



Optometrists & Opticians Board

2019 *Annual Report*

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1. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

1.1 Re-accreditation of courses by Singapore Polytechnic

Under the Optometrists and Opticians Act, one of the key functions of the Board is to assess and determine the standard and content of courses, and accredit them for the purpose of registration. For fully accredited courses, they would be gazetted and included under the First and Second Schedules of the Optometrist and Opticians (Registration and Practising Certificates) Regulations. Thereafter, the Board would periodically check and review to ensure continuous quality and relevance of the professional training conducted in the courses .

Singapore Polytechnic is the first local educational institution recognised by the Board to offer optometry diploma and opticianry certification courses. Hence, it was also the first to be engaged by the Board's Accreditation Committee (AC) for the re-accreditation of its courses.

The courses were reviewed extensively by the AC, and found to have met all the assessment criteria. The re-accreditation exercise was completed in 2019. In future, such re-accreditation would be done once every five years. During this period, institutions are required to update the Board if there are any significant changes to the courses.

1.2 Complaints against Optometrists and Opticians

The Board concluded its investigation into the following complaints on professional misconduct in 2019.

a) Complaint 1

The complaint was made against an Optician (Refraction and Dispensing) who prescribed a pair of spectacles to the complainant despite knowing that he was under review by an ophthalmologist for an eye condition. The complainant alleged he could not see clearly with his new spectacles and that there was no proper refraction room in the shop he visited.

The complainant later sought for refund of deposit but was refused as the Optician had already delivered the prescribed spectacles. Nonetheless, the Optician suggested to hold on to the new spectacles and replace the lenses for the complainant if he could obtain a new prescription from an ophthalmologist. The complainant felt this was unnecessary, and therefore lodged a complaint.

The Board reviewed and proceeded with an inquiry. The Board was of the view that the Optician should not have proceeded with refraction and prescribing of spectacles for the complainant but should have instead referred him to an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

In addition, the Board noted that the shop did not meet the requirements under the Board's Professional Practice Guidelines (PPG) (Article 1.1.2) which state that every optician shall ensure that refraction is conducted in a facility that allows a distance of 6 metres between the patient and the visual acuity chart, or 3 metres if a mirror is used.

The Board was also of the view that the Optician could have kept better patient records, which should include patient's particulars, measurement and description of the patient's optical appliances, results of the observation, examination or measurement of presenting monocular visual acuities and refractive error and best corrected visual acuities (Article 1.2.1 and 1.2.2).

After considering all information and the fact that this was the Optician's first non-compliance with the requirements, the Board issued the Optician with a Letter of Advice.

b) Complaint 2

The Board received a complaint against an Optometrist who had sold contact lenses to a member of public who claimed to be buying for a friend, who was an existing customer, without proper verification.

The Board investigated the complaint and the Optometrist explained that an eye exam was conducted briefly for a prior customer, but the purchase was not completed as the customer was in a hurry. Hence, the Optometrist had assumed that the member of public had come to complete the purchase on behalf of the said customer.

Under Article 4 of the PPG for Optometrists, optometrists are required to examine every patient's suitability for contact lens, advise the patient on contact lens wear and document the assessment and advice in the patient's ophthalmic record. Optometrists shall also ensure that the contact lenses prescribed/dispensed/fitted with, are appropriate for the needs of the patient.

The Board was of the view that the Optometrist should have verified the identity of the customer and his intent to purchase on behalf of the earlier customer before selling the contact lens. After due consideration, the Optometrist was issued with a Letter of Advice, reminded to observe and always comply with the regulations and practice guidelines as required by the Board.

2. REGISTRATION DATA

All data in this section are based on practitioners on register with valid practising certificates.

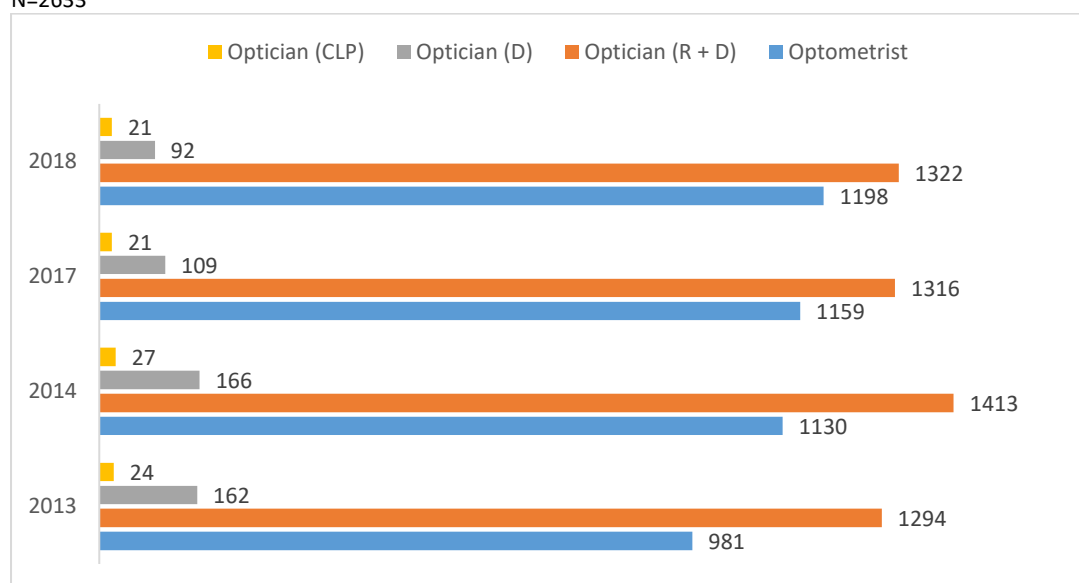
2.1 New Registrations

Since the Board started regulating the industry in 2008, there has been a steady supply of optometrists and opticians. The figures provided included new registration for all registration type (full, provisional, conditional and temporary registration).

Register Type	2015	2016	2017	2018
Optician (Dispensing)	16	5	18	1
Optician (Refraction + Dispensing)	44	58	50	50
Optometrists	146	152	146	141
Total	206	215	214	192

2.2 Registration by Categories

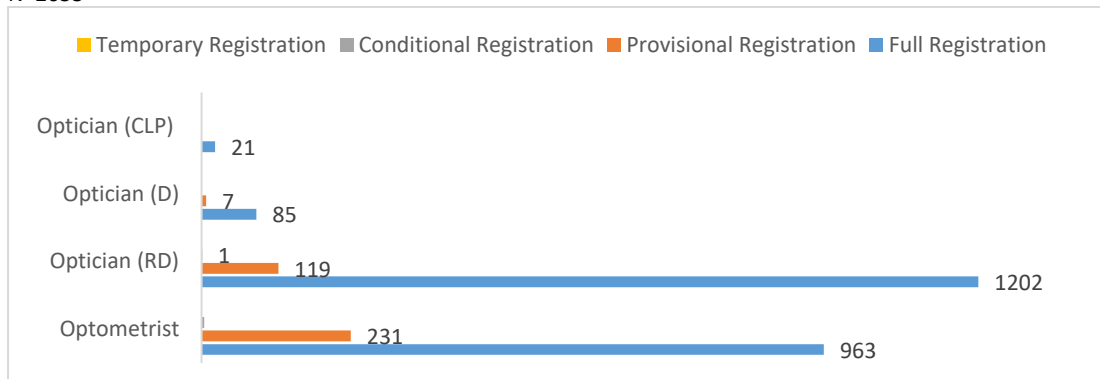
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	2013	2014	2017	2018
Optometrist	981	1130	1159	1198
Optician (R + D)	1294	1413	1316	1322
Optician (D)	162	166	109	92
Optician (CLP)	24	27	21	21
Total	2461	2736	2605	2633

2.3 Registration by Type

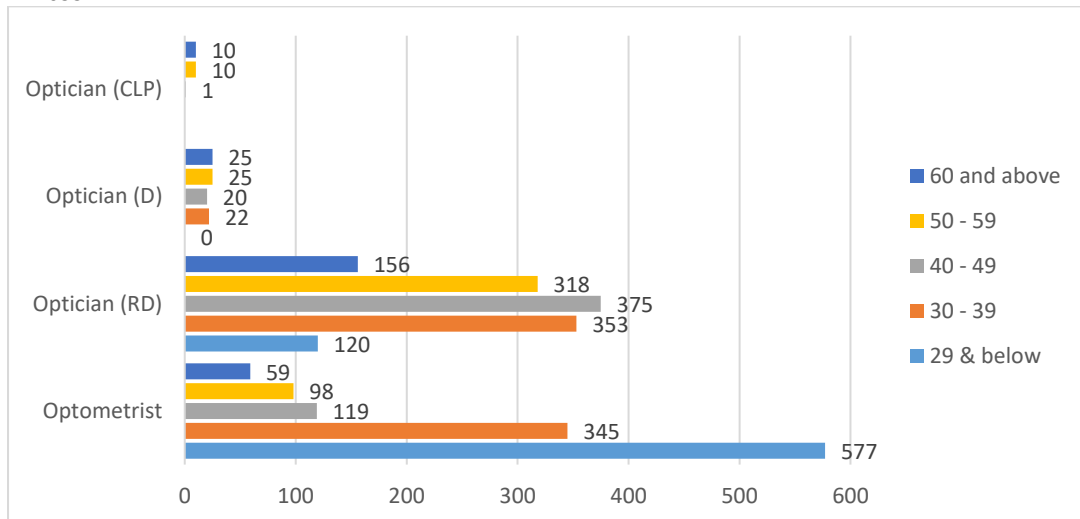
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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Full Registration	963	1202	85	21
Provisional Registration	231	119	7	0
Conditional Registration	4	1	0	0
Temporary Registration	0	0	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>1198</i>	<i>1322</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>21</i>

2.4 Practitioners by Age Group

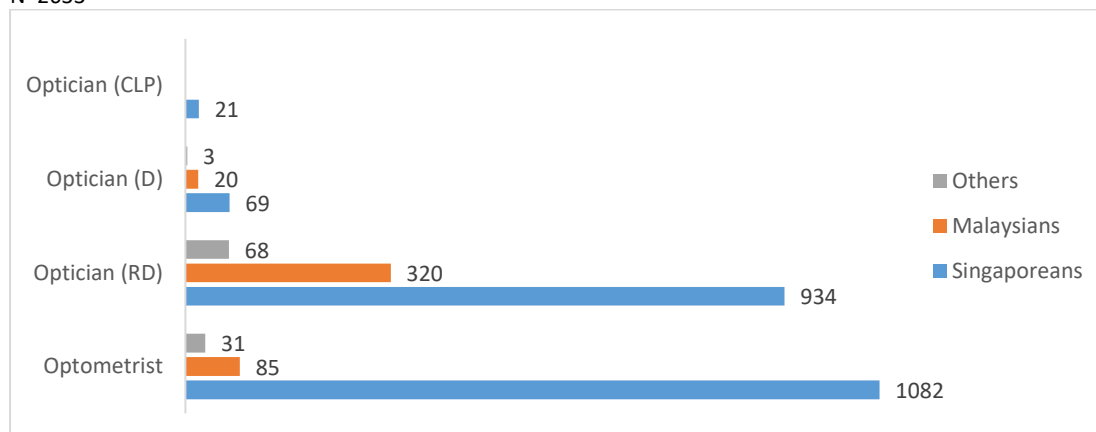
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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
29 & below	577	120	0	0
30 - 39	345	353	22	0
40 - 49	119	375	20	1
50 - 59	98	318	25	10
60 and above	59	156	25	10
<i>Total</i>	<i>1198</i>	<i>1322</i>	<i>92</i>	<i>21</i>

2.5 Practitioners by Nationality

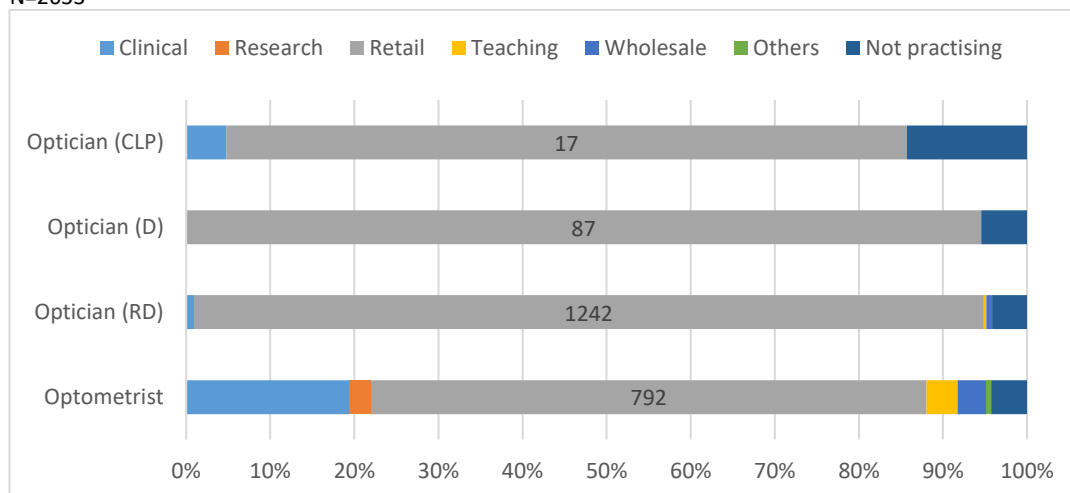
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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Singaporeans	1082	934	69	21
Malaysians	85	320	20	0
Others	31	68	3	0
Total	1198	1322	92	21

2.6 Practitioners by Fields of Employment

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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Clinical	232	12	0	1
Research	31	0	0	0
Retail	792	1242	87	17
Teaching	44	4	0	0
Wholesale	41	9	0	0
Others	7	0	0	0
Not practising	51	55	5	3
Total	1198	1322	92	21