



New Zealand Association of Optometrists Inc.

New Graduates Membership Application Information 2018/19

Updated 13 November 2018

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New Zealand Association of Optometrists

The New Zealand Association of Optometrists (NZAO) is the professional organisation that has represented optometrists in New Zealand for more than 100 years.

Aims of the NZAO:

1. To represent the collective views of members and to promote the role of optometry in the provision of the highest standard of primary vision care.
2. To promote the highest standard of optometric education through provision of undergraduate and graduate scholarships, continuing education and vision research.
3. To support the international community through participation in international and regional optometric organisations and the voluntary provision of optometric services in developing countries.

Membership of the NZAO supports the educational, research, legislative and co-operative activities that will make the profession of optometry in New Zealand better over the course of your career.

The NZAO helps its members by supporting NZ optometric education:

- The NZAO annual conference provides opportunity for members to achieve their continuing professional development (CPD) credits for the year. The educational programme includes international and local speakers, and a blend of clinical lectures, clinical workshops, clinical science and vision science lectures.
- NZAO branches and national office organise local opportunities for peer support, vocational education (lectures, peer review, online CPD, clinical placements), and opportunities for interaction with kindred professions.
- The Association initiated the process that resulted in structured peer review becoming a recognised activity for practitioner CPD credits.
- The Association provided the seed funding and persuaded The University of Auckland to establish an optometry course for NZ in 1965. This course has since grown into the School of Optometry and Vision Science (SOVS). Although the NZAO has no direct influence on University affairs or policy decisions, the NZAO and SOVS maintain an important and ongoing working relationship.
- New Zealand Optometrical Trust (NZOT) and NZAO Education and Research Fund (NERF) are the charitable trusts of the NZAO that provide:
 - NZAO Extern Student Scholarships (undergraduate)
 - NZAO Undergraduate Awards
 - Peg Wood Award (undergraduate)
 - Paul Dunlop Memorial Research Scholarship (undergraduate)
 - HC Russell Memorial Postgraduate Scholarship (Masters or PhD)
 - NZAO Postgraduate Scholarships (PhD)
 - NZAO Post-Doctoral Fellowship (Post-Doctoral position at SOVS)
 - Optometry Development Grants (professional education and research of relevance to practitioners)

- NZAO membership subscription includes a donation to NERF. If practitioners provide financial support for their colleagues who will be the future NZ educators and the future NZ researchers, then there will be more NZ optometrists in the future who can assist with optometry CPD and optometry research. This helps the profession of optometry in NZ to develop in positive ways.

The NZAO helps its members by working with the Government on the legislative issues that affect NZ optometrists:

- Optometry in NZ was unregulated when the predecessor of the NZAO was formed in 1912. The Association actively lobbied Government for optometry to become a legislated and regulated occupation. This eventually happened in 1928.
- The aspiration and desire of members at that time and to this day is for optometrists to be legally recognised and regulated as professionals rather than as retailers.
- The NZAO represented the collective views of members when the Government introduced the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (HPCAA). This is the current legislation that regulates optometry in NZ.
- Under the HPCAA "optometrist" is a legal title, and the prescribing of ophthalmic appliances is a "restricted task" only to be performed by suitably trained and qualified health practitioners – optometrists and ophthalmologists.
- The restricted task makes it illegal for "refraction only sight tests" to be conducted in NZ because of the significant risk to public eye health and safety from undiagnosed eye disease. The restricted task means the clinical education and training required for a person wanting to use the title of "optometrist" in NZ is high by international standards.
- The restricted task is a direct result of the work undertaken by the NZAO and the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board (the Board is the regulatory authority appointed by Government). Without this combined and concerted approach there is no doubt the restricted task for prescribing ophthalmic appliances would not exist.
- The prescribing of medicines by optometrists happened because the NZAO actively applied to the Ministry of Health for optometrists to be designated prescribers when the Government passed the Medicines Amendment Bill into law 1999. The NZAO worked with SOVS, the Board, and other groups, so the TPA scope of practice for optometry came into effect 2005. NZ optometrists who graduate from SOVS 2006 onwards are TPA-endorsed.
- In 2006 NZAO started working with Pharmac to ensure optometrist prescriptions were eligible for pharmacy subsidies. As a result the system of subsidies was reviewed to focus on patient characteristics not who prescribes the medicines. This means optometrist scripts for medicines are eligible for government subsidies just like ophthalmologist scripts for medicines.
- As a direct result of the efforts of NZAO, in 2014 NZ optometrists became "authorised prescribers" and, as such, equal under the law to other authorised prescribers such as registered medical practitioners and dentists. This has public health benefits for conditions such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, and professional career benefits for optometrist health practitioners.

Other ways in which the NZAO helps its members:

- **Disputes Resolution Service:** The NZAO Complaints Committee is often the first port of call if a patient were to make a complaint against an optometrist. The alternative is a direct complaint made to the Optometrists Board and/or the Health & Disability Commissioner.
- **Publications:** Members are kept informed about NZAO affairs, items of interest and CPD opportunities through monthly mail outs that include our newsletter Total Vision Care and e-News, and other relevant brochures or news sheets. Members also have online access to the quarterly Journal of Clinical and Experimental Optometry and Pharma magazine.
- **Access to MIMS online:** reference of medicines, doses, interactions, and contraindications.
- **Cornea and Contact Lens Society Membership:** Membership of NZAO is a pre-requisite for optometrists wishing to join the CCLS. This Society has a membership of optometrists and ophthalmologists, and holds a biennial NZ conference.
- **Group Insurance Schemes:** Insurances including professional indemnity, public liability, and locum cover are available to members as group schemes. This means a significant saving in premiums than are available through individual policies.
- **Professional Appointments Listing:** NZAO provides information to local and overseas optometrists seeking employment, and to NZAO practitioners looking to employ optometrists, including locums.
- **Practice for Sale Service:** NZAO provides a confidential service for practitioners wanting to let other practitioners know about the potential sale/partnership-buy-in of their practice.
- **Practice Consumables:** National office has a range of items on sale to members at a modest cost, such as patient information pamphlets, display stands for use in practices, carrier bags printed with our logo, posters, and prescription cards for travelers.
- **Financial Benefits:** Westpac Bank offers discounted member rates on credit card processing, discounts on business and personal banking, lending, and EFTPOS terminals for member practitioners.

Our History

- The New Zealand Association of Optometrists began in Wellington on 1 February 1912, when a small group formed the *New Zealand Optical Association*. Although the Association went into recess during World War I, it was revived in 1922 as the *Institute of Optometrists of New Zealand Inc.*
- Another name change resulted from the *Opticians Act 1928*, which described an *optician* as a person who might employ any methods for the estimation of errors of refraction of the human eye and prescribe or adapt lenses to correct such errors. This meant the more commonly used word *optometrist* had no legal status, and the *Institute of Optometrists* became the *Institute of Opticians of New Zealand* as of 1 January 1930.
- In 1954 steps were taken to have the word *optometrist* included in the list of legal descriptions, and at the 1958 AGM the name of the Institute was changed to *The New Zealand Optometrical Association*. With the 1976 *Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Act* the term *optometrist*, previously optional, became obligatory. The 1989 AGM produced the current name *New Zealand Association of Optometrists Inc.*

NZAO Council

- The affairs of the Association are managed by Council. There are seven Councillors who are elected for two year terms. Council elects from its members a president and vice-president. The immediate past president is also included as a councillor even though his or her term may have expired.
- Council meetings are held five or six times per year. There are also a number of Council committees dealing with complaints and discipline; such committees may include other NZAO members. From time to time Councillors also convene working parties to address specific topics.
- Councillors, particularly those from the Wellington area, have had considerable success lobbying government and working with government departments. This has involved areas such as the Children's Glasses Subsidy, proposals for legislative changes, and independent prescribing rights
- Council maintains relationships with a range of professional bodies and interest groups such as the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists, the College of General Practitioners, The Health Professionals Policy Forum, the NZ Optical Wholesalers Association, the Association of Dispensing Opticians of New Zealand, the NZ Blind Foundation, Save Sight Society, Diabetes New Zealand, Macular Degeneration New Zealand and Glaucoma New Zealand.

NZAO National Office

- The staff at the national office, Tawa, Wellington, provides support to Council and members of the NZAO and complete all administrative duties for the Association. The office also undertakes the distribution of pamphlets and other resources and manages the CPD recording programme for continuing professional development required by the Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians Board.
- The office is situated at 137 Main Road Tawa, Wellington.

NZAO Activities

- **Programme development:** We are committed to improving public access to quality eyecare through joint initiatives with other health care providers. NZAO members and the Wellington Independent Practice Association were active in the development of an award winning diabetic retinopathy screening programme for the greater Wellington region.
- **Save Our Sight month:** This is an annual public relations campaign to educate the public about the primary health role of optometrists and the value of comprehensive eye exams. The emphasis is on encouraging the public to have regular eye exams and to protect their sight as part of their general health care. Throughout the month high profile events focus on specific topics such as children's vision, diabetic retinopathy, or eyecare for the elderly.
- **Volunteer Ophthalmic Services Overseas:** VOSO is a charitable trust formed under the auspices of the NZAO. Several missions are organised each year to areas of the Pacific Basin needing the services of an eyecare team. Teams include both optometrists and ophthalmologists and trips are usually of about two week's duration. All NZAO members have the opportunity to participate.

- **University of Auckland:** NZAO maintains an active interest in the School of Optometry and Vision Science and although the NZAO has no direct influence on University affairs or policy decisions, this contact does allow members to remain in touch with developments in the School.
- **Student awards:** Each year NZAO makes several awards to students enrolled in the B.Optom programme. These awards are available to students in Part three, four and five and provide \$1,000 per award per year. There are also extern scholarship awards up to \$1,200 for clinical placements with NZAO members. The NZAO also makes provision for employing a student researcher to assist the various work groups. The value of the research stipend is currently in the range \$2,000 - \$3,000 per year. The Paul Dunlop Memorial Scholarship provides \$6,000 + \$1,000.
- **Practitioner development:** Each year from 2015, the NZAO has sponsored one optometrist placement on the four-week Snowvision internship programme at the Department of Continuing Education in the State University of New York College of Optometry
- **Liaison with overseas optometrists:** NZAO is a member of the World Council of Optometry (WCO) and the Asia Pacific Council of Optometry (APCO) and for some years has had representatives at annual meetings. This results in a vital exchange of information with other countries on developments in optometry. NZAO also has an on-going relationship with the Optometry Australia (OA) which includes mutual recognition of continuing education programmes.

Applying for Membership

- Membership of the NZAO is voluntary and open to all optometrists registered to practice in New Zealand. (For information on registration, visit <http://www.odob.health.nz>)
- Intending NZAO members should complete an application form (next page) and have it signed by two current NZAO members as nominator and seconder. The completed form should be sent to our national office. NZAO's financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June and renewal subscriptions are charged in October each year. The annual subscription is currently \$1328.25 (incl GST) for ordinary members.
- New grads joining by 31 December 2018 pay nothing for the first 6 months of 2019 and then a reduced rate for the next full membership year from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 with the subscription being billed in October 2019, a portion in arrears and the rest in advance.
- On receipt of the application, national office will send a confirmation letter advising receipt and noting the date of the next Council meeting where applications will be considered. **Please note that in signing the application form, an intending member acknowledges that they have read the Association's Rules and Code of Ethics and agrees to comply with these and adhere to the high professional standards of the NZAO.**
- Once membership has been approved, new members become eligible to join their local NZAO Branch. The national office will send your contact details to the Branch secretary.

**Application Form for membership follows.
If you have any questions, please contact the NZAO National Office:**

Postal Address: PO Box 51008
Tawa
WELLINGTON 5249

Phone: 04 473 2322

Freephone: 0800 439 322 (0800 4EYECARE)

Fax: 04 473 2328

Email: membership@nzao.co.nz

Website: www.nzao.co.nz



NEW GRADUATE APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS INC

I wish to apply for membership of the New Zealand Association of Optometrists Inc. I agree to comply with, the Rules and Code of Ethics of the Association, and will accept any future additions or alterations to these. I agree to uphold the high professional standards expected of NZAO members. I acknowledge that information about me will be held in Association records and may be provided to outside agencies.

Name (In Full):
(please underline your preferred first name)

Professor, Doctor, Mr, Mrs, Ms, Miss (*please circle one*) Female Male

Practice/Employer Name (IF APPLICABLE):

Work address:

Phone: Fax: E-Mail:

How many Optometrists work in the practice?

Are you: Owner / Partner / Locum / Employed Optometrist (please circle which applies)

Date and Place of Birth:

Postal address (if different from above):

Personal E-Mail:

Registration Number (located on Annual Practising Certificate):

Date of Registration by the NZ Optometrists & Dispensing Opticians Board:
(Attach copy of APC or other proof of registration)

Qualification (including date granted/graduated):
..... Date:

I declare that these details are true.

Signature: Date:

Being members of the New Zealand Association of Optometrists Inc, we confirm that this applicant has read and understood the Rules and Code of Ethics and consider that he/she is a suitable candidate for membership.

Proposer

Name (Please Print):Address:

Signature:Date:

Seconded

Name (Please Print): Address:

Signature: Date:



Please return your application and a copy of your Annual Practising Certificate (APC) to:

**The Executive Officer
New Zealand Association of Optometrists Inc
PO Box 51008
Tawa
WELLINGTON 5249**