

TAKING LEAVE FROM OPTOMETRY

Optometrists holding a current Annual Practising Certificate who plan to take extended time away from practice will need to consider the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board competency requirements and the process for APC renewal after an extended leave period.

While an optometrist holds a current APC he or she must comply with CPD requirements for the Optometry Scope of Practice; and for the TPA Scope if applicable. An APC, once issued, is current until the expiry at the standard date of 31 March each year.

MAKING SURE YOUR CPD RECORD IS IN ORDER

No matter the date at which an optometrist ceases practice to take an extended break in practice, compliance requirements extend right up until his or her current APC expires.

Because the APC cycle and the CPD year do not coincide there will always be a part period of CPD in play at the time an APC is not renewed. For an optometrist who chooses to not renew their APC as at 1 April an automatic adjustment will be made for the period April to October (inclusive) in respect of the November to October CPD year.

CPD for the period November, when CPD year starts, to March, when APC expires, must be completed (6 CPD credits; and 2 TPA credits if applicable).

Optometrist intending to renew APC after the period of leave will need to provide the Board with their history of CPD compliance up to point their last APC expired.

IF YOUR CPD RECORD IS IN DEFICIT WHEN YOU TAKE A BREAK IT REMAINS IN DEFICIT

Optometrists taking a break, who have a CPD deficit at the time their APC expires, need to be aware that the deficit will be carried forward on their record and this will be considered as part of any future application to the Board for an APC. It is likely that the deficit will be required to be 'made up' within a specified period; and if the Board has concerns about practising standards some further demonstration of current competence may be required.

MEETING THE THREE YEAR BARRIER

The HPCAA requires the Board to consider whether to issue an APC if:

- The optometrist has not held an APC within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of the application; or
- The optometrist has not lawfully practised optometry within the 3 years immediately preceding the date of application

This information has been prepared by the NZAO for use by members from information on the ODOB website and the HPCA Act. Optometrists are advised that they cannot necessarily rely on the contents of this advisory note as the ODOB policy is subject to change without notice to the NZAO and we do not have access to all ODOB policy documents. To the best of our knowledge the above notes are relevant at the time of preparation. For definitive policy rulings please contact the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board on +64 4 474 0704 or email registrar@oanddboard.org.nz.