



HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY	
TITLE:	Authorisation to practise in a restricted practice area Ocular Therapeutics
EFFECTIVE DATE: May 2004	REVIEW DATE: January 2007, March 2009
NEXT REVIEW DATE: February 2011	
BOARD: Optometrists Board of the Northern Territory	

Purpose of Policy

In accordance with the authority granted under Section 31 of the *Health Practitioners Act*, the Optometrists Board of the Northern Territory has declared the sale and supply of ocular therapeutics a restricted practice area. This policy has been developed to inform staff of the Health Professions Licensing Authority and Board members of the procedure for determining applications for authorisation to practise in the restricted practice area of ocular therapeutics.

Supporting documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Health Practitioners Act* Registration/Enrolment Policy, the Optometrists Board of the Northern Territory Entitlement to Registration Policy and the *Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act*.

Who can apply for authorisation to practise in a restricted practice area?

Section 32 of the *Health Practitioners Act* states that a registered health practitioner may apply for an authorisation to practise in a restricted practice area if the applicant

- (a) has the qualification, training and experience determined by the relevant Board in respect of the area of practice; or
- (b) has qualifications, training and experience that the relevant Board considers to be a least substantially equivalent to those determined by it under paragraph (a).

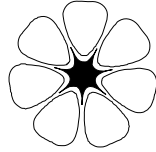
Who is entitled to authorisation?

Section 34 of the *Health Practitioners Act* states that an applicant is entitled to be granted the authorisation if the relevant Board is satisfied that the applicant

- (a) is eligible to apply for the authorisation; and
- (b) is competent and has the capacity to practise in the restricted practice area.

Ocular therapeutics as a restricted area of practice in the Northern Territory

Section 29(3) of the *Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act* gives the Optometrists Board the authority to impose conditions and restrictions on the sale or supply of Schedule 2, 3, or 4 substances by an optometrist for the treatment of a condition of the eye.



The Board requires optometrists wishing to sell or supply ocular therapeutics to apply for authorisation.

Meaning of the authorisation to sell and supply ocular therapeutics

An authorisation to practise in this area entitles the optometrist to sell or supply a Schedule 2, 3 or 4 substance included in the Board's approved formulary, for the treatment of a condition of the eye. The conditions and restrictions on the sale and supply of ocular therapeutics are detailed in the Board's Ocular Therapeutic Protocol for Therapeutic Authorised Optometrists. An Ocular Therapeutics Advisory Committee will regularly review the clinical pathways and the formulary, which are included in the protocol, as new drugs and treatment regimes emerge.

Board requirements

To be eligible and entitled to apply to the Board for an authorisation to sell or supply ocular therapeutics applicants must

- Be either registered as an optometrist and hold a current practising certificate issued by any Australian or New Zealand Optometry Registration Board; or Eligible to register as an optometrist (if seeking restricted practice authorisation at the time of applying for registration in the Northern Territory);
- Provide documentary evidence of having completed a course in ocular therapeutics accredited by the Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand and
- Make a statutory declaration that they have competence and capacity to practise in the restricted practice area.

Granting interim authorisation to practise in a restricted practice area

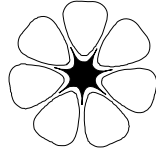
Section 36 of the Act empowers the Registrar to grant interim authorisation if the Registrar reasonably considers that the applicant is entitled to the authorisation but that it is not practicable to wait until the Board can consider the application.

If the Registrar grants interim authorisation, the optometrist will be advised in writing and provided with an interim certificate of authorisation. The Registrar will provide a list of those applicants who have been granted interim authorisation at the next scheduled meeting of the Board, at which time the Board will make a determination on the applications.

The interim authorisation remains in force from the date granted, until the optometrist is advised that the Board has granted full authorisation, refused to approve the application or cancelled the interim authorisation.

Full authorisation

If the Board determines to grant full authorisation the applicant will be advised in writing and provided with a practising certificate that clearly states that the



optometrist is authorised to sell and supply ocular therapeutics. The Board will notify the Chief Poisons Officer of authorisations granted to practise in the restricted practice area of ocular therapeutics.

The Board may determine to refuse to grant full authorisation to an optometrist who has been issued with interim authorisation. In line with procedural fairness, the applicant will be advised of the refusal in writing and notified of the right of appeal.

The Board may also determine to cancel the interim authorisation. If the Board determines to cancel the authorisation it must not cancel the authorisation without first giving the optometrist reasonable opportunity to be heard. An applicant whose interim registration is cancelled will be required to surrender the annual practising certificate.

**All forms and any other updated information can be found on the Optometrists Board of the Northern Territory's website www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards