

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15
2014-15 年報

視光師管理委員會
(香港)

OPTOMETRISTS BOARD
HONG KONG



Optometrists Board
視光師管理委員會

Report of the Optometrists Board

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1. Preface

Through this report, which covers the period from April 2014 to March 2015, the Optometrists Board aims to keep members of the profession and the public better informed of the functions and work progress of the Board and its committees.

This report is intended for general information only. Certain functions of the Optometrists Board have been simplified and presented in the form of an information document. For details of the statutory functions of the Board and its committees, readers should refer to the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance, Chapter 359, Laws of Hong Kong and the Optometrists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation, Cap. 359F.

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2. Message from the Chairman

It is a great honour for me to be appointed as the Chairman of the Optometrists Board in October 2014. Having devoted my career to the dental profession and various community services for nearly 40 years, it has always been my firm belief that the interests of the community and members of the public are of paramount importance. I believe the Board and members of the optometrist profession share the same conviction with me, and we have all along worked in unison to uphold the high standard of professional practice.

One of the major highlights of our work in 2014/2015 is the review of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme. The scheme has been running on a voluntary basis since 2004 and the Board considered it an opportune time to re-examine the effectiveness of the scheme. Under the revised CPD scheme which has taken effect in July 2014, the scope of recognised CPD activities is widened to include a broad range of activities, such as active participation as speaker or panelist in any accredited CPD activity, post-graduate studies, self-study or publication in peer-reviewed journals related to optometry. The allocation of CPD points is adjusted depending on the mode of participation (active/passive) and the relevance to optometry (core/non-core activities). A ceiling is also imposed for certain categories of CPD activities to encourage registrants' attainment of a more balanced CPD profile. With all these new features, we aim at boosting registrants' involvement and participation in various CPD activities. The Education Committee under the Board will continue monitoring the scheme and exploring the feasibility of mandatory CPD in the long run.

On regulating the conduct and discipline of registered optometrists, the Board received a total of 6 complaints during the year, mostly related to unprofessional conduct. The nature of complaints reveals the fact that members of the public show great concern over the service standards of the optometrist profession. The Board will keep striving for enhancing the sense of professional ethics and the quality of services being rendered by the profession in order to meet the rising expectation of the community.

On behalf of fellow colleagues of the Board, I would like to thank Professor Ricky Y. K. MAN, the former Chairman, for his dedicated and invaluable contributions over the past 6 years. I would also like to thank all Members of the Board and its Committees and the Secretariat for their hard work to ensure the efficient discharge of all its statutory functions. In the year ahead, the Board is confident of the continuous collaboration with members of the optometrist profession to achieve sustained improvements to our professionalism and the quality of service standards.

Dr Homer TSO Wei-kwok, SBS, JP
Chairman, Optometrists Board

3. Introduction

3.1 The Optometrists Board is a statutory body established under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance, Chapter 359, and the Optometrists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation, Chapter 359F, responsible for the registration, discipline, and management of optometrists. The Board is also tasked to promote adequate standards of professional practice and conduct among optometrists. The Board Secretariat, which is staffed by the DH, provides administrative and secretarial support to the Board and its committees.

Registration of optometrists

3.2 Registration of optometrists commenced on 1 December 1994. With effect from 1 April 1996, any person who practises the profession of optometry in Hong Kong without being registered commits an offence¹. Any information on illegal practice of the optometry profession will be reported to the Police for investigation.

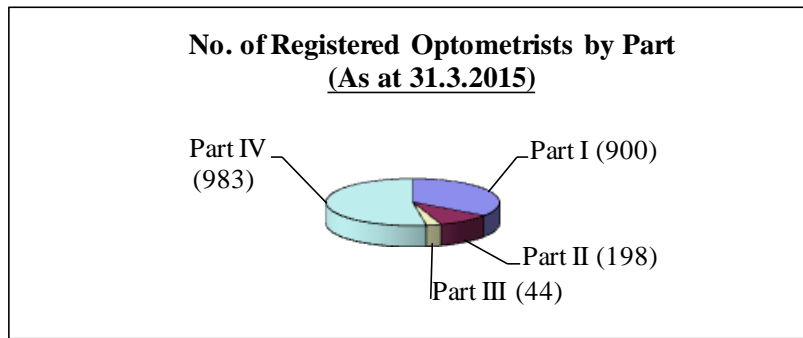
3.3 The Register has four parts, Part I, Part II, Part III and Part IV. Entry in the various parts of the Register is based mainly on the qualification and/or experience possessed by the applicants.

3.4 A person who was practising optometry on 1 December 1994 and did not qualify for full registration could apply for provisional registration in Part IV register. Provisional registration was a one-off exercise which was completed on 31 May 1995.

3.5 The Optometrists Board is empowered under section 15A of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance to hold examinations for the purpose of registration as and when it considers expedient or necessary.

3.6 As at 31 March 2015, there were 2,125 registered optometrists. Statistics on the registration of optometrists are detailed at Annex A. Appended below is a pie chart showing the number of registrants in each part of the register :

¹ Schedule 4 to the Optometrists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation provides for persons exempt from the requirement.



Control mechanism and disciplinary power of the Board

3.7 The Optometrists Board is empowered by law to regulate the professional conduct of registered optometrists through an established disciplinary mechanism.

3.8 Complaints against registered optometrists are normally either lodged with the Board by individuals or referred to the Board by other bodies such as the Hong Kong Police Force.

3.9 The Optometrists Board has prepared a Code of Practice prescribing the standards of conduct and practice and regulating the activities of optometrists. The Code is issued to all registered optometrists for compliance. The Board will from time to time review the Code and promulgate changes whenever necessary. Any alleged cases of professional misconduct committed by the optometrists will be referred to the Board for investigation, and for inquiry where necessary. At inquiries, the Board may make orders ranging from the issue of warning letters to the removal of the optometrist's name from the register.

Continuing professional education for registered optometrists

3.10 To encourage optometrists to engage in life-long learning to sharpen their professional knowledge and skills, the Optometrists Board introduced a voluntary Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme in November 2004. The Education Committee formed under the Board was set up to monitor and review the design and implementation of the CPD Scheme and the Registration Committee for the accreditation of CPD activities and appointment of accredited programme providers.

4. Membership of the Optometrists Board

4.1 The Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance stipulates that all members of the Optometrists Board are appointed by the Chief Executive*. The Board comprises –

- (a) a Chairman from among the members of the Supplementary Medical Professions Council, other than a member appointed under section 3(1)(d)(iv) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance;
- (b) one registered medical practitioner on the nomination of the Hong Kong Medical Association;
- (c) one person specially qualified to advise the Board on professional education; and
- (d) five to eight optometrists.

4.2 Membership of the Board for the period from April 2014 to March 2015 was as follows –

Chairman: Prof Ricky Y. K. MAN (from 1.4.2014 to 30.9.2014)
Dr Homer TSO Wei-kwok, SBS, JP (from 1.10.2014)

Members: Ms CHAN Lai-ming
Miss Rufina CHAN Tin-yan
Dr CHOW, Pak Chin, JP (from 1.4.2014 to 30.9.2014)
Dr DO Chi-wai
Ms KWOK Wai-ying
Mr Patrick CHENG Wai-hung
Mrs Joyce LEUNG Chi-dai
Mr Keith LEUNG Man-kei
Dr TSE Hung-hing, JP (from 1.10.2014)
Mr John WONG Chun-hon
Ms Queenie YIP Siu-lai

* Authority delegated to the Secretary for Food and Health.

5. Highlights of activities of the Optometrists Board

5.1 The Optometrists Board transacted its business at meetings and by the circulation of papers. Set out below is a highlight of major activities of the Board between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 –

(a) Establishment of Guidelines for Suitable Premises under Section 19(1) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance

The Supplementary Medical Professions (SMP) Council agreed at its September 2011 meeting on the policy relating to the exercise of the Board's power to ensure suitability of premises for practice under section 19 of the SMP Ordinance. In essence, the 5 SMP Boards may authorize public officers in the Department of Health to inspect the premises concerned upon receipt of complaints. To facilitate onsite inspection by the public officers, the 5 SMP Boards should consider developing guidelines for suitable premises having regard to the needs and views of the profession.

In response to the Council's deliberation, the Optometrists Board has tasked the Working Group on the Overall Review of the Code of Practice to draw up the guidelines on suitable premises.

With reference to the Code of Practice for Private Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Maternity Homes, the Code of Practice for Clinics Registered under the Medical Clinics Ordinance (Cap. 343), as well as the guidelines on suitable premises adopted the Occupational Therapists Board and the Physiotherapists Board, the Working Group has prepared the draft guidelines on premises suitable for practice for optometrists. The Working Group's proposal will be submitted to the Optometrists Board for consideration at its next policy meeting.

(b) Guidelines for Assessing Professional Training for the Purpose of Registration as Optometrists

The Board Registration Committee (BRC) is now examining the proposal of requiring those applicants, whose name had been removed from the Register or who had a certain non-practice period, to update their professional knowledge and skills when re-applying for registration under section 12 of the SMP Ordinance. The proposal serves to safeguard the interests of the public and to maintain a high standard of professional competence among the registrants.

The BRC is preparing a set of guidelines for assessing professional training for the purpose of registration as optometrists, which will be submitted to the Optometrists Board for consideration in due course.

(c) Review of the CPD Scheme

With a view to encourage wider participation in the voluntary CPD scheme, the Board Education Committee (BEEdC) has conducted a review on the design and the implementation of the CPD scheme.

Under the revised CPD scheme, the scope of recognized CPD activities is widened to include a broad range of activities such as active participation, post-graduate studies, self-study and publication. The allocation of CPD points will be adjusted depending on the mode of participation (active/passive) and the relevance to optometry (core/non-core activities). A ceiling is also imposed for certain categories of CPD activities to encourage registrants' attainment of a more balanced CPD profile.

The new CPD scheme took effect on 1 July 2014. A letter has been issued to all registrants in June 2014 informing them of the new arrangement and Members of the profession may visit the Board's website for updated information.

(d) Continuing Professional Education

214 optometrists have reported attainment of 10 CPD hours in 2014/2015. Subject to consent given by the registrants, they were awarded a Certificate of Achievement and their names were posted on the Board's website.

(e) Quotable Qualifications

On the recommendation by the Board Registration Committee, the Optometrists Board has approved the inclusion of "*Certificate of Attainment in Optometry (Part II), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University*" in the List of Quotable Qualifications.

As at 31 March 2015, there were a total of 77 quotable qualifications. Registrants may visit the Board's website for the most updated List of Quotable Qualifications as approved by the Board.

6. Committees of the Optometrists Board

6.1 Section 9 of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance provides for the Supplementary Medical Professions Boards to appoint committees for the better discharge of its functions under the Ordinance. Works of the four committees under the Optometrist Board are detailed below –

Preliminary Investigation Committee

6.2 The Optometrists Board's jurisdiction over optometrists' professional conduct is laid down in the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance and the Optometrists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulation.

6.3 Situations that may give rise to disciplinary proceedings include where a registered optometrist –

- (a) has been convicted in Hong Kong or elsewhere of an offence punishable with imprisonment;
- (b) has been guilty in Hong Kong or elsewhere of professional misconduct;
- (c) was not at the time of his registration qualified to be registered;
- (d) has obtained registration by fraud or misrepresentation; or
- (e) has not complied with or is in breach of any condition of his registration (other than a condition under section 15) or has failed to comply with the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance.

6.4 Membership of the Preliminary Investigation Committee for the period from April 2014 to March 2015 was as follows –

Chairman: Mr John WONG Chun-hon

Members: Miss Joyce CHOW Kar-yan
Dr Larry NG Hou-yan

6.5 If an optometrist is found guilty of a disciplinary offence after an inquiry, the Optometrists Board may order any one of the following –

- (a) removal from the Register of Optometrists which will be published in the Gazette;
- (b) removal from the Register of Optometrists for such period as the Optometrists Board may think fit which will be published in the Gazette;
- (c) a reprimand which will be published in the Gazette; and
- (d) a warning letter in such terms as the Board considered appropriate which may or may not be published in the Gazette.

6.6 Below is a summary on the complaints handled by the Board's Preliminary Investigation Committee for the period from April 2014 to March 2015:

<u>Cases</u>	<u>No.</u>
Received	6
Considered	6
Dismissed	5
Referred to the Board for inquiry	1

There was no disciplinary inquiry conducted by the Optometrists Board in the year of 2014 / 2015.

Registration Committee

6.7 The Registration Committee, established in 1994, is responsible for –

- (a) approving applications for registration under section 12(1)(a) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance;
- (b) advising the Supplementary Medical Professions Council Registration Committee on the eligibility of applicants for registration under sections 12(1)(b) and 12(1)(c) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance;
- (c) approving the registration of applicants found by the Supplementary Medical Professions Council to be qualified for registration under sections 12(1)(b) and 12(1)(c) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance;
- (d) making recommendations to the Optometrists Board in updating the list of registrable qualifications under section 12(1)(b) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance;
- (e) determining the removal of names from the register under section 10(4) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance;
- (f) determining the restoration of names to the register for removals effected under section 10(4) of the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance;
- (g) accrediting CPD programmes from non-accredited programme providers;
- (h) vetting the applications for renewal of accreditation status from accredited programme providers for the CPD scheme
- (i) deciding on and updating the list of quotable qualifications, their abbreviations and Chinese translation for inclusion on signboards and stationery used by registered optometrists; and
- (j) advising the Optometrists Board on matters relating to registration.

6.8 Membership of the Board Registration Committee for the period from April 2014 to March 2015 was as follows –

Chairman: Mr John WONG Chun-hon

Members: Mr CHAN Kong
Miss Rufina CHAN Tin-yan (from 1.4.2014 to 9.12.2014)
Dr Karen CHENG Kam-yee (from 1.4.2014 to 20.1.2015)
Mr KWAN Kwok-fai (from 10.12.2014)
Mr Geoffrey CHENG Wai-chak
Dr Larry NG Hou-yan (from 21.1.2015)
Ms Bibianna YU Sin-ying

Examination Committee

6.9 The Examination Committee, established in 1989, is responsible for –

- (a) advising the Optometrists Board on syllabus and format of examination/ assessment for registration;
- (b) advising the Optometrists Board on the appointment of examiners;
- (c) assisting the Optometrists Board in matters relating to examinations/ assessments; and
- (d) advising the Optometrists Board on matters relating to qualifications and experience.

6.10 Membership of the Examination Committee for the period from April 2014 to March 2015 was as follows –

Chairman: Dr DO Chi-wai

Members: Dr FAN Chi-shing (from 1.4.2014 to 29.9.2014)
Mr Dominic CHIM Chun-pong
Mr KWOK Wai-wah (from 30.9.2014)
Mr Alex YIM Kwok-bun
Prof Kenneth LAM Chung-wing

Education Committee

6.11 The Education Committee, established in 2001, is responsible for –

- (a) developing an implementation plan on continuing professional development for registered optometrists;
- (b) developing an accreditation system for continuing professional development for registered optometrists; and
- (c) considering the promotion strategies for continuing professional development for registered optometrists.

6.12 Membership of the Education Committee for the period from April 2014 to March 2015 was as follows –

Chairman: Miss Rufina CHAN Tin-yan

Members: Dr Henry CHAN Ho-lung (from 1.4.2014 to 12.11.2014)
Dr Allen CHEONG Ming-yan
Dr Patrick CHU Ho-wai
Dr LAM Chuen (from 13.11.2014)
Dr Forrest NG Yiu-fai
Ms Queenie YIP Siu-lai

7. Review by Committee Chairmen

Preliminary Investigation Committee

7.1 The role of the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) is to make preliminary investigation into complaints and determine, based on the information available, whether there is any prima facie case of professional misconduct on the part of registered optometrists. If affirmative, the PIC shall refer the case to the Board for an inquiry.

7.2 In 2014/2015, the PIC processed a total of 6 complaints, in which 5 were dismissed and 1 was referred to the Board for inquiry. It was noted that majority of complaints did not reach the inquiry stage. They were dismissed at the decision of the PIC either due to their frivolous nature or because they were related to such allegations which could not be taken as unprofessional conduct. It was worth pointing out that some of the complaints touched on civil claims or compensation of professional negligence, rather than unprofessional conduct of the registered optometrist which should more appropriately be dealt with through civil proceedings.

7.3 In order to maintain the professional credibility of registered optometrists and to meet with the rising expectations of the public, registrants should observe at all times high standards of professional and personal conduct. In particular, registrants are advised to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code, which lays down the standards of conduct and practice expected of all registered optometrists.

Mr John WONG Chun-hon
Chairman, Preliminary Investigation Committee

[The Preliminary Investigation Committee held three meetings during the reporting period.]

Registration Committee

7.4 For the year of 2014/2015, the Registration Committee received a total of 45 applications for registration, of which 42 cases were approved. The Committee has also endorsed 6 applications for restoration of names to the Register of Optometrists during the period.

7.5 The Registration Committee is also responsible for scrutinizing qualifications, on application from registrants or institutions, for inclusion in the List of Quotable Qualifications. At the Committee's recommendation, the Board approved the inclusion of "*Certificate of Attainment in Optometry (Part II), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University*" in the list. The updated list was uploaded to the Board's website in May 2014 for registrant's easy reference.

7.6 As the Board's delegated accreditor of CPD programmes, the Registration Committee has approved 9 applications for validation of CPD programmes organized by non-accredited programme providers. Registrants may visit the Board's website for the most updated list of CPD programmes as accredited by the Board.

7.7 Besides the above statutory duties, the Registration Committee has also taken the opportunity to examine the proposal of requiring those applicants, whose name had been removed from the Register or who had a certain non-practice period, to update their professional knowledge and skills when re-applying for registration under section 12 of the SMPO. The proposal serves to safeguard the interests of the public and to maintain a high standard of professional competence among the registrants. The Committee is preparing a set of guidelines for assessing professional training for the purpose of registration as optometrists, which will be submitted to the Optometrists Board for consideration in due course.

Mr John WONG Chun-hon
Chairman, Registration Committee

[The Registration Committee held one meeting during the reporting period.]

Examination Committee

7.8 To pave way for the holding of the Part II and Part III registration examinations as provided in the Optometrists (Registration and Disiplinary Procedure) Regulation, the Examination Committee has previously worked out the format, design and the preliminaries for the examinations. The Committee's proposal was put forth to the Optometrists Board for initial consideration at its policy meeting held in August 2013. The Board shall resume discussion of the matter in due course.

Dr DO Chi-wai

Chairman, Examination Committee

[The Examination Committee transacted its business by circulation of papers during the reporting period.]

Education Committee

7.9 For the year 2014/2015, 264 members of the profession, representing 12.4% of total number of registrants, submitted returns on their CPD attainment to the Board, of which 214 registrants have attained the Board's annual requirement of 10 CPD hours.

7.10 With a view to maintaining a high professional standard and the credibility of the optometrist profession, the Education Committee would like to take the opportunity to appeal for registrants' fullest support in continually enriching their professional knowledge and skills through life-long learning and participation in CPD activities.

7.11 In July 2014, the Education Committee launched the revised CPD scheme, as one of its initiatives to encourage registrants' wider participation in CPD activities. In the future, the Committee would continue to monitor and refine the CPD scheme, taking into account the operational experience and feedback from the profession.

Miss Rufina CHAN Tin-yan
Chairman, Education Committee

[The Education Committee transacted its business by circulation of papers during the reporting period.]

Registration of Optometrists
(as at 31.3.2015)

SMPO	Qualification/Eligibility	Part of Register	Restriction on Practice	No. of registrants
12(1)(a)	(a) Bachelor of Science Degree in Optometry awarded by the Hong Kong Polytechnic or the Hong Kong Polytechnic University	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed to use drugs approved by the Board as shown in the Code of Practice 	(a) 654
	(b) Professional Diploma in Optometry issued by the Hong Kong Polytechnic			(b) 99
	(c) Part II optometrist with Certificate of Attainment in Ocular Pharmacology issued by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and has practised for one year or more after having been registered as a Part II optometrist, or has other experience that is recognized by the Board			(c) 69
12(1)(a)	(a) Higher Certificate in Optometry issued by the Hong Kong Polytechnic; or	II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not allowed to use diagnostic agents except staining agents 	(a) 20
	(b) A certification from the Optometrists Board that he has passed an examination in optometry conducted under section 15A of the SMPO			(b) 0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A certification from the Optometrists Board that he has passed an examination in refraction conducted under section 15A of the SMPO 	III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To practice refraction only 	0
12(1)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person who holds degree, diploma or any other document of any examining body other than those prescribed in law and has appropriate experience as recognized by the SMPC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined by SMPC in consultation with the Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictions relevant to the part of the register entered 	Part I = 78 Part II = 19 Part III= 0
12(1)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person who was practising optometry profession on 1 December 1994, and by reason of his education, training, professional experience and skill satisfies the SMPC that he is fit for registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined by SMPC in consultation with the Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictions relevant to the part of the register entered 	Part I = 0 Part II = 159 Part III= 44

Legend: SMPO – Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance
SMPC – Supplementary Medical Professions Council

SMPO	Qualification/Eligibility	Part of Register	Restriction on Practice	No. of registrants
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person who was practising optometry profession on 1 December 1994 but who on that date was not qualified under section 12 of the SMPO to be registered and has acquired substantial knowledge, experience and skill in the practice of his profession to the satisfaction of the SMPC 	IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not allowed to perform any function or engage in any activity other than work relating to refraction and contact lenses and not allowed to use any diagnostic agents other than staining agents 	471
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To practice refraction only 		182	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person who was practising optometry profession on 1 December 1994 and has passed the Optometrists Board examination on refraction and contact lens fitting 	IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not allowed to perform any function or engage in any activity other than work relating to refraction and contact lenses and not allowed to use any diagnostic agents other than staining agents 	133
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person who was practising optometry profession on 1 December 1994 and has passed the Optometrists Board examination on refraction 	IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To practice refraction only 	197
<u>Part</u>	<u>No.</u>			
I	900 (864)			
II	198 (198)			
III	44 (46)			
<u>IV</u>	<u>983 (989)</u>			
Total	2,125 (2,097)			

Note :

Numbers in brackets are last year's figures as at 31 March 2014.