – Visual requirements for licensed flight crew are complex and vision examinations in relation to air crew licensing can only be carried out by practitioners approved by the CASA. <http://services.casa.gov.au/avmed/dames/default.asp>
- Ambulance, fire and emergency services, state and territory police services, public transport drivers – Contact relevant State/Territory
- Australian Federal Police

Education providers

The following education providers have OCANZ accredited optometry programs (as at October 2019)

Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of Melbourne

<http://healthsciences.unimelb.edu.au/departments/optometry-and-vision-sciences>

School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of New South Wales

<http://www.optometry.unsw.edu.au/>

Discipline of Optometry and Vision Science, Flinders University

<https://www.flinders.edu.au>

Schools of Optometry and Vision Science, Queensland University of Technology

<https://www.qut.edu.au/health/about/schools/school-of-optometry-and-vision-science>

School of Medicine (Optometry), Deakin University

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/courses/find-a-course/medicine/optometry>

Australian College of Optometry

<http://www.aco.org.au/professional-development/ocular-therapeutics-course>

NEW ZEALAND

Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB)

The Board carries out the functions determined by the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCA Act). These functions include – authorising the registration of Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians under this Act, and to maintain registers; receiving and acting on information from health practitioners, employers, and the Health and Disability Commissioner about the competence of Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians; and setting the standards of clinical competence, cultural competence, and ethical conduct to be observed by Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.

In order to practice as an optometrist or dispensing optician in New Zealand you must be registered with the Board and hold a current practising certificate (renewed annually). It is illegal to practice without a current certificate, and doing so can result in prosecution and/or disciplinary action.

Standards of Clinical Competence for all scopes of practice and a list of the medicines optometrists registered in the Optometrist Scope of Practice (TPA Endorsement) may prescribe are available on their website.

Website: www.odob.health.nz

New Zealand Association of Optometrists (NZAO)

The NZAO is a membership body whose objects include a commitment to high quality eye health care for all New Zealanders. Optometrists who are members of the NZ Association of Optometrists are bound by professional ethics and clinical guidelines to provide the highest standards of eye health and vision care. Membership of the NZAO is open to all registered optometrists.

For further information contact the NZAO at info@nzao.co.nz.

Website: www.nzao.co.nz

Assessing fitness to drive

The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is a Crown entity governed by a statutory board. Its purpose is to deliver transport solutions for New Zealand on behalf of the government. Their publication “Medical Aspects of Fitness to Drive” contains medical standards to assist medical practitioners in assessing the fitness to drive of any individual. It also sets out the responsibilities and obligations of medical practitioners.

Website: <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/medical-aspects/?category=&subcategory=&audience=&term=medical+aspects>

Visual standards

Practitioners need to be aware that many occupations and activities have their own visual standards – below is a list of some of the common bodies with specific requirements in New Zealand.

- New Zealand Defence Force – <http://www.defencecareers.mil.nz/>
- Police – <https://www.newcops.co.nz/recruitment-process/health-fitness>
- Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand – Visual requirements for licensed flight crew are complex.

Education provider

The following education provider has an OCANZ accredited optometry program (as at October 2019)

School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of Auckland
<http://www.optometry.auckland.ac.nz/en.html>

CULTURAL SAFETY RESOURCES

OCANZ considers it critical that Optometrists working in Australia and New Zealand provide culturally safe eye health services. Cultural safety is about integrating understanding of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori first nations peoples, history and cultures into health care practice, and challenging unconscious and conscious cultural biases in the process.

OCANZ encourages overseas trained optometrists seeking registration in Australia and New Zealand to ensure they are able to provide culturally safe eyecare.

In New Zealand, the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB) require new registrants to complete a Treaty of Waitangi course (typically including cultural safety) within 2 years of registration.

Free open online courses include the following:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kinship – University of Sydney

<http://sydney.edu.au/kinship-module/index.shtml>

Safer Healthcare for Australia's First Peoples – Griffith University

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/first-peoples-safer-healthcare#section-dates>

Informed by Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing – University of Sydney

<https://sydney.edu.au/nccc/training-and-resources.html> (course includes Sydney focussed content)

Mauriora Health Education Research – Maori Healthcare and The Treaty of Waitangi (\$49)

<https://members.mauriora.co.nz/>

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND STANDARDS

Australian and New Zealand Standards apply to ophthalmic lenses, eye protection, interior lighting and colour vision. Below is a list of some of the Australian and New Zealand standards that practitioners should be aware of. These Standards are sold and distributed worldwide by SAI Global Limited –

<http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/>.

AS/NZS 1067:2003	Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
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AS/NZS ISO 12870:2018	Ophthalmic optics – Spectacle frames – Requirements and test methods
AS/NZS ISO 10322.1:2017	Ophthalmic optics – Semi-finished spectacle lens blanks – Specifications for single-vision and multifocal lens blanks
AS/NZS ISO 10322.2:2017	Ophthalmic optics – Semi-finished spectacle lens blanks – Specifications for progressive power lens blanks
AS/NZS ISO 13666:2015	Ophthalmic optics – Spectacle lenses – vocabulary
AS/NZS ISO 16034:2011	Ophthalmic optics – Specifications for single vision ready-to-wear near-vision spectacles
AS/NZS ISO 21987:2019	Ophthalmic optics – Mounted spectacle lenses
AS/NZS 1336:2014	Eye and face protection – guidelines
AS/NZS 1337.1:2010/Amdt 2:2018	Personal eye protection – Eye and face protectors for occupational applications
AS/NZS 1337.6:2012	Prescription eye protector against low and medium impact
AS/NZS 1338.1:2012	Filters for eye protectors: Filters for protection against radiation generated in welding/allied operations
AS/NZS 1338.2:2012	Filters for eye protectors: Filters for protection against ultraviolet radiation
AS/NZS 1338.3:2012	Filters for eye protectors: Filters for protection against infra-red radiation
HB 59-1994 (R2016)	Ergonomics – The human factor – A practical approach to work systems design
AS/NZS 1680.1:2006	Interior and workplace lighting – General principles and recommendations
AS/NZS 1680.2.2:2008	Interior and workplace lighting – Office and screen-based tasks
AS/NZS 1680.3:2017	Interior and workplace lighting – Measurement, calculation and presentation of photometric data

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