



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health
Social Care Professionals

Optical Registration Board

Standards of Proficiency for **Dispensing Opticians**

Background

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act, 2005 (HSCP Act 2005) provides for a Registration Board, to establish and maintain a Register for the profession. Registration will allow a person to use the title of that profession.

Statutory registration is fundamental to the delivery of quality and accountability in the provision of the profession and ensures that members of the public are guided, protected and informed, so that they can be confident that the profession providing services are properly regulated and qualified for the job.

This system of statutory regulation is designed to ensure professional conduct and the maintenance of high standards of professional education and training among the profession, regardless of whether they work in the public or private sector or are self-employed.

The object of the registration board is to protect the public by fostering high standards of professional conduct and professional education, training and competence among registrants of that profession (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 27(1)(as amended)). To this end the Act makes provision for:

- › the **approval** of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 48).
- › **monitoring** the continuing suitability of education and training programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 49).

The registration board sets out the requirements for approval of programmes (HSCP Act, 2005: Section 48). An approved programme means that the programme has satisfied the registration boards' criteria for approval and those students who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for the profession and as a result are eligible to apply to join the register.

The role of the Registration Board in relation to the approval of programmes is distinct from academic accreditation which programmes may already undergo within their institution. Academic accreditation is based on the suitability of a programme for the award of a qualification. Regulatory approval is a judgment as to whether a programme consistently and effectively prepares the graduate for entry into practice of that profession by facilitating the achievement of the standards of proficiency for that profession.

Standards of Proficiency

The standards of proficiency detail the skills and abilities that all graduates from an approved programme in a given profession must possess in order to enter the register. They are the threshold standards deemed necessary by the registration board at the level of entry to practice. In the approval and monitoring of education and training, programme providers must demonstrate that all graduates of a programme holding a specific qualification have the required skills and abilities for entry to the register.

This document sets out the standards of proficiency for Dispensing Opticians under five domains:

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability
2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking
3. Safety and Quality
4. Professional Development
5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Programme providers must be able to demonstrate that the education and training programme is designed to ensure that all students who successfully complete the programme have met the required standards of proficiency for the profession.

Criteria for Approval and Monitoring of Education and Training Programmes

The criteria for education and training programme are used to ensure that a programme has a system in place to consistently and safely produce graduates who have achieved the standards of proficiency for the profession.

The registration board is responsible for conducting the approval and monitoring process with education providers to ensure that their programmes meet the criteria. If a programme meets the required criteria it will be granted approval and the qualification associated with the programme will be listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as one of the entry criteria to the register. The programme will then be subject to on-going monitoring and review.

Supporting CORU documentation

The following documents should be considered in conjunction with each other:

- › Standards of Proficiency for the profession
- › Criteria for Approval and Monitoring of Education and Training Programmes
- › Criteria for Approval and Monitoring of Education and Training Programmes – Guidance for Education Providers
- › Approval and Monitoring Process
- › Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the profession

These documents can be downloaded from www.coru.ie

1. Professional Autonomy and Accountability

Graduates will:

1. Be able to practise safely and effectively within the legal, ethical and practice boundaries of the profession
2. Be able to identify the limits of their practice and know when to seek advice and additional expertise or refer to another professional
3. Be able to act in the best interest of service users at all times with due regard to their will and preference
4. Be aware of current guidelines and legislation relating to candour and disclosure
5. Be aware of the agreements with the relevant local and national government bodies for the provision of eye exams and dispensing services
6. Respect and uphold the rights, dignity and autonomy of every service user including their role in the diagnostic, therapeutic and social care process
7. Be able to demonstrate equitable delivery of service to all service users regardless of access route; be able to identify, understand and manage potential financial and commercial conflicts; and be aware of the role of professional indemnity insurance in the practice of the profession
8. Be able to exercise a professional duty of care
9. Understand what is required of them by the Registration Board and be familiar with the provisions of the current *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics* for the profession issued by the Registration Board
10. Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups
11. Understand the role of policies and systems to protect the health, safety, welfare, equality and dignity of service users, staff and volunteers
12. Understand and respect the confidentiality of service users and use information only for the purpose for which it was given
13. Understand confidentiality in the context of the team setting
14. Understand and be able to apply the limits of the concept of confidentiality particularly in relation to child protection, vulnerable adults and elder abuse
15. Be aware of current data protection, freedom of information and other legislation relevant to the profession and be able to access new and emerging legislation
16. Be able to recognise and manage the potential conflict that can arise between confidentiality and whistle-blowing

- 17.** Be able to gain informed consent to carry out assessments or provide treatment/interventions and document evidence that consent has been obtained
- 18.** Be aware of current legislation and guidelines related to informed consent for individuals with lack of capacity
- 19.** Recognise personal responsibility and professional accountability for one's actions and be able to justify professional decisions made
- 20.** Be able to take responsibility for managing one's own workload as appropriate
- 21.** Understand the principles of professional decision-making and be able to make informed decisions within the context of competing demands including those relating to ethical conflicts and available resources
- 22.** Be aware of and be able to take responsibility for managing one's own health and wellbeing

2. Communication, Collaborative Practice and Teamworking

Graduates will:

1. Be able to communicate diagnosis/assessment and/or treatment/management options in a way that can be understood by the service user
2. Be able to modify and adapt communication methods and styles, including verbal and non-verbal methods to suit the individual service users considering issues of language, culture, beliefs and health and/or social care needs
3. Recognise service users as active participants in their health and social care and be able to support service users in communicating their health and/or social care needs, choices and concerns
4. Understand the need to empower service users to manage their well-being where possible and recognise the need to provide advice to the service user on self-treatment, where appropriate
5. Be able to recognise when the services of a professional translator are required
6. Be able to produce clear, concise, accurate and objective documentation
7. Be able to apply digital literacy skills and communication technologies appropriate to the profession
8. Be aware of and comply with local/national documentation standards including, for example, terminology, signature requirements
9. Be able to express professional, informed and considered opinions to service users, health professionals and others e.g. carers, relatives in varied practice settings and contexts and within the boundaries of confidentiality
10. Understand and be able to recognise the impact of effective leadership and management on practice
11. Understand and be able to discuss the principles of effective conflict management
12. Understand the need to work in partnership with service users, their relatives/carers and other professionals in planning and evaluating goals, treatments and interventions and be aware of the concepts of power and authority in relationships with service users
13. Understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an independent practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
14. Understand the role and impact of effective interdisciplinary team working in meeting service user needs and be able to effectively contribute to decision-making within a team setting
15. Understand the role of relationships with professional colleagues and other workers in service delivery and the need to create professional relationships based on mutual respect and trust

3. Safety and Quality

Graduates will:

1. Be able to gather all appropriate background information relevant to the service user's health and social care needs
2. Be able to justify the selection of and implement appropriate assessment techniques and be able to undertake and record a thorough, sensitive and detailed assessment
3. Be able to determine the appropriate tests/assessments required and undertake/arrange these tests
4. Be able to analyse and critically evaluate the information collected in the assessment process
5. Be able to demonstrate sound logical reasoning and problem solving skills to determine appropriate problem lists, action plans and goals
6. Be able to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to professional decision-making, adapting practice to the needs of the service user and draw on appropriate knowledge and skills in order to make professional judgments
7. Be able to prioritise and maintain the safety of both service users and those involved in their care
8. Be able to evaluate intervention plans using appropriate tools and recognised performance/ outcome measures along with service user responses to the interventions. Revise the plans as necessary and where appropriate, in conjunction with the service user
9. Understand the need to monitor, evaluate and/or audit the quality of practice and be able to critically evaluate one's own practice against evidence-based standards and implement improvements based on the findings of these audits and reviews
10. Be able to recognise important risk factors and implement risk management strategies; be able to make reasoned decisions and/or provide guidance to others to initiate, continue, modify or cease interventions, techniques or courses of action and record decisions and concerns
11. Understand the principles of quality assurance and quality improvement
12. Be able to carry out and document a risk analysis and implement effective risk management controls and strategies; be able to clearly communicate any identified risk, adverse events or near misses in line with current legislation/guidelines
13. Be able to comply with relevant and current health and safety legislation and guidelines
14. Be able to establish safe environments for practice which minimises risks to service users, those treating them and others, including the use of infection prevention and control strategies

4. Professional Development

Graduates will:

1. Be able to engage in and take responsibility for professional development
2. Understand the need to demonstrate evidence of ongoing continuing professional development and education, be aware of professional regulation requirements and understand the benefits of continuing professional development to professional practice
3. Be able to evaluate and reflect critically on own professional practice to identify learning and development needs; be able to select appropriate learning activities to achieve professional development goals and be able to integrate new knowledge and skills into professional practice
4. Understand and recognise the impact of personal values and life experience on professional practice and be able to manage this impact appropriately
5. Understand the importance of and be able to seek professional development, supervision, feedback and peer review opportunities in order to continuously improve practice
6. Understand the importance of participation in performance management activities for effective service delivery

5. Professional Knowledge and Skills

Graduates will:

1. Know, understand and apply the key concepts of the domains of knowledge which are relevant to the profession
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of relevant physical and biological sciences, human development, social and behavioural sciences and other related sciences, together with a knowledge of health and wellbeing, disease, disorder and dysfunction relevant to the profession of ophthalmic dispensing
3. Know and understand the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment/intervention efficacy, the research process and evidence-informed practice
4. Demonstrate skills in evidence-informed practice, including translation of theory, concepts and methods to clinical/professional practice
5. Demonstrate safe and effective implementation of practical, technical and clinical skills
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the theoretical basis of and the variety of approaches to assessment/diagnosis and intervention.
7. Be able to dispense optical appliances for both adults and children; be able to dispense high powered lenses, bifocals, trifocals, progressive lenses, occupational lenses, tinted lenses, sports eyewear, personal eye protection, prescribed prism; and be able to dispense in gross anisometropia
8. Be able to check and verify optical appliances, including the analysis of the accuracy of finished products against standard tolerance charts and the service users requirements
9. Be able to modify, adjust and repair optical appliances
10. Be able to analyse spectacle prescriptions of all types
11. Demonstrate an understanding of contact lenses and their care; be able to instruct a service user on the insertion and removal of contact lenses; and be able to remove contact lenses for a service user in an emergency situation
12. Understand low vision, low vision aids and the management options available for people experiencing low vision or visual impairment
13. Demonstrate an understanding of ocular disease and appropriate management of emergency referral
14. Understand the roles of other relevant professionals including optometrists, ophthalmologists, orthoptists and general practitioners
15. Be able to identify and understand the impact of organisational, community and societal structures, systems and culture on health and social care provision

16. Demonstrate ability to participate in or lead clinical, academic or practice-based research
17. Know the basic principles of effective teaching and learning, mentoring and supervision



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