



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 to work as an optometrist in Australia and/or New Zealand.

AUSTRALIA

Optometry Board of Australia (OptomBA)

The OptomBA 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 OptomBA works under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law), which came into effect on 1st July 2010. The OptomBA's functions are supported by Ahpra (see below).

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

Under the OptomBA'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 OptomBA's policies, codes and guidelines can be found at <http://www.optometryboard.gov.au/Policies-Codes-Guidelines.aspx>. It is important that all optometrist are familiar with these guidelines.

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 the National Boards is to protect the public. They 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.

The register for all medical practitioners registered to practice in Australia, including optometrists and whether they're therapeutically endorsed or not, can be found on the Ahpra website.

Website: www.ahpra.gov.au

Medicare

Medicare is Australia's publicly funded 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 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. Glasses and contact lenses are not covered by Medicare.

You can find further information at:

- <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/organisations/health-professionals>
- Medicare Benefits Schedule Book – Optometric 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 85 per cent of Australian optometrists. Optometry Australia is a not-for-profit organisation. It comprises five state bodies NSW & ACT, VIC & SA, QLD & NT, 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 or through their website <https://www.optometry.org.au/about-us/contact-us/>

Website: www.optometry.org.au

Assessing Fitness to Drive

Austrroads is the association of Australasian Road transport and traffic agencies. Austrroads' 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.austroads.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 (including pilots and air traffic controllers) 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

Education providers

The following education providers have OCANZ accredited optometry programs (as of November 2022)

Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, University of Melbourne

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

School of Optometry and Vision Science, University of New South Wales (entry-level optometry program and postgraduate therapeutic program)

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

Discipline of Optometry and Vision Science, Flinders University

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

School 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 (postgraduate ocular therapeutics program)

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

School of Allied Health, The University of Western Australia

<https://www.uwa.edu.au/study/Courses/Doctor-of-Optometry>

Faculty of Health, The University of Canberra

<https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/faculties/health/study/vision-science-and-optometry>

NEW ZEALAND

Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB)

The ODOB 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.

To practice as an optometrist or dispensing optician in New Zealand you must be registered with the ODOB and hold a current practicing 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 are available on the ODOB website.

Website: www.odob.health.nz

New Zealand Association of Optometrists (NZAO)

The NZAO is a membership body whose objectives include a commitment to high quality eyecare for all New Zealanders. Optometrists who are members of the NZAO 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 admin@nzao.co.nz.

Website: www.nzao.co.nz

Assessing fitness to drive

The Waka Kotahi 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. It also sets out the responsibilities and obligations of medical practitioners. Their publication “Medical Aspects of Fitness to Drive” contains medical standards to assist medical practitioners in assessing the fitness to drive of any individual.

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. <https://www.aviation.govt.nz/>

Education provider

The following education provider has an OCANZ accredited optometry program (as of November 2022)

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 Aotearoa / 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 healthcare practice, and challenging unconscious and conscious cultural biases in the process.

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

In Aotearoa / 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.

The [OCANZ Cultural Safety Training for Optometrists](#), an online self-paced course, provides foundational knowledge for your ongoing learning journey of providing safer, culturally responsive eyecare. It is important to note that there is no end point for cultural safety practice; rather, it is a commitment of lifelong learning, ongoing critical self-reflection, and taking active steps to manage risk in the provision of cultural safety healthcare.

Other valuable cultural learning resources to support your learning experience include (but are not limited to):

- Indigenous Allied Health Australia, Cultural Responsiveness Training - [Cultural Responsiveness Training - Indigenous Allied Health Australia \(iaha.com.au\)](http://iaha.com.au)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training: Cultural awareness training for public sector employees and board members (Western Australia) [Public Sector Commission - Cultural Awareness](#)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety, Victoria Department of Health [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety \(health.vic.gov.au\)](http://health.vic.gov.au)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Kinship – University of Sydney <http://sydney.edu.au/kinship-module/index.shtml>
- 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 – Māori Healthcare and The Treaty of Waitangi <https://members.mauriora.co.nz/>
- Te Kaa – Māori culture training. Maurea Consulting - [Training | Maurea – Māori culture training, consulting &... | Maurea](#)
- Māori Cultural Competency Workshops, Iwi United Engaged Limited - [Services | Iwi United Engaged Limited \(iue.net.nz\)](http://iue.net.nz)

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND STANDARDS

Australian and New Zealand Standards apply to ophthalmic lenses, protective eyewear, interior lighting, and colour vision. Below is a list of some of the key 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
AS/NZS 1067:2003/Amdt 1: 2009	Sunglasses and fashion spectacles
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 of photometric data	Interior and workplace lighting – Measurement, calculation and presentation

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