

Registration Guidelines for Optometrists and Opticians



Optometrists and Opticians Council

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Edition 1



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH, SENIORS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

Table of Contents

1.	ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT.....	3
2.	OVERVIEW OF REGISTRATION	3
3.	INITIAL REGISTRATION	4
	3.1. REGISTRATION OF LOCUM & AUTHORIZED VISITING PRACTITIONER.....	5
4.	RE-REGISTRATION	6
5.	INACTIVE STATUS, UPDATING & RESTORATION TO REGISTER.....	7
6.	REGISTRATION APPEALS AND CPD INTERNAL REVIEW	7
7.	ACCRUING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	8
8.	APPENDICES.....	13
	8.1. Frequently Asked Questions.....	13
	8.2. Transitional Pro-rated Fee Provision	13
	8.3. Regulatory Changes from Previous Edition	13

Document Information

These guidelines were established in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, Seniors and Environment. Reference this document as: *Registration Guidelines for Optometrists and Opticians*. (Mar, 2015). Optometrists and Opticians Council.

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2014, Ed 1.	New document outlining registration process to assist practitioners
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1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides **guidance to practitioners** wishing to register with the Optometrists and Opticians Council (the Council). The application process, required documentation, continued professional development and appeals are described. **This document is effective March 1st 2015.**

Definitions

- **Act** means the Optometrists and Opticians Act 2008. Copies may be found on-line at: www.bermulalaws.bm/Laws/Consolidated
- **CPD** means Continuing Professional Development; **CEU** means Continuing Education Unit
- **Council** means the Optometrists and Opticians Council
- **Office** means the office of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO). Note, the registrations manager in the Office provides administrative support to the Council.
- **Registrar** appointed at this time is the Council chair
- **Regulations** mean the Optometrists and Opticians Regulations 2010. Copies may be found on-line at: www.bermulalaws.bm/Laws/Consolidated

2. OVERVIEW OF REGISTRATION

If you wish to practice in Bermuda as an Optometrist or Optician you must be registered with the Council. Registration ensures practitioners meet standards that protect the public. Registered practitioners are required to meet criteria established by the Council, to abide by the legislation, and to adhere to the standards, ethical codes, scopes, and continued professional development as established by the Council, these include:

- a. The Act and the Regulations
- b. *Code and Standards of Conduct*. (2015). Optometrists and Opticians Council
- c. *Optometrists: Prescribing Restrictions and Requirements* (2013).

Initial registration is valid for up to two-years, after which renewal is required every two years. Re-registration for all practitioners is batched for **Sept 1st every second odd-year**. You must apply by July 31st. The first re-registration occurs in 2015. To remain registered, an applicant must meet the re-registration requirements which include continued professional development and minimum practice. This ensures professional growth and keeps practitioners abreast with best practice and protects the interests of the public. In addition, this process allows us to monitor compliance with continued professional development and to ensure that our practitioner information is up-to-date. Individuals who do not re-register, or satisfy the re-registration requirements, by the deadline, will be removed from the register.

Under sections 25 and 27 of the Act, only registered practitioners are entitled to use the profession's title and the term "registered" (denoted by "R") to describe the nature of their professional practice. Non-registered persons are not allowed to practice, or identify themselves, as an Optometrist or Optician. Persons who practice without an active registration status are breaking the law, and will be subject to disciplinary procedures. For more information on the disciplinary process see sections 14-24 of the Act.

3. INITIAL REGISTRATION

- i. Registration applications, and other correspondence, are processed through the Office
- ii. For non-Bermudians, an offer of employment must be submitted with the application
- iii. Registrants must submit a completed **Registration Package**¹ accompanied by the required documents and fee as indicated following:
 1. A completed *Registration* form
 2. Offer of employment letter from Bermuda employer (for non-Bermudians only)
 3. Curriculum Vitae detailing education and employment history
 4. One passport-sized photograph
 5. Registration fee (see www.gov.bm/ministryOfHealth/OCMO/fees for current fee [Bermuda/US dollars]). Make cheque/draft payable to the ACCOUNTANT GENERAL. Do not mail cash. If your registration date is less than 24 months before re-registration at Sept 1st, on odd years, you are eligible for a fee reduction (see #xi below)

Along with **original or notarized copies** of the following:

[copy of notarized copies will not be accepted. If documents are not in English, an English translation must be provided and notarized]

6. The originals of all professional diplomas awarded to the applicant, or copies of the diplomas certified as true copies by or on behalf of the authorities by which the original diplomas were respectively awarded or qualification certificate(s) or letter of proof of qualification (graduation) from relevant learning institution
7. Proof of competency to practice in the jurisdiction in which you were **trained** i.e. national certification exam certificates (College transcript or letter), where applicable. For example, this is usually required in the USA, but not in the UK.
8. Proof of registration (aka licensure) in current jurisdiction of practice. For a new graduate, an official letter of *eligibility* to register is required from the regulatory authority in that jurisdiction.
9. Proof of good standing from the profession's regulatory body in the jurisdiction in which you were last registered.
10. Two official letters of reference, one of each as follows:
 - a. A certificate or testimonial of the *character* of the applicant, given within the twelve months period preceding the date of the application, by a person of standing and responsibility well acquainted with the applicant.
 - b. A certificate or testimonial of the *professional competence* of the applicant in the practice of optometry given by an optometrist or optician of standing and responsibility well acquainted with the practice of the applicant.
11. Birth certificate or passport
12. Marriage or Deed Poll certificate (if your documents reference different names)
13. Professional association membership card or certificate (if applicable)

¹ Forms may be obtained from the Ministry website or from the registrations manager at the Office

- iv. **Applications will not be processed if incomplete.** The applicant will be asked to re-submit a completed form, which may result in a delay of processing and the right to practice.
- v. It is the registrant's responsibility to notify the Council of their change of address and name within 30 days after the change becomes effective
- vi. Successful applicants will be informed that their registration certificate may be picked up from the Office.
- vii. If the application is not approved, the applicant will be informed in writing as to the reason and has the right to appeal the decision (see section #6 following)
- viii. Practitioners should display their registration certificate in a public area at their place of work.
- ix. The Council that regulates the professions is comprised of five (5) registered practitioners, i.e. four Optometrists and one Optician. If you wish to serve on the Council please contact the Office.
- x. **Pro-rata of fee:** If your initial registration date is less than 24 months before the re-registration date, then the fee requirement is pro-rated to the nearest 6 month period (see table 1). This is a new fee policy and only affects persons applying after Sept 1st, 2015.

Table 1. Initial Fee if Re-registration (Sept, 2017) is due in less than 24 months

Period to Re-registration	Date of <u>Initial</u> Registration	Fee
19-23	Sept 1 st 2015 to Feb 28 th 2016	full
13-18	Mar 1 st to Aug 31 st , 2016	$\frac{3}{4}$
7-12	Sept 1 st 2016 to Feb 28 th 2017	$\frac{1}{2}$
0-6	Mar 1 st to Aug 31 st , 2017	$\frac{1}{4}$

However, if your initial application was between Sept 1st 2013 and Aug 31st 2015 then you are eligible for a fee reduction (see **Transitional pro-rated-fee provision**, Appendix 8.2).

3.1. REGISTRATION OF LOCUM & AUTHORIZED VISITING PRACTITIONER

- i. A locum provides cover for a practitioner who is absent from practice for short periods usually up to 3 months, due to personal reasons (holiday, illness, bereavement etc).
- ii. In accordance with section 12 of the Act, locum Optometrists and Opticians must meet the same registration requirements as for other practitioners. The application process is similar as for other practitioners. However the period of validity is only three (3) months, although this may be extended by three months. Please contact the Office for the appropriate registration form and fee.
- iii. An authorized visiting practitioner provides services that are not available in Bermuda. Their practice is limited in period and scope. There is no provision in the Act for authorized visiting practitioners.

4. RE-REGISTRATION

Re-registration is tied to continued professional development and minimum practice. In order to maintain active registration status, practitioners must re-register **every two years** as follows:

Re-registration steps:

- i The next registration period is Sept 1st 2015 to Aug 31st 2017. The **deadline to re-register is 31st July 2015**, and every second odd year thereafter (2017, 2019 etc). The July 31st date is one calendar month *before* your registration expires. Registration opens June 1st, i.e. two (2) months *before* the deadline. ***You should commence the process in June*** so as to avoid an interruption in your registration status and thus your legal right to practice. It is your responsibility to know the re-registration date. Failure to receive re-registration notices, or not knowing your re-registration date, is not grounds for applying late. Applications received after 31st July may not be processed in time to prevent an interruption in practice. Applications received after 31st September will incur a late fee.
- ii Attain the required continuing professional development (CPD) and minimum practice hours within the two years prior to re-registration. These must be documented on the *CPD Record* form. In addition, please note:
 - a. If re-registration is less than two years since the initial registration the number of CPDs required will be pro-rated (see table 4).
 - b. For more information on attaining CPD and documentation required see table 6.
 - c. The minimum number of practice hours is 100 hours²
- iii Complete the *Re-registration Application* form and *CPD Record* form. The forms may be down-loaded, emailed, or a printed copy may be picked up, from the Office.
- iv Submit the following to the Office:
 - a. Completed *Re-registration* Form; and
 - b. Completed *CPD Records* Form, and verifying documentation of all CPD obtained; and
 - c. The re-registration fee (see www.gov.bm/ministryOfHealth/OCMO/fees for current fee [Bermuda/US dollars]). Make cheque/draft payable to the ACCOUNTANT GENERAL. Do not mail cash. If your initial application was between Sept 1st 2013 and Aug 31st 2015 please see the ***transitional pro-rata-fee provision*** (appendix 8.2)
 - d. And, for persons who have not registered in Bermuda for more than two years, but have been practicing in another jurisdiction, include an official letter of good standing from the authorized body in that jurisdiction.
- v It is recommended that you keep a copy of all documents submitted for re-registration.
- vi The registrations manager will check the application package. If it is complete it will be sent to the Council for assessment.
- vii **Applications will not be processed if incomplete.** The applicant will be asked to re-submit a completed form, which may result in a delay of processing and interruption of practice.

² Minimum practice hours satisfies the continuing to meet experience requirement [s8(2)a, the Act]. This may be added to the Act for the removal of doubt if required.

- viii Successful applicants will be informed that their registration certificate may be picked up from the Office.
- ix If the application is not approved, the applicant will be informed in writing as to the reason, and has the right to appeal the decision (see section #6 following)
- x Practitioners should display their registration certificate in a public area at their place of work.

5. INACTIVE STATUS, UPDATING & RESTORATION TO REGISTER

If a registered person intends to refrain from practicing, or from practicing in Bermuda, for more than 12 months, they may apply to have their registration designated as **inactive**. The Council will direct the Registrar to enter a notation on the Register as inactive. The advantage of this is, when the practitioner wishes to return to practice, the process is re-registration, not initial registration, that is, fewer documents are required.

Inactive means it is unlawful for a person to practice, to use the professional title, or to use the term “registered”. If you practice without having an active registration status you will be subject to disciplinary procedures (see section 14 - 24, the Act).

If a person wishes to have their registration **re-instated**, they will need to apply as for re-registration. However, in addition, they will be required to undertake **updating** as determined by the Council. Updating includes study, CPD and clinical requirements. Table 2 is a general guide only; you must contact the Office for updating advice from the Council regarding your case.

Table 2. Restoration Updating Requirements

Period inactive (years)	Updating required (# days)
0 - 2	n/a ⁺
2 - 5	10 days
> 5 yrs	20 days

Notes

- + If inactive period is less than 2 years, then the re-registration CPDs apply
- Study may be private or formal
- A day is defined as 7 hours

6. REGISTRATION APPEALS AND CPD INTERNAL REVIEW

Registration applications may be not approved for several reasons. For those involving incomplete or non-recognized CPD, an **internal review** is allowed. The aggrieved must send a letter which outlines the grounds for the review, including the reason why the application should be accepted, to the Registrations Manager within 30 days of receipt of the non-approval notice. Note the internal review concerns CPD credit only.

If an application for initial registration [s#6(5), the Act], locum application [s12(6), the Act] or restoration [s21, the Act] is not approved, the applicant has the right to **appeal to Supreme Court**. This must be done within 28 days of receipt of notice of non-approval [s24, Act].

7. ACCRUING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order to be eligible to re-register, registrants must have accrued Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as follows:

- i Practitioners must accrue the following number of Continuing Education Units (CEU) within the preceding two-year cycle (see table 3):

Table 3. CEUs by profession

Profession	# CEUs	May carry forward
Optometrist	24	10
Therapeutic Optometrist	40*	6
Optician	20	8

* 40h i.e. an **additional** 16h for authority to prescribe

However, if your re-registration date is less than 24 months after initial registration, then your CPD requirement is pro-rated to the nearest 6 month period (see table 4). you must contact the Office to confirm your CPD requirement.

Table 4. Pro-rata of CEUs if initial registration less than 24 months ago

Period since Initial Registration	Date of Initial Registration	# CEUs
19-23	Sept 1 st 2013 to Feb 28 th 2014	18
13-18	Mar 1 st to Aug 31 st , 2014	12
7-12	Sept 1 st 2014 to Feb 28 th 2015	6
0-6	Mar 1 st to Aug 31 st , 2015	none

- ii You are required to document the CPDs earned in the *CPD Record Form* of the *Re-registration Application Package*. If you have undertaken more than the required CPDs please submit at least 5 hours of these in case some CPDs are not accepted by the Council.
- iii You must provide documentation to verify the CPDs attained. The verification required is described in column two of table 6. The certificate of attendance or completion must include the following information:
 - a. your name
 - b. course title
 - c. name of organization or individual giving the course
 - d. date and location of the course
 - e. number of hours completed
- iv One CPD unit = one contact hour. This does not include meals or breaks.
- v CPD's may be undertaken from across the **CPD Practice Areas** (tables 5a and 5b), and across the **CPD Activity Types** (table 6). Note:
 - a. You do not have to accrue CPD's in every Practice Area or Activity Type.
 - b. The number of units indicated in the 3rd column of table 6 is the *maximum* allowable per registration cycle.

- c. There is no limit on the clinical CPD (table 5a) for optometrists, therapeutic optometrists and opticians. However, the maximum number of non-clinical CPD units (table 5b) per registration cycle for optometrists and therapeutic optometrists is 5 units, and for Opticians is 20 units.
- vi Concerning CPD's:
 - a. Must be relevant to your profession
 - b. Cannot be accrued from activities that are a regular part of your current work/role, e.g. as outlined in job description
 - c. May be claimed one time only e.g. a series of the same presentation
 - d. Cannot be claimed if the activity is required ~~reading~~ for academic coursework
 - e. Time spent on preparation cannot be included
- vii If you have earned more than the required number of hours, you may **carry forward** a maximum of 40% CPD's into the next registration cycle, if the units were earned in the year immediately prior to that period (see table 3 above). If CPDs are carried forward, submit them for the period to which they are being **applied**.
- viii Practitioners will be audited for compliance with the CPD requirements. Therefore you must keep evidence of all CPD undertakings. If the practitioner fails the audit, they will be notified and given options for remediation.
- ix CPD requirements apply to **all** registrants-regardless of employment status, profession, or registration status (e.g. locum or inactive).
- x All CPD courses must be pre-approved by the Council. Courses accredited or approved by the institutions listed in footnote a and b of table 6, are considered as pre-approved.

Table 5a. CPD Clinical Practice areas

a. Anterior Segment Treatment and Management	f. General Optometry
b. Posterior Segment Treatment and Management	g. Principles of Diagnosis
c. Glaucoma Treatment and Management	h. Neuro-Optometry
d. Systemic/Ocular Disease	i. Pharmaceuticals
e. General Ocular Disease	j. Contact Lens

Table 5b. CPD Non-clinical Practice areas

k. Optical Technology
l. Business Solutions
m. Allied Health

For non-clinical practice areas the maximum number of hours allowed by profession is: Optometrists & t-Optometrists – 5; Opticians 20

Table 6. CPD Activities by Type

Continuing Education Activity Type	Verification Documentation	Max units
ATTENDING WORKSHOPS/COURSES/INDEPENDENT LEARNING		
1. Conferences, in-Person Attending workshops, seminars, lectures, professional conferences approved by the Council ^a	A certificate of attendance or letter from sponsor verifying contact hours or CEU, dates, event title, attendee name and agenda	40
2. Academic Coursework Successfully completing academic course work at an approved college or university of Optometry in Canada, the UK or the United States.	Official transcript from accredited college/university	40
3. Independent e-learning³ Virtual online courses <i>with assessment</i> element ^{**} . Courses must be approved by the Council ^b	Certificate of completion verifying contact hours or CEU, name, dates and provider	40 (tOptoms) 24 (Optoms) 20 (Optics) 1 unit/course
4. Independent Learning⁴ Non-virtual independent learning with assessment, e.g. continuing education articles, self study series ^{**} .	Certificate of completion verifying contact hours or CEU, name, dates and provider	20 (tOptoms) 12 Optoms) 10 (Optics) 1 unit/course
5. Mentoring ^d Receiving mentoring from a registered health professional specific to your profession to improve your skills (must be your primary role). Must be presented to the Council for pre-approval. ^{**}	Goals and objectives established in collaboration with the mentor and self analysis of performance	5
6. Study Group ^{d,*} Participating in professional study group/online study group designed to advance knowledge through active participation ^{**} .	Study group attendance records verifying time spent, goals; and a report documenting what you learned and its application to your role	5
PRESENTING*		
7. Professional Presentation Giving a presentation at local or international workshop, seminar or conference ^{*,+}	Copy of presentation and program listing. Presenter name, times (or length of session) and title of presentation must be indicated on documentation.	5
8. Author of Poster Primary author of poster presentation for workshop, seminar or conference ^{*,+}	Copy of presentation and copy of program listing. Presenter name, times (or length of session) and title of presentation must be indicated on documentation.	5

³ All of the required CPD may be accrued via distance learning. This recognizes the barrier of attending conferences abroad. However, these must be COPE or GOC approved.

⁴ Only self learning with assessment is credited, i.e. reading of articles without assessment is not credited

Continuing Education Activity Type	Verification Documentation	Max units
9. Public Presentation Primary or co-presenter providing presentation for local organizations/associations/ or group on practice-area related topic*, +,++	Copy of attendance record and outline of presentation or letter from supervisor on letter head verifying: presenter's name, date and time/length of presentation	2
PUBLISHING		
10. Author of Professional Literature Primary or co-author of a chapter in practice-area <i>professional</i> or academic textbook	Grant funding letter, abstract/executive summary, or copy of completed research/study, that indicates registrant as primary/co-primary investigator	5
11. Author, Non-Professional Literature Primary or co-author or participator of practice-area related article in <u>lay</u> publication e.g. community newspaper or newsletter ++	Copy of published chapter or letter from editor, and letter from primary author verify input	5
12. Primary or co-author of practice-area Literature Author of related article in <i>professional</i> or academic publication e.g. journal, book chapter, research paper	Copy of published article and letter from primary author verify input	5
13. Research Investigator Primary or co-primary investigator involved with extensive <i>scholarly</i> research activities or outcomes studies, or externally funded service/training project associated with grants or post-graduate studies **	Program description and copy of research findings/paper. And a description of the person's role.	5
14. Author, Instructional Material ^d : Developing instructional materials/training manuals, multimedia or software programs that advance the professional skills of others ^{d,++,*} (not for proprietary use)	Copy of presentation and program listing (Presentation title, duration - or times, and presenter must be indicated); and, copy of instruction materials or software program	5
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE		
15. Volunteering ^d Volunteering for an organization or individual that <i>adds to the overall development of your practice roles</i> . Includes leadership/executive roles or clinical practice ^{d,*}	Letter from organization and a report describing the hours and outcomes of volunteer service	5
16. Reviewing Peer review of a <i>professional</i> or academic manuscript or textbook	Letter from publishing organization.	5

Notes for table

- * Activities may be claimed one time only for CEU
- ** Cannot claim for CEU purposes if activity is required for academic coursework
- + Time spent on preparation cannot be included

++ Must not be one's primary work/role

Regarding approval

- a. Courses accredited or approved by the following institutions are considered pre-approved:
 - *Professional optometric degree programs recognized by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) in Canada and United States; or by the General Optical Council (GOC) in the United Kingdom (for GOC approved universities see: http://www.aoa.org/Documents/students/od_program_directory_11_19_2014.pdf)*
 - *the American Academy of Optometry;*
 - *the American Optometric Association;*
 - *US state, Canadian provincial or British optometric societies (for the UK - Association of Optometrist, College of Optometrists);*
 - *Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) (=US & CAN);*
 - *American Medical Association; British Med Association;*
 - *For Opticians (in addition to the above):*
 - American Board of Opticians
 - National Academy of Opticianry (USA)
 - Opticians Assoc of Canada
 - Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO)
 - GOC (for optometrists and opticians) (UK)
- b. *Virtual Courses to be used toward therapeutic-optometrist credits must be COPE approved; and COPE or GOC approved to be used toward optometrist-only credits.*
- c. Likely to be approved: where the term academic, scholarly or professional is used. It is recommended that you confirm this with the Council beforehand
- d. Requires Council approval, you must get this beforehand

ENDS

8. APPENDICES

8.1. Frequently Asked Questions

Question: Do I have to send in my CPD verification documentation at the time of submitting my re-registration application?

Answer: YES, you must include the CPD verification documentation at the time of submitting the re-registration application

Question: My name has changed since my last registration, how will this impact my re-registration application?

Answer: The office needs to be notified of a name change so that documentation under a different name can be linked to you. In addition, should you wish to practice under the new name - your registration certificate will need to be changed.

Question: I am due to re-register now, but I don't have enough CPD. What should I do?

Answer: You cannot re-register unless you have accrued the required number of CPD. Please contact the Office for guidance

Question: I've accrued more than the required CPD since my last registration, should I list all the activities I've completed on the application?

Answer: You need only list the required number of CPD. However, it is recommended that you list at least 5 extra hours on the CPD Record form in case some of your CPD is not accepted by the Council.

8.2. Transitional Pro-rated Fee Provision

Effective Sept 1st 2015, the initial fee, and not the re-registration fee, will be pro-rated. Thus, for persons already in the system, if your re-registration **for Sept 2015 only**, is less than 24 months since initial registration, then your re-registration fee will be pro-rated to the nearest 6 month period table next). You must contact the Office to confirm your fee requirement.

Table 7. Pro-rata 2015 re-registration fee if initial registration is less than 24 months before

Period since Initial Registration	Date of <u>Initial</u> Registration	Fee for 2015 only
19-23	Sept 1 st 2013 to Feb 28 th 2014	$\frac{3}{4}$
13-18	Mar 1 st to Aug 31 st , 2014	$\frac{1}{2}$
7-12	Sept 1 st 2014 to Feb 28 th 2015	$\frac{1}{4}$
0-6	Mar 1 st to Aug 31 st , 2015	none

8.3. Regulatory Changes from Previous Edition

[Not applicable for the 2015 edition. If the Guidelines are revised, note changes here – e.g. changes to CPD type and weighting etc].