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**Subject:** therapeutics  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 March 2011 12:07:46 AM

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RE PROPOSAL FOR THERAPEUTIC QUALIFICATION TO BE INCLUDED FOR GENERAL REGISTRATION AS AN OPTOMETRIST

In reference to the board's call for comments, I would like to add my voice to the debate. In particular I would like to briefly address point 7 in the boards request for comments "Are there impediments to the proposal that need to be considered and if so, can these be overcome?"

As a Melbourne-based Optometrist of a few years practice I want to eventually attain my therapeutic endorsement and I know many other optometrists would like to. However from my perspective there are a few "impediments" that do not make this a seamless process, and if the board is serious about making it compulsory to have therapeutic endorsement then these obstacles could be minimised to broaden the base of optometrists who can more easily undergo the course.

What are these obstacles?

1. COST The cost of the course is not inconsiderable and rises almost every year. The course at the university of Melbourne is in the vicinity of \$12000. In NSW it is apparently around \$4000. The discrepancy I have been informed is due to the fact that the Melbourne course does not have commonwealth funding. This has resulted in the inconvenient situation of Victorian optometrists travelling up and down to Sydney numerous times to complete the course.

2. AVAILABILITY As I have been advised the Melbourne course is not even being held this year and the Sydney course for 2011 is full and was filled prior to the end of 2010 ...so if one wanted to do the course this year at this stage one cannot. There are no other options I know of.

3. WEEKENDS I understand both courses require a substantial amount of face to face Saturday lectures. This may suit some practitioners, but for whatever reason this is not always feasible for others due to family, sporting, religious or business commitments. For some practitioners a weekday evening or a Sunday is the only option if Saturdays cannot be attended.

A lot of courses are held now off-campus online. Perhaps this could be introduced for the didactic component of the therapeutics course. A prescribed reading list would take the place of some lectures, and any necessary direct contact hours would be thus reduced perhaps lowering costs.

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