

**Subject:** Therapeutic qualifications  
**Date:** Tuesday, 8 February 2011 9:18:35 PM

---

1. The public does benefit with uniformity, however in the current state of affairs Optometrists are viewed as refractionists and the public presents to General practitioners for matters requiring ophthalmic topical prescriptions.
2. Emphatically NO. It is unreasonable to expect Optometrists to assume this extra responsibility and onus when Medicare will not reimburse additional benefits to compensate for the time, expertise, re-training and additional expense involved in obtaining therapeutics qualifications. As a medical profession Optometrists are one of the most underpaid with fees already capped as a requirement of being part of the Medicare scheme.

The increased requirements of CPD, CPR have already increased our workload with no benefit to the individual Optometrist. It has created an environment of dissatisfaction amongst the workforce, I have experienced this on a personal level and seen it in my colleagues.

Optometrists are simply expected to be philanthropists and undertake extra studies, at their own expense for the common good. What other profession is expected to partake in such a bizarre practice?

To require therapeutics now when the education mechanism for this is inadequately formed will only expediate the retirement of a large portion of the working population and be the impetus for the younger members to pursue other careers.

3. No it should not. If an Optometrist so chooses to be qualified it should be considered much like a specialty practice. It is wholly unnecessary for this to become a blanket requirement.
4. No it is bureaucracy in the extreme, it should not be permitted at any cost as the unwarranted changes and expectations are a serious effect on work life balance. It should be up to each individual Optometrist to make a choice. Certainly there will come a time when therapeutically qualified graduates will become the majority and only then would it be reasonable to revisit these proposals. It is unreasonable to introduce this when the majority of Optometrists will find themselves unable to register pending further study.
5. It is reasonable to require overseas applicants to be comparable to current graduating standards. They have not already made the prior contributions professionally in Australia, so demanding more of them is appropriate. Eventually graduates will outnumber those pre-therapeutic optometrists naturally so overseas endorsed entrants must meet the new guidelines for all graduates. Otherwise the natural course of all Optometrists being therapeutically qualified will not work. It will create two tiers of registration but overseas entrants are aware of this requirement from the outset rather than having it thrust upon them after the fact.
6. No, it is unreasonable to expect all Optometrists to be therapeutically trained if they are highly unlikely to use the skill sets. It is a great expense for Optometrists, both in quality of life (having to dedicate additional hours to the curriculum and depriving themselves of time with family and in the business). If it comprises almost no relevance to the daily practice of their profession it is impudent to force all individuals to partake in useless expense of time and resources on a whim.

7. The impediments are severe. It will damage Optometry very deeply as the requirement to have all Optometrists therapeutically endorsed in a predetermined time period will force many out of the profession. I would simply choose a different vocation where choice to pursue certain interests are permitted.

In the current Optometric environment therapeutics is a very small component of the day to day duties of an average clinician. I am outraged that we are required to spend our own time, money and expertise to gain qualifications in an area for which we will not be remunerated. There is zero incentive. Medicare will not increase rebates accordingly, patients will not value the service, the system is poorly designed. Salaries in Optometry are barely commensurate with the years of study required, the introduction of further requirements will simply make it a profession of philanthropy. I for one am whole heartedly against this proposal and am prepared to pursue a different vocation if such a proposal is approved.

See additional email - next page

**Subject:** Re: Respect and democracy in Optometry  
**Date:** Saturday, 12 February 2011 8:23:50 PM

---

For such an important landmark proposal I would suggest that every member of the Optometrists Association be required to express their view in an actual vote. Much like voting for council members, this way we do not have a skewed representation from those who may already be therapeutically qualified, and thus are largely unaffected with such changes.

I am hoping that the proper processes are being followed and that the OBA and OAA are only in the preliminary stages and simply gauging opinions before finalising any proposals.

Regards,

Linda Ka