



Optometrists & Opticians Board

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# *2020 Annual Report*

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## 1. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

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### 1.1 COVID-19: Advisories and Interim Delegation of Contact Lens Delivery

With the heightened awareness about the COVID-19 situation since February 2020, the Optometrists and Opticians Board (OOB) issued several advisories to remind optometrists and opticians to step up on personal hygiene and disinfection routines at their practices.

1. [Advice for OOB practitioners \(COVID-19\)](#) [17 February 2020]
2. [Safe Distancing Measures for Optical Shops](#) [31 March 2020]
3. [Optical Services as Essential Services](#) [ 7 April 2020]
4. [Guidance to Phased Approached Re-opening for Optical Services](#) [4June 2020]

In addition, as public was expected to stay home during the circuit breaker period in April 2020, the OOB allowed [delegation of contact lens delivery during the period of COVID-19](#). With this arrangement, patients or consumers could replenish their contact lens supplies safely and legally from their qualified practitioners and optical shops instead of unknown sources. Practitioners were expected to adhere to the practice guidelines, and the arrangement would be subject to OOB's review.

### 1.2 Revision to CPE Fulfilments

#### Removal of Category 3 Point Cap for CPE Fulfilment (QP Ending September 2020)

Under the OOB's current Continuing Professional Education (CPE) policy, all practitioners with full registration are expected to fulfil the minimum required CPE points by participating in activities recognised under the CPE Framework. Optometrists are expected to fulfil 50 points and opticians, 40 points, over a 2-year qualifying period (QP).

In view of the pandemic situation, the OOB noted that several CPE events were cancelled, and the number of local events continued to decline as the authorities discouraged mass events.

Hence, the OOB removed the cap of 30 points for activities under Category 3 (Reading and Online Programme) for practitioners with QP ending September 2020. Practitioners with outstanding points were allowed to fulfil the remaining outstanding CPE points by doing self-reading and participating in online programmes.

As of 20 September 2020, 92% of the practitioners were able to meet the minimum CPE points required. The OOB would contact and seek explanation from the rest of the practitioners on the challenges they faced with fulfilling the CPE requirements.

#### Revision to Professional Practice Guidelines (CPE-Related) 2020

In August 2020, the OOB practitioners were informed of the amendment of articles in the **Code of Professional Conduct and Professional Practice Guidelines for Optometrists and Optician** (PPG).

Under the revised PPG (Oct 2018), all practising practitioners are expected to fulfil the required CPE points within each QP. Failure to fulfil the CPE requirements could amount to professional misconduct and the registered practitioners may be subjected to disciplinary actions by the Board.

Similarly, for practitioners whose practising certificates have lapsed and who wish to return to practise, are now required to obtain the requisite CPE points in the 24 months preceding their application for practising certificate (PC) with the Board.

The revised articles are applicable to practitioners with immediate effect from August 2020. Practitioners who wish to return to practice may contact the OOB Secretariat at [OOB@spb.gov.sg](mailto:OOB@spb.gov.sg) for clarifications or assistance.

### **1.3 Revision to Supervisory Framework Guidelines**

The OOB has revised its Supervisory Framework Guidelines for all provisionally registered optometrists and opticians (“practitioners”) and the changes took effect from 1 October 2020.

The key updates include the following:

- Recommended list of equipment to guide optometrists in their selection of suitable optical employment;
- Enhanced conditions for supervised practice and eligibility criteria for supervisor (no spouse or first-degree relatives);
- Elaboration on different supervisory roles;
- Further definition of follow-up requirements under additional guiding pointers for optometrists;
- Submission of supervisor’s reports by supervisor at regular intervals via email for all new registration granted from 1 October 2020 onwards;
- Submission of logbook via email only; and
- New Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs) about COVID-19.

For more information, please refer to the Supervisory Framework Guidelines for the respective professions via this [link](#).

### **1.4 Complaints Against Optometrists**

The OOB received two complaints in 2019 against two optometrists for alleged negligence of care, and both cases were concluded in 2020.

#### First Complaint

In the first case, a complaint was lodged against an optometrist for alleged failure to conduct a proper eye check and provide appropriate care on several occasions when the practitioner attended to him at the optical practice.

The Board later noted from the explanation by the optometrist that the prescriptions were recent and were either from an optometrist or ophthalmologist at the eye clinics and hospitals

for dispensing of glasses. There was nothing in the prescriptions that suggested that it could not be used for dispensing of glasses.

In addition, the OOB noted that the optometrist, although representing a lens company, had attended to the complainant on a few occasions in his attempt to resolve the issues raised by complainant, and had replaced the glasses on two occasions. The glasses were also verified with the prescriptions before they were submitted to the optical practice for fitting accuracies.

In this regard, the OOB was of the view that the optometrist had acted professionally and exercised due diligence in managing care for the complainant and thus dismissed the complaint.

### Second Complaint

Complainant alleged that an optometrist breached his duty of care by failing to check for cataract in complainant's eyes during her visit to his practice place.

The optometrist explained that he had performed a subjective refraction with retinoscopy and adjusted the lens power until the complainant (then 40 years old) had no visual difficulty. The practitioner did not check for cataract in complainant's eyes as he knew her as his customer from his previous practice place and that she appeared satisfied with her level of vision following his eye examination.

At the complainant's second visit, the practitioner performed the check for cataract once he detected that her prescription had changed significantly within the two months of her visits.

Having considered the evidence, while the Board was satisfied that there was no professional misconduct or negligence on practitioner's part that merited further disciplinary action, the OOB was of the view that the practitioner ought to have treated the complainant as a new patient and checked for cataract instead of relying on his previous consultations.

Hence, although the Board decided to dismiss the complaint, the optometrist was issued with a stern reminder to do a detailed eye examination, including a slit-lamp biomicroscopy, on all first-time patients of his existing practice place.

## 2. REGISTRATION DATA

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

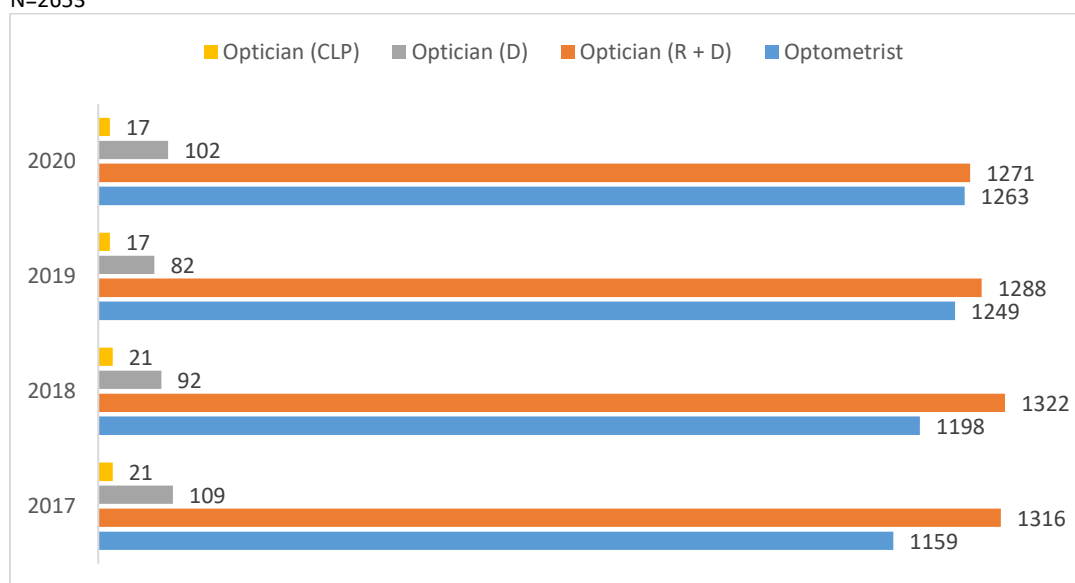
### 2.1 New Registrations

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

Register Type	2017	2018	2019	2020
Optician (Dispensing)	18	1	16	23
Optician (Refraction + Dispensing)	50	50	72	59
Optometrists	146	141	168	137
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>219</b>

### 2.2 Registration by Categories

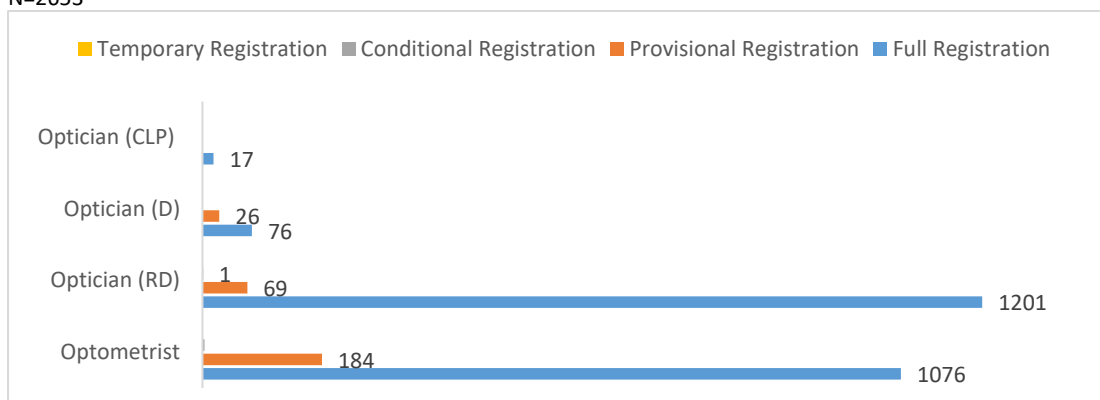
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	2017	2018	2019	2020
Optometrist	1,159	1,198	1,249	1,263
Optician (R + D)	1,316	1,322	1,288	1,271
Optician (D)	109	92	82	102
Optician (CLP)	21	21	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,605</b>	<b>2,633</b>	<b>2,636</b>	<b>2,653</b>

## 2.3 Registration by Type

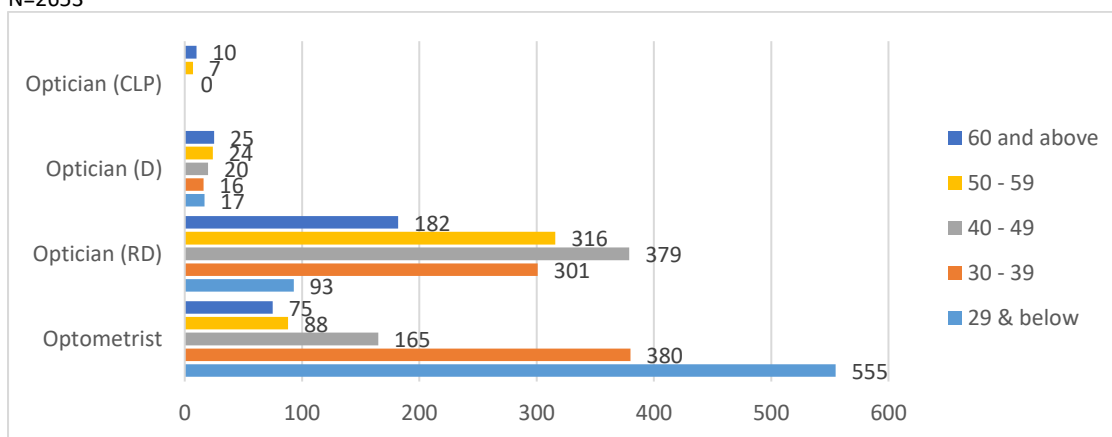
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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Full Registration	1,076	1,201	76	17
Provisional Registration	184	69	26	0
Conditional Registration	3	1	0	0
Temporary Registration	0	0	0	0
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>1,263</i>	<i>1,271</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>17</i>

## 2.4 Practitioners by Age Group

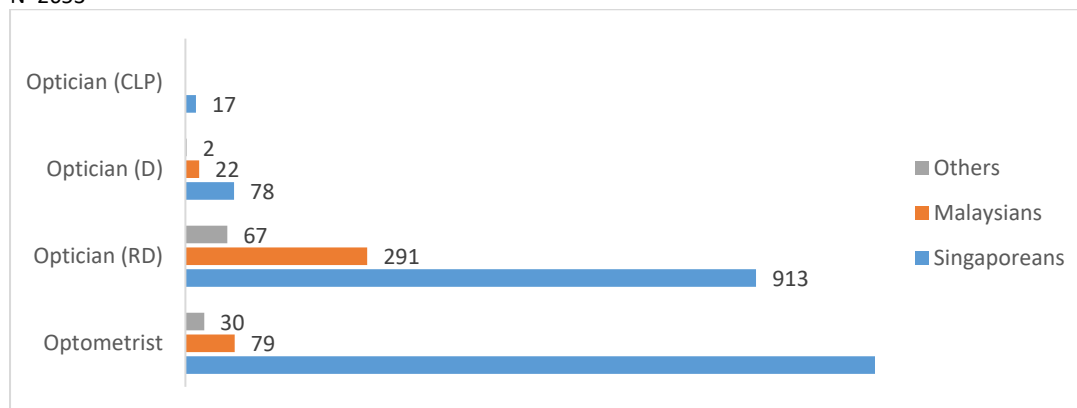
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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
29 & below	555	93	17	0
30 - 39	380	301	16	0
40 - 49	165	379	20	0
50 - 59	88	316	24	7
60 and above	75	182	25	10
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,263</i>	<i>1,271</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>17</i>

## 2.5 Practitioners by Nationality

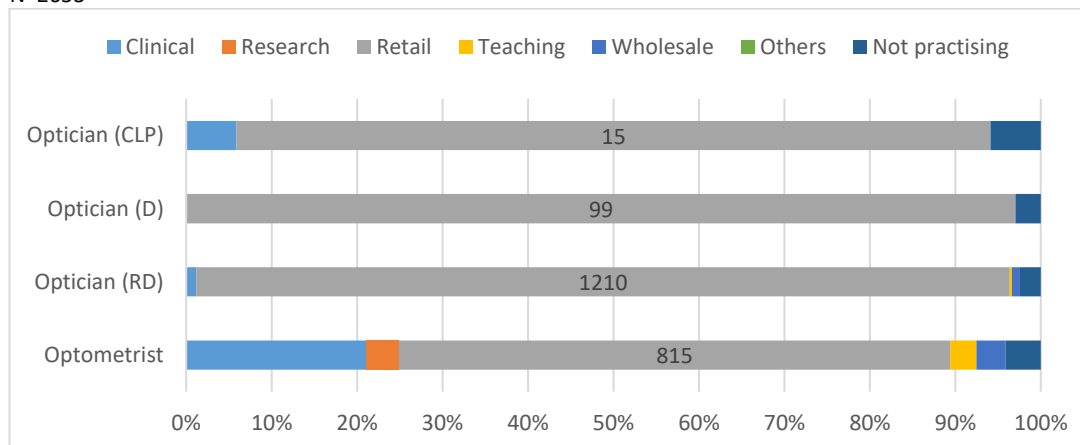
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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Singaporeans	1,154	913	78	17
Malaysians	79	291	22	0
Others	30	67	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>17</b>

## 2.6 Practitioners by Fields of Employment

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	Optometrist	Optician (RD)	Optician (D)	Optician (CLP)
Clinical	266	15	0	1
Research	48	0	0	0
Retail	815	1,210	99	15
Teaching	39	3	0	0
Wholesale	43	12	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0
Not practising	52	31	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,263</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>17</b>