



Optometrists & Opticians Board

2014
Annual Report

Contents

1. Optometrists And Opticians Board Members	3
2. Chairman’s Message	4
3. Introduction	5
4. Key Highlights	
4.1 Revised CPE Guidelines	7
4.2 Amendments of exemption order for Orthoptist	8
4.3 Registrations	8
5. Registration Data 2014	
5.1 Registration Categories	9
5.2 Practitioners by Registration Type	9
5.3 Practitioners by Age Group	10
5.4 Practitioners by Nationality	10
5.5 Practitioners by Fields Of Employment	11
Appendix I	
Code of Professional Conduct for Optometrists	12
Appendix II	
Code of Professional Conduct for Opticians	14
Appendix III	
Schedule of Fees	16

1. OPTOMETRISTS AND OPTICIANS BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

BOARD MEMBERS

Chairman	Dr. Khoo Chong Yew Ophthalmologist, Raffles Eye Centre
Representative for Director-General of Education	Mr. Lee Yan Kheng Senior Quality Assessor, Ministry of Education
Registrar	Dr. Harold Tan Ministry of Health
Members	Dr. Anna Yeo Optometrist, Essilor Asia
	Mr. Chandra Mohan K Nair Advocate & Solicitor, Tan Rajah & Cheah
	Ms. Caroline Lau Optician (Refraction & Dispensing), Yi Eyecare Pte Ltd
	Ms. Jacqueline Tay Optometrist, Singapore National Eye Centre
	Dr. Koh Hui Hiang Optometrist, Ngee Ann Polytechnic
	Dr. Lim Boon Ang Ophthalmologist, Tan Tock Seng Hospital
	Mr. Peter Koh Optician (Contact Lens Practitioner) The Lens Men and The Eye Site
	Mr. Roland J Izaac Optometrist, Philip D Izaac Pte Ltd
	Dr. Yvonne Ling Ophthalmologist Singapore National Eye Centre

2. CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present to you the new appointment of the Board (2014-2016) by the Minister of Health. The Board includes Registrar, ophthalmologists, optometrists, opticians and representative from the Ministry of Education and a lay member. Members have committed their time and contributed selflessly, to carry out the functions of the Board, with a key objective to improve primary eye care in Singapore, and to uphold standard of practice by registered practitioners. I would like to thank the Board members for their commitment and attention on the board matters.

In 2014, some of the main deliverables are the revised CPE guidelines and CPE activities categories. The CPE framework aims to help practitioners stay conversant and hopes to encourage more practitioners to participate in activities to uphold their practice standard.

We also amended the exemption order for Orthoptist, to include a list of registrable qualifications in the regulations to allow more graduates to practice under supervision of ophthalmologist.

A key role of the Board is to regulate professional conduct and ethics. The Board is currently inquiring into three complaints relating to professional practice and ethics against practitioners under full and provisional registration. The Board would like to urge all practitioners to adhere to the practice guidelines issued by the Board at all times.

I look forward to leading the Board through the coming term, and continue to review and implement policies to fulfill the functions of the Board.

Dr Khoo Chong Yew
Chairman
Optometrists and Opticians Board

3. INTRODUCTION

The Optometrists and Opticians Board (the “Board”) is a professional Board established under the Optometrists & Opticians Act (Chapter 213A) (the “Act”) that was passed in parliament in July 2007. The Act serves to ensure that those who provide eye care services in Singapore are qualified and properly trained so as to ensure that members of the public receive safe and quality eye care services.

The Board sets the standards required for registration, approves registration, and issues practising certificates (PC) for optometrists and opticians, as well as regulates the conduct and practice of optometrists and opticians. As at 31 Dec 2014, the Board has in the register, a total of 2,736 registered optometrists and opticians.

Table 1- No. of registrants in each category from 2008 to 2014

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Optometrists	588	729	754	820	893	981	1130
Optician (R + D)	1,335	1,325	1,293	1,280	1,289	1,294	1,413
Optician (D)	177	175	222	204	140	162	166
Optician (CLP)	65	27	27	27	26	24	27
Total	2,165	2,256	2,296	2,331	2,348	2,461	2,736

Under the Optometrists and Opticians Act (Chapter 213A), the Minister can appoint between 10 to 12 members to establish the Board. The current Board members are made up of three Ophthalmologists, four Optometrists and two Opticians from both private and public sectors. The remaining three members are the Registrar, a representative from the Ministry of Education and a Lay Member to represent the interest of persons receiving optometry and opticianry service.

The functions of the Board as prescribed by the Act are:

- a) To approve or reject applications for registration under the Act and to approve any such applications subject to such restrictions as it may think fit;
- b) To accredit courses in the practice of optometry and opticianry in Singapore for the purposes of registration;
- c) To issue guidelines on the standards for the practice of optometry and opticianry;
- d) To make recommendations to the appropriate authorities for the training and education of optometrists and opticians;
- e) To determine and regulate the conduct and ethics of optometrists and opticians; and
- f) Generally to do all such acts, matters and things as are necessary to be carried out under or for the purpose of the Act.

Who Are Optometrists?

Optometrists are primary eye care providers who specialize in performing eye examinations. Through the tests, they can detect eye infections and common eye diseases such as cataract, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration, all of which may be treatable if detected early.

In general, optometrists are qualified to:

1. Perform refraction on patients who are adults, children or adolescents;
2. Prescribe optical appliances such as glasses and contact lenses to correct vision problems such as short-sightedness, long-sightedness and astigmatism;
3. Perform visual examination on patients and refer them to other healthcare practitioners such as ophthalmologist for further management if any eye abnormalities/diseases are detected; and
4. Perform any other types of practice of eye care which is part of the practice of opticianry (eg. dispensing and fitting of glasses and contact lenses).

Who Are Opticians?

There are three different categories of opticians in Singapore. All of them are equipped with the skills to dispense and fit glasses based on prescriptions from optometrists or ophthalmologists.

The opticians are registered in the following categories:

1. Opticians (Dispensing only) – this category of opticians are only qualified to dispense and fit glasses.
2. Opticians (Refraction and Dispensing) – this category of opticians are qualified to:
 - a. Perform refraction on patients who are 8 years of age or older.
 - b. Dispense and fit glasses to correct vision problems such as short-sightedness, long-sightedness and astigmatism.
3. Opticians (Contact Lens Practice) – this category of opticians are qualified to:
 - a. Perform refraction on patients who are 8 years of age or older.
 - b. Dispense and fit glasses and contact lenses to correct vision problems such as short-sightedness, long-sightedness and astigmatism.
 - c. Provide aftercare to patients, including monitoring to detect, prevent and manage problems or complications arising from the use of contact lenses.

4. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

4.1 Revised CPE Guidelines

As the regulator of eye care professionals in the optical trade, it is the Board's main responsibility to ensure that all fully registered optometrists and opticians continue their professional learning and keep their skills up-to-date. To ensure this, the Board oversees a CPE framework to help practitioners stay conversant.

The CPE framework first started in 2009. Over the years, the industry has evolved and practitioners were able to participate in CPE activities through various ways. Thus in 2014, the Board appointed its Continuing Education Committee to review the activities categories and revised CPE guidelines for broader learning. It is now mandatory for all fully registered optometrists and opticians to declare and submit claims for CPE points obtained during the qualifying period before their practicing certificates expire.

There are total of five main categories of CPE activities (Table 1) which practitioners can claim CPE points for. Under the new guidelines, practitioners are allowed to clock more points by doing self-reading. The claim caps were increased from 5 to 15 points per year. The Board also removed the caps for attending local activities to encourage practitioners to interact and share their knowledge via workshops and seminars. In addition, the Board has also added a new category to award CPE points to supervisors whose supervisees have successfully fulfilled the Supervisory Framework requirements and were eligible for full registration.

With the launch of Professional Registration System (PRS) in 2013, the Board has worked with local CPE event providers to submit event attendance on behalf of practitioners. Practitioners can also submit claims under Category 3 (Reading) by submitting their readings online, and monitor their own CPE points after logging in to the system.

Practitioners may refer to the CPE guidelines for more details. The guideline is available for download at the Board's website at www.oob.gov.sg.

Table 2: CPE activity categories

Activity Category	Description	CPE Points System	Maximum Points per year
Category 1A	<u>Local CPE Activity</u> Any activities conducted/ organised by <u>local</u> providers.	1 point per hour for participants 2 points per hour for speakers	No Caps
Category 1B	<u>Overseas CPE Activities</u> Any activities conducted/ organised by <u>overseas</u> providers.	1 point per hour for participants 2 points per hour for speakers	20
Category 2	<u>Publications</u> Publications related to optometry or opticianry.	Author/Editor - 1 paper = 5 points Reviewer - 1 paper = 2 points	15

Activity Category	Description	CPE Points System	Maximum Points per year
Category 3	<u>Reading</u> a) Article that is related to optometry/opticianry or article that will aid the practitioner in the practice of optometry/opticianry; or b) Practice guidelines compilation; or c) Video/audio tapes or podcasts	1 point per article 1 point per compilation 1 point per tape/ podcast	15
Category 4	<u>Formal Certification Course</u> Certification must be in relation to optometry or opticianry and courses must be approved by OOB.	1 completed module = 4 CPE points	20
Category 5	<u>Supervisory Framework</u> (Supervisor Role) Supervision must be taken place over the valid qualifying period. Supervision must be a full time, on site supervision.	4 points per supervisee	12

4.2 Amendments of Exemption Order for Orthoptist

When the Optometrists and Opticians Exemption Order came in force in 2008, it was stated that a person who has obtained a degree in orthoptics, or an equivalent qualification, prior to 1st January 2008 is exempted from Section 25(1) of the Optometrists and Opticians Act. This exempts persons with the qualification in relation to the performance of refraction and binocular vision tests to detect abnormalities of the eye, provided that such acts or activities are carried out under the supervision of an ophthalmologist.

As the industry developed, the Board agreed that the exemption order needed to be updated to be more inclusive. Hence, the exemption order was amended to include a schedule with a list of Orthoptist qualifications from Australia and United Kingdom. In addition, persons who obtained the degree on or after 1 January 2008, should also perform refraction, binocular vision tests and visual field tests under the supervision of an ophthalmologist or on an ophthalmologist's patient upon a referral from the ophthalmologist.

A copy of the amended exemption order is available on Singapore Statutes Online.

4.3 REGISTRATIONS

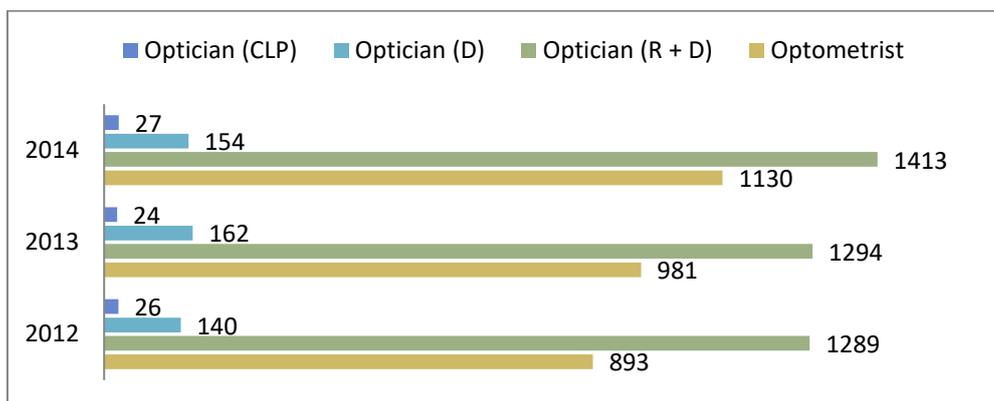
Since the Board started regulating the industry in 2008, there has been a steady supply of optometrists and opticians,

Table 3- New registrants from 2009 to 2014

Register Type	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Optometrists	77	117	176	135	166	227
Optician (Dispensing)	6	26	51	27	25	21
Optician (Refraction + Dispensing)	23	72	81	74	55	105
Total	106	215	308	236	246	353

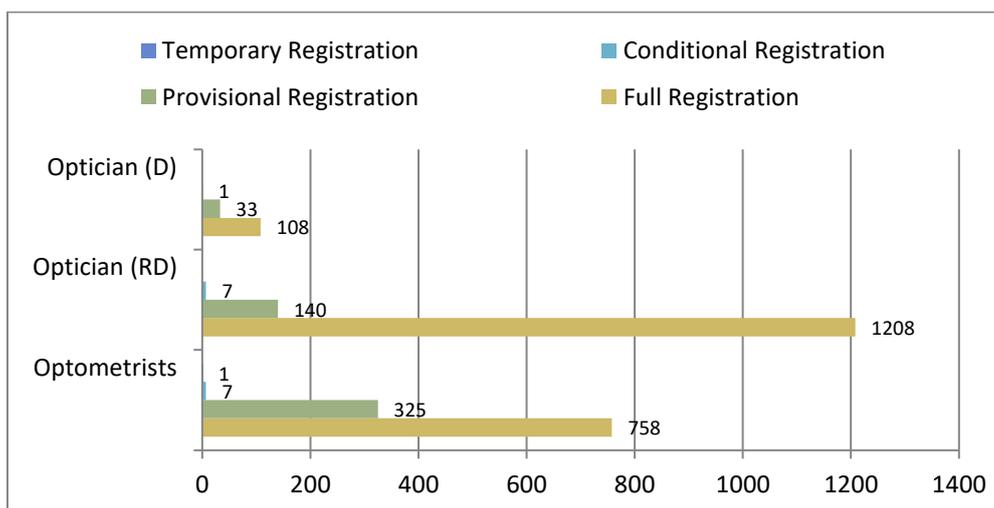
5. REGISTRATION DATA

5.1 Registration by Categories



	2012	2013	2014
Optometrist	893	981	1130
Optician (R + D)	1289	1294	1413
Optician (D)	140	162	166
Optician (CLP)	26	24	27
Total	2348	2461	2736

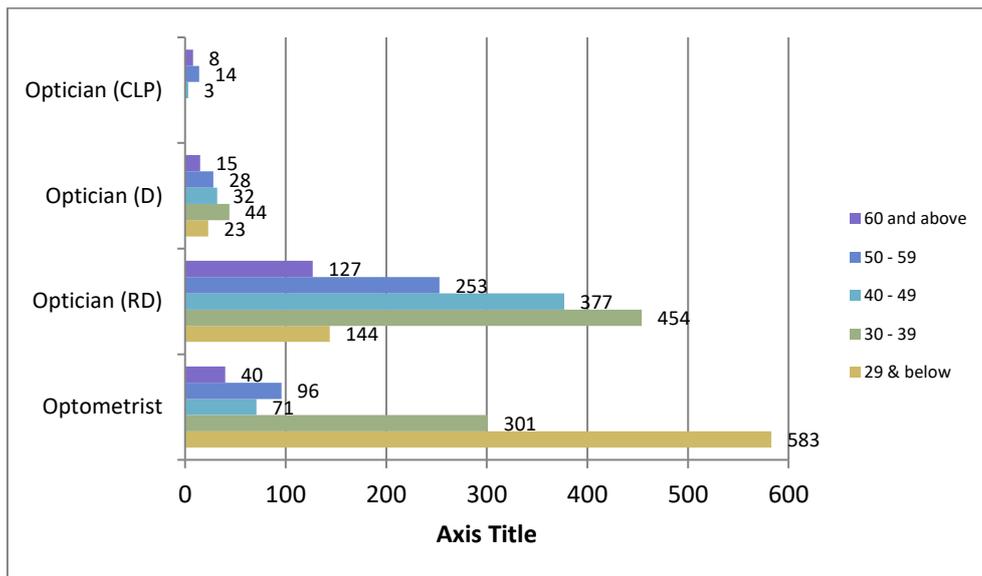
5.2 Registration by Type



	Optometrists	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)
Full Registration	758	1208	108
Provisional Registration	325	140	33
Conditional Registration	7	7	1
Temporary Registration	1	0	0
Total	1091	1355	142

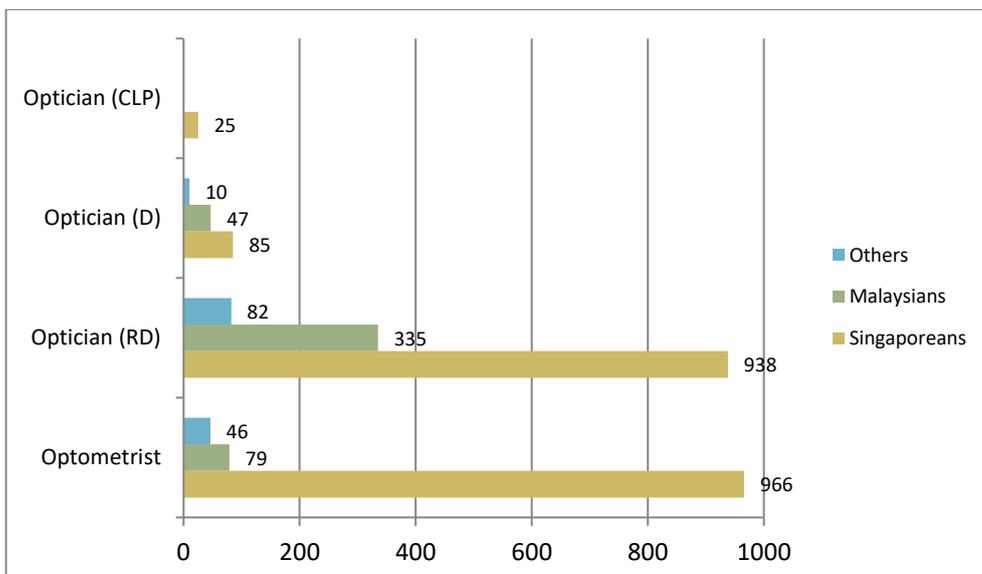
Note: Opticians (Contact Lens Practitioner) - There are a total of 27 Opticians (CLP) and all are fully registered.

5.3 Practitioners by Age Group



	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
29 & below	583	144	23	0
30 - 39	301	454	44	0
40 - 49	71	377	32	3
50 - 59	96	253	28	14
60 and above	40	127	15	8
Total	1091	1355	142	25

5.4 Practitioners by Nationality



	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Singaporeans	966	938	85	25
Malaysians	79	335	47	0
Others	46	82	10	0
Total	1091	1355	142	25

5.5 Practitioners by Fields of Employment



	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Clinical	182	13	0	1
Research	26	0	0	0
Retail	757	1280	136	22
Teaching	39	5	0	0
Wholesale	15	8	0	0
Others	72	49	6	2
Total	1091	1355	142	25

APPENDIX I

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR OPTOMETRISTS

In order to meet the Board's objectives in regulating the optometrists and opticians in Singapore, the Board has established and commissioned the Practice Ethics and Conduct Committee to develop a Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) for optometrists.

Patients and the public must be able to trust optometrists with their visual and ocular well-being. To justify this trust, optometrists have to maintain a good standard of care, conduct and behaviour. Optometrists are expected to uphold the principles dictated by this Code. Adherence to this Code will also enable public trust and confidence in the profession.

The Code of Professional Conduct constitutes a yardstick for conduct, behaviour and professional ethics for Optometrists. It can be referenced should ethical issues be raised.

Disregarding or failure to meet the standards of the code can potentially harm patients or bring disrepute to the optometric profession. Breaches of any article in this Code could lead to optometrists being asked to explain their actions and face disciplinary proceedings for professional misconduct.

This Code will be periodically updated to cover areas that were not previously dealt with, including issues arising from advances in optometry, and statutory or regulatory requirements.

- a) An optometrist must conduct himself or herself in his or her professional duties in accordance with the Optometrists and Opticians Act 2007 and Regulations and in accordance with this Code. The Code does not over-ride obligations that may be imposed on the practice of optometry by the Optometrists and Opticians Act and Regulations and any other Act or Regulation relating to the practice of optometry.
- b) An optometrist must maintain his or her knowledge and practise at a competent level and participate in continuing professional education activities.
- c) An optometrist must only perform or participate in those procedures that are within his or her competence and for which he or she is appropriately qualified, and refer those patients whose needs or requests are outside his or her competence, and where necessary follow up the referral.
- d) An optometrist must ensure privacy and confidentiality for his or her patients and for their ophthalmic records unless disclosure is necessary in the course of referral to a colleague in his or another healthcare profession or he/she is required to by the Board or the Law. Information contained in any patient's ophthalmic record should be made available to that patient if requested.
- e) An optometrist must not exploit his or her professional relationship with a patient or any other person in the conduct of his or her practice sexually, emotionally or financially or otherwise in any way.
- f) An optometrist should take reasonable steps to ensure his or her patients understand at the commencement of any test, procedure or treatment the risks, complications, possible reactions, nature, purpose, cost of and alternatives to the procedure or treatment.
- g) An optometrist must treat patients without prejudice of race, religion, creed, social standing, disability or financial status.
- h) An optometrist must respect the wish of a patient for a second opinion and, if requested, help the patient obtain the appropriate second opinion.
- i) If an optometrist has reason to believe that a colleague is behaving in an unprofessional manner, or that his standard of practice falls substantially below acceptable standards, he should report the conduct to the Optometrists and Opticians Board.

- j) An optometrist must not attend to a patient whilst his ability to do so is impaired by the influence of alcohol, drugs or physical or mental illness.
- k) An optometrist must maintain professionalism in informing the public about his or her services, ensuring that information projected is factual and does not self aggrandise. An optometrist shall not advertise his or her services in a way that is not consistent with the Optometrists and Opticians (Practice, Conduct, Ethics and Publicity) Regulations or any guidelines promulgated by the Board relating to publicity.

APPENDIX II

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR OPTICIANS

The Board has similarly established and commissioned the Practice Ethics and Conduct Committee to develop this Code of Professional Conduct (CPC) for opticians.

Patients and the public must be able to trust opticians implicitly with their visual and ocular well-being. To justify this trust, opticians have to maintain a good standard of care, conduct and behaviour. Opticians are expected to uphold the principles dictated by their Code. Adherence to a Code of Professional Conduct will enable public trust and confidence in the profession.

The Code of Professional Conduct constitutes a yardstick for conduct, behaviour professional ethics. It can be referenced should ethical issues be raised.

The Board is of the view that disregarding or failure to meet an agreed code of standards amounting to professional misconduct can potentially harm patients or cause disrepute to the opticianry profession. Professional misconduct may be judged through disciplinary proceedings.

This Code will be periodically updated to cover areas that were not previously dealt with, including issues arising from advances in opticianry, and statutory or regulatory requirements.

- a) An optician must conduct himself or herself in his or her professional duties in accordance with the Optometrists and Opticians Act 2007 and Regulations and in accordance with this Code. This Code does not over-ride obligations imposed in the practice of opticianry by the Optometrists and Opticians Act and Regulations and any other Act or Regulation relating to the practice of opticianry.
- b) An optician must maintain his or her knowledge and practise at a competent level and participate in continuing professional education activities.
- c) An optician must only perform or participate in those procedures that are within his or her level of competency and for which he or she is appropriately qualified, and refer those patients whose conditions are outside his or her level of competence.
- d) An optician must ensure privacy and confidentiality for his or her patients and their ophthalmic records unless disclosure is necessary in the course of referral to another profession or is required by the Board or the law. Information contained in any patient's ophthalmic record should be made available to that patient if requested.
- e) An optician must not exploit his or her professional relationship with a patient or any other person in the conduct of his or her practice sexually, emotionally, financially or otherwise in any way.
- f) An optician should take reasonable steps to ensure his or her patients understand any procedure or prescription, risks and complications if any as well as the costs to the patient.
- g) An optician must manage his patients without bias or regard for race, religion, creed, social standing, disability or financial status.
- h) An optician must respect the wish of a patient for a second opinion and, if requested, help the patient obtain an appropriate second opinion.
- i) If an optician has reason to believe that a colleague is behaving in an unprofessional manner, or that his standard of practice falls substantially below acceptable standards, he should report the conduct to the Optometrists and Opticians Board.
- j) An optician must not attend to a patient when his ability to do so is impaired by the influence of alcohol, drugs, physical or mental illness.

- k) An optician must maintain professionalism in informing the public about his or her services, ensuring that information projected is purely factual and devoid of any attempt at self aggrandisement. An optician shall not advertise his or her services in a way that is not consistent with the Optometrists and Opticians (Practice, Conduct, Ethics and Publicity) Regulations or any guidelines promulgated by the Board relating to publicity.

APPENDIX III

Schedule of Fees

Application Fee	\$50
Registration Fee	\$200
Practising Certificate Renewal Fees (2 years):	
- Optometrists	\$300
- Opticians (CLP)	\$280
- Opticians (Refraction & Dispensing)	\$280
- Opticians (Dispensing)	\$200
Late application fee for the renewal of a practising certificate:	
where the application is made less than 30 days before the expiry of the practising certificate	\$50
where the application is made after the expiry of the practising certificate	\$100
Registration of any additional qualification	\$50
Restoration Fee	\$300
Certified True Copy of Certificate Fee	\$50
Certificate of Good Standing Fee	\$60