
Subject: Board Submission
Date: Thursday, 27 January 2011 1:03:39 PM

Subject: Should therapeutic qualification be included as a requirement for general registration as an Optometrist

I do not see any public benefit in requiring all Optometrists to be eligible for therapeutic qualification. For those Optometrists who are therapeutically qualified, I see this as a bonus to their patient. For those that are not qualified, it is very easy to refer a patient to a colleague who has their qualification if the need arises, which I believe would occur less than once a week in general practise. Patients would/do not suffer from seeing an Optometrist without a therapeutics qualification.

Is such a requirement a reasonable expectation of Optometrists? I do not believe this to be the case. Prior to Optometrists being therapeutically qualified, we referred patients who needed further attention to GP's and Ophthals, which can continue to this day

Should therapeutic qualifications be a requirement for practice? I do not believe this should be. Many Optometrists have no desire to be "quasi" doctors and should not be made to practice in this way if they are happy with their current way of practice

I do not believe that overseas trained graduates should have to complete appropriate competency assessments for therapeutics. As an employer, finding suitable graduates from overseas is arduous enough without requiring them to have greater competency. We would find very few graduates would come to work in Australia, and until the number of Optometrists in regional Australia is addressed, we need the overseas Optoms to work in hard to fill locations like Mildura, Shepparton, Innisvail etc

I believe that Optometrists in non clinical roles (such as myself) should be made to have the same qualifications as other Optometrists, but do not think that that needs to be therapeutics qualifications

To get the remainder of the 3200 Optometrists therapeutically qualified, would need to accommodate for the following

- *Optometrists retiring
- *Optometrists working part time
- *Female Optometrists on maternity leave or caring for children
- *Optometrists from regional areas that already struggle to get time away from their practice to complete cpd
- *Optometrists who can not afford the therapeutics fees at QUT or VCO etc

Many thanks for reading my submission

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