



Registration Pathways from accredited prescribed qualifications

Introduction

The Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (ODOB) has four registration pathways:

1. Registration Pathway 1: Dispensing Optician
2. Registration Pathway 2: Provisional Optometrist
3. Registration Pathway 3: Optometrist
4. Registration Pathway 4: Specialist Optometrist – Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries

Each registration pathway lists accredited programmes leading to registration in a specific scope of practice.

Registration Pathway 1: Dispensing Optician

Registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice.

This registration pathway is for those who hold one of the prescribed qualifications listed below. This will allow registration in the Dispensing optician scope of practice.

To apply for this scope, applicants must hold any one of the listed prescribed qualifications.

Prescribed Qualifications:

1. Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, Australasian College of Optical Dispensing (ACOD), Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, 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 practical experience as specified in the Board's record of training book, within 2 years of qualification or a period otherwise approved by the Board
2. Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, New South Wales (NSW) Technical and Further Education (TAFE)/ TAFE digital (conducted by Open Technical Education Network (OTEN))¹, Australia, 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 practical experience as specified in the record of training book, within 2 years of qualification or a period otherwise approved by the Board.
3. Level 6² Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing (United Kingdom (UK) pathway), Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO), United Kingdom (UK). Graduates are awarded the Fellowship of British Dispensing Opticians (FBDO)
4. The Level 6³ Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing (Overseas pathway, for students outside the UK), ABDO; and has submitted a completed and signed record of training book showing evidence of the completion

¹ NSW TAFE's name has changed to TAFE Digital.

² The ABDO programme is mapped at Level 6 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) (England/Northern Ireland) and is recognised by the General Optical Council (GOC). A Level 6 qualification on the RQF may be recognised as a Level 7 qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), but this would require an assessment by NZQA (<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/>).

³ Level 6 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) (England/Northern Ireland).

of a minimum of 800 hours of practical experience, within 2 years of qualification or a period otherwise approved by the Board. Graduates from this course are awarded the FBDO

5. The Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing awarded by the RMIT University (Melbourne, Australia) (between 31 May 2009 - 15 September 2022)⁴.
6. An alternative qualification approved by the Board; and the Board may require a pass grade from the Competence in Optical Dispensing Examination (CODE), or another optical dispensing examination as approved by the Board.

Registration Pathway 2: Provisional Optometrist

Registration in the Provisional optometrist scope of practice, with a condition.

This registration pathway is for those who have a pass in the OCANZ's COE, and who are in the process of completing a Board-accredited therapeutics qualification.

Once a practitioner has passed the OCANZ's COE, they are eligible to apply for registration in the Provisional optometrist scope of practice, with a condition (two restrictions) applied that indicates:

- the practitioner must practise under supervision, and
- is in the process of completing Board-accredited training to prescribe therapeutic medicines.

Once both restrictions on the condition are met, the practitioner is eligible to be registered in the Optometrist scope of practice. The provisional optometrist scope of practice is a time-limited scope and registration in this scope will expire in 3 years if a practitioner does not meet the conditions in the given period.

To apply for this scope, applicants must hold this prescribed qualification:

Prescribed Qualification:

1. A pass grade in the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ) Competency in Optometry Examination.

Registration Pathway 3: Optometrist

Registration in the Optometrist scope of practice.

This registration pathway is for those who hold one of the prescribed qualifications listed below. This will allow registration in the Optometrist scope of practice.

To apply for this scope, applicants must hold any one of the listed prescribed qualifications.

Prescribed qualifications:

1. Bachelor of Optometry, Auckland University, Aotearoa New Zealand (from 2006 onwards)⁵

⁴ Previously called the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) (Melbourne, Australia). Please note, on 20 July 2022, the ODOB has revoked this prescribed qualification. It comes into force on 15 September 2022. Available at: <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2022-gs2983>.

⁵ Any student that has completed their Bachelor of Optometry from 2006 onwards (conferred as of December 2006 or later), may register with the ODOB in the current Optometrist scope of practice, without any conditions prohibiting prescribing.

An undergraduate programme in optometry, the Diploma in Optometry was initiated at University of Auckland in 1964, and the Bachelor of Optometry (BOptom) degree was first introduced in 1982. Prior to 2005 all optometrists were registered in the Optometrist scope of practice and only a limited number of optometrists had completed additional therapeutics prescribing training to be allowed to prescribe.

On 1 October 2005, pursuant to s105 and s105B of the Medicines Act 1981, optometrists became "designated prescribers" and the curriculum for the Bachelor of Optometry (University of Auckland) and the Board's gazetted scopes of practice for optometry changed to keep in step with regulatory changes. The Board introduced the Optometrist (Therapeutic Pharmacological Agents (TPA) endorsement) scope of practice and came into effect on 1 April 2007. Optometry students completing their degrees at the University of Auckland (2006 and onwards) were able to register in this new scope (Optometrists (TPA endorsement)) and able to prescribe. On 1 July 2014, the Medicines Amendment Act 2013 and Misuse of Drugs Amendment Regulations 2014 came into effect and optometrists became "authorised prescribers." That meant that, optometrist may prescribe all medicines within their scope of practice.

2. Bachelor of Vision Science/ Master of Optometry, Deakin University, Australia (from 2013 onwards)⁶
3. Bachelor of Science (Vision Science) & Master of Optometry, Flinders University, Australia (2010 onwards)⁷
4. Bachelor of Vision Science/ Master of Optometry, Queensland University of Technology, Australia (from 2001 onwards)⁸
5. Doctor of Optometry, University of Melbourne, Australia (2014 onwards)⁹
6. Bachelor of Vision Science and Master of Clinical Optometry, University of New South Wales, Australia (2017 onwards)¹⁰
7. Bachelor of Vision Science / Master of Optometry, University of Canberra, Australia (2019 onwards)¹¹
8. Doctor of Optometry, University of Western Australia (from 2021 onwards)¹²
9. For applicants who hold an international optometry qualification which is not one of the prescribed qualifications listed above:
 - (a) a pass grade in both the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ)¹³ Competency in Optometry Examination (COE)¹⁴ and the Assessment of Competence in Ocular Therapeutics (ACOT); or
 - (b) a pass grade in both the OCANZ COE and a pass in an OCANZ-accredited ocular therapeutics qualification. These qualifications currently include:
 - i. Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics, Australian College of Optometry, Australia (from 2013 onwards)¹⁵
 - ii. Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics, Queensland University of Technology, Australia (conferred between 2006 and 2017)¹⁶
 - iii. Graduate Certificate in Ocular Therapeutics, University of New South Wales, Australia (from 2007 onwards)¹⁷.

Please note, each application for registration is assessed individually and conditions on a practitioner's scope may apply.

Registration Pathway 4: Specialist Optometrist – Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries

Registration in the Specialist optometrist scope of practice – Ophthalmic laser surgeries.

This registration pathway is for those already registered in the Optometry scope of practice and who have successfully completed the Board-approved training programme (prescribed qualification) for performing specific laser surgeries.

This will allow for registration in the Specialist optometrist scope of practice. Optometrists registered under this scope are authorised to perform specified ophthalmic surgical procedures below the mucous membrane or surface of the skin, specifically:

- capsulotomy; and/or

Students that had completed their optometry Bachelor of Optometry before 2006, or those previously registered practitioners with older degrees, had to upskill in order to prescribe medicines. They had to complete The Auckland Programme in Ocular Therapeutics (TAPIOT) at the University of Auckland (2004 or 781,784 and 787 modules (between 2005 and 2015). The latter modules were offered as part of the Postgraduate Diploma in Science, but modules could be done separately. Practitioners who chose not to upskill by 1 April 2007, were registered in the Optometrist scope of practice, with a condition that they may not prescribe medication in accordance with the 'Grandfather clause'.

⁶ Initial accreditation date.

⁷ This programme was first accredited in 2010 as the Bachelor of Medical Science (Vision Science) and Master of Optometry. In 2023, the programme name changed to the Bachelor of Science (Vision Science) & Master of Optometry.

⁸ Initial accreditation date.

⁹ Before 1994, this was the Bachelor of Science in Optometry. In 1994, it changed to the Bachelor of Optometry. In 2011, the programme changed to the Doctor of Optometry, with its first cohort graduating in December 2014.

¹⁰ The Bachelor of Optometry was first introduced in 1996. In 2011, the programme changed to the Bachelor of Optometry (Honours)/Bachelor of Science. In 2017, it changed to a Bachelor of Vision Science & Master of Clinical Optometry.

¹¹ Initial accreditation date.

¹² Initial accreditation date.

¹³ <https://www.ocanz.org/>

¹⁴ <https://www.ocanz.org/examination/competency-in-optometry-examination/>

¹⁵ Initial accreditation date.

¹⁶ This programme has been discontinued.

¹⁷ Initial accreditation date.

- laser peripheral iridotomy.

To apply for this scope, applicants must hold the following prescribed qualification:

Prescribed qualification:

This prescribed qualification is an internship-based training programme. The prescribed qualification for the registration pathway in the Specialist Optometrist Scope of Practice – Ophthalmic Laser Surgeries requires applicants:

1. To hold registration in the Optometrist Scope of Practice and not be subject to any conditions.
2. To have worked in a hospital ophthalmology department for a minimum of three years with at least 400 hours as a clinician in a Board-approved clinic (as applies).
3. To have demonstrated their understanding and comprehensive knowledge in the following specified areas of competence for the safe delivery of ophthalmic laser surgeries to the satisfaction of their supervising ophthalmologist:
 - a. Comprehensive knowledge of the relevant anatomy and physiology of the eye and adnexa
 - b. Knowledge of the physics of light and laser, and the penetration of light through ocular tissues
 - c. An understanding of the interaction of light and living tissue including thermal effects, photocoagulative effects, photoablative effects and photodisruptive effects
 - d. Knowledge of the wavelengths and powers utilised in ophthalmic lasers for the specific surgery
 - e. Knowledge of required sterile techniques for performing laser surgery
 - f. Knowledge of surgical procedure and specialised equipment
 - g. Knowledge of the risks and benefits for each surgery
 - h. Knowledge of appropriate management plans for adverse outcomes.
4. To have satisfactorily observed a minimum of 20 Nd:YAG capsulotomies and/or Nd:YAG laser periphery iridotomies (as applies) being performed by their supervising ophthalmologist, attested to by their supervising ophthalmologist.
5. To have satisfactorily and independently performed a minimum of 20 Nd:YAG capsulotomies and/or 10 Nd:YAG laser periphery iridotomies (as applies) under the supervision of their supervising ophthalmologist, attested to by their supervising ophthalmologist.