

Media release

Guidelines for the prescription of optical appliances released for optometrists

2 May 2016

The Optometry Board of Australia (the Board), the national optometry regulator, has published revised guidelines on the prescription of optical appliances for the profession.

The revised guidelines were approved by the Board in March 2016 and will come into effect on 1 June 2016. The Board is publishing them in advance to allow practitioners time to become familiar with its content.

The guidelines are a useful tool for registered optometrists, reflect current practices and expectations, and are suitable for use in clinical, educational and regulatory contexts.

Optometry Board of Australia Chair Mr Ian Bluntish said the new guidelines are more flexible and user-friendly for optometrists.

‘The revised guidelines strike a better balance between protecting the public and the professional obligations of the practitioner to adhere to best practice in the prescription of optical appliances. They provide greater flexibility and clarity for the optometrist regarding the preparation and supply of a prescription, and have been reworded to be simpler and clearer,’ Mr Bluntish said.

The guidelines define how the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), restricts who may prescribe optical appliances.

The term ‘optical appliance’ includes prescription sunglasses, spectacles with prism, and low-vision devices such as magnifiers, binocular telescopes, monocular telescopes and electronic magnification devices and plano cosmetic and novelty contact lenses.

The guideline provides information for optometrists on the preparation of prescriptions, spectacle prescriptions, contact lens prescriptions, supply of prescriptions and outlines the responsibilities for optometrists.

To ensure that the guidelines were developed with feedback from practitioners and stakeholders included, the Board ran a [public consultation](#) in September 2015. The Board has not experienced any major issues in relation to compliance with the guideline and therefore, the guidelines have not changed significantly as a result of the consultation.

The previous guidelines had been in place for over three years and have been updated as a result of a scheduled review.

The revised guidelines are available in the [Codes, Guidelines and policies](#) section of this website.

For more information

- Lodge an [online enquiry](#)
- For registration enquiries: 1300 419 495 (within Australia) +61 3 9275 9009 (overseas callers)
- For media enquiries: (03) 8708 9200