



Health Professions Council of South Africa

HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA	
<u>GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER OPTOMETRY SERVICES</u>	Version 1
PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR OPTOMETRY AND DISPENSING OPTICIANS	
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PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR OPTOMETRY AND DISPENSING OPTICIANS

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER OPTOMETRY SERVICES

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERISM:

“...the terms volunteering, volunteerism and voluntary activities refer to a wide range of activities, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, undertaken of free will, for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor.”(1)

ABBREVIATIONS:

FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
NPOs	Non-profit Organizations
PBODO	Professional Board for Optometry and Dispensing Opticians
SA	South Africa
WCO	World Council for Optometry
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
Optometry service	Acts pertaining to the profession of optometry in terms of the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974)

INTRODUCTION

The Professional Board for Optometry and Dispensing Opticians (PBODO) acknowledges that there is an inadequate representation of eye care services resulting in unavailability, inaccessibility and unaffordability of these services. While the PBODO recognizes the primary responsibility of Government in the progressive realization of the constitutional imperative of access to eye care to the public, the PBODO further recognizes the contributions made by other stakeholders towards the delivery of eye care in South Africa (SA).

As the regulator, the PBODO is committed to protecting the public, and to provide guidance to the professions of optometry and dispensing opticianry.

BACKGROUND

The need to develop guidelines for volunteer optometry services was prompted by complaints received by the PBODO relating to unprofessional conduct and poor service delivery experienced by patients resulting from clinical examinations conducted at the chosen volunteer site.

The PBODO is mindful of the benefits of volunteer eye care services in areas and/or under certain circumstances where access and availability to eye care may be limited. In order to ensure that the affected communities, receive the minimum standard of care the PBODO has developed guidelines for volunteers in the delivery of optometry services, irrespective of whether the activities are operated based on 'for-profit' or 'not-for-profit' purposes.

The PBODO acknowledges that volunteers frequently participate in activities and programmes that are organized by Government, organizations/individuals in public-private partnerships (PPPs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-profit organizations (NPOs), faith based organizations (FBOs), private organizations/companies, academic institutions etc.; however, many of them fit the description of mobile Optometry services², and must therefore be guided by the Guidelines for Mobile Practice developed by the PBODO³.

REQUISITES FOR THE REGULATION OF OPTOMETRY VOLUNTEERS

1. Volunteer optometrists who are not registered with the HPCSA but who are registered with the regulatory body in their country of origin must submit details of their professional qualifications to the PBODO for review and approval.
2. Foreign qualified practitioners who want to register as volunteers should register using Form 12 and submit supporting documents.
3. Volunteers must practice only within the respective scopes of their training, as defined and described in the table below, based on the World Council of Optometry (WCO) Global Competency Based Model of Scope of Practice of Optometry.⁴
4. Student volunteers must work under the supervision of a qualified registered Optometrist in compliance with the Ethical and Professional Rules of the HPCSA, Annexure 8, paragraph 2 and 4 published in 'Guidelines for Good Practice in the Health Care Professions' (6).

5. The Optometrist in-charge must assume responsibility for ensuring that the activity/programme complies with the guidelines for the standard of care as published by the Board on its webpage.
https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/ODO_2019/Policy%20and%20Guidelines/Mobile_Practice_Guidelines_Revised_08032022.pdf.
6. Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians who are registered with the HPCSA and wish to volunteer their services in SA must comply with the conditions under which volunteering services are conducted. They must comply with the standard of care as outlined in the guidelines published by the PBODO.
https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/ODO_2019/Policy%20and%20Guidelines/Mobile_Practice_Guidelines_Revised_08032022.pdf

Category	Description	Relevant For Optometrists (w.r.t. to their specific scope of practice)	Relevant For Dispensing Opticians
1. Optical Technology Services	Management and dispensing of ophthalmic lenses, ophthalmic frames and other ophthalmic devices that correct defects of the visual system.	✓	✓ excludes contact lenses, and excludes low vision devices
2. Visual Function Services	Optical Technology Services plus Investigation, examination, measurement, recognition and correction/management of defects of the visual system, includes refractive and ocular health assessments (note: practitioners at Level 2 are considered to be optometrists).	✓	
3. Ocular Diagnostic Services	Optical Technology Services plus Visual Function Services plus Investigation, examination and evaluation of the eye and adnexa, and associated systemic factors, to detect, diagnose and manage disease , including the use of diagnostic pharmaceutical agents.	✓	
4. Ocular Therapeutic Services	Optical Technology Services plus Visual Function Services plus Ocular Diagnostic Services plus Use of pharmaceutical agents and other procedures to manage ocular conditions/disease.	✓	

CAVEATS: (meaning: provision of specific stipulations, conditions, or limitations)

1. Volunteers and activity organizers are reminded to comply with the Guidelines on the Ethical Rules of Conduct published on the HPCSA website, <https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/Professional Practice/Conduct%20%26%20Ethics/Booklet%20%20Generic%20Ethical%20Rules%20with%20anexures%20September%202016.pdf>
2. Volunteers are reminded in particular of the importance of respecting the patient's right to privacy, proper record keeping, ensuring continuity of care and of ensuring reliable follow-up service if a medical device is supplied.
3. Volunteers are further reminded of ethical rules of conduct outlined in Booklet 11: Guidelines on Over-servicing, Perverse Incentives and Related Matters. <https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/Professional Practice/Conduct%20%26%20Ethics/Booklet%2011%20Guidelines%20on%20over%20servicing%20perverse%20incentives%20and%20related%20matters.pdf>
4. Volunteers who are engaged in PPPs must be in possession of a written agreement in lieu thereof, and are reminded to abstain from practices that constitute touting.

REFERENCES

1. United Nations General Assembly. Resolution adopted by General Assembly: 56/38 Recommendations on Support for Volunteering. Source UNGA 2002 (A/RES/56/38)2002.
2. Professional Board of Optometry and Dispensing Opticians, HPCSA. Draft Mobile Practice Guidelines. 2017.
3. Professional Board of Optometry and Dispensing Opticians. Guidelines for Mobile Practice: HPCSA; 2017. Available from: https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/ODO_2019/Policy%20and%20Guidelines/Mobile_Practice_Guidelines_Revised_08032022.pdf
4. Chapell R. A Global Competency-Based Model of Scope of Practise of Optometry. Legislative, Registration and Standards Committee: World Council of Optometry, August 2015.
5. Health Professions Council of South Africa. Booklet 2: Generic Ethical Rules with annexure 1-11. Available from: https://www.hpcsa.co.za/Uploads/Professional_Practice/Conduct%20%26%20Ethics/Booklet%20%20Generic%20Ethical%20Rules%20with%20anexures%20September%202016.pdf