



TRAINING  
PACKAGE

# Optical Dispensing



HumanAbility



Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing Functional Analysis



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## Executive summary

As part of optical dispensing qualification review project, a '**functional analysis**' was conducted to systematically define the roles, tasks, and skill requirements within the optical dispensing profession. This structured approach breaks down the occupation into core and supporting functions, identifying the knowledge and performance outcomes required across different job roles.

**Grounding qualifications in functional analysis strengthens their credibility, providing a defensible, evidence-based foundation for decisions on content, structure, and industry relevance.**

The purpose of this activity was to ensure that future updates to the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing are driven by real occupational outcomes of roles such as optical dispensers, optical technicians, and practice support staff rather than being shaped solely by curriculum content. This proactive, industry-informed approach supports the development of robust qualifications and units of competency that reflect the skills, tasks and responsibilities required in contemporary optical retail and clinical environments. It also ensures alignment with current and emerging workforce demands while supporting compliance with national training package policies, which mandate that qualifications are anchored in clearly defined job roles and consistent occupational outcomes.

This research explores the current state and future outlook of the optical dispensing sector in Australia. The research aims to provide evidence on current workforce requirements, skill gaps, and future training needs to inform updates to the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing. The findings support the alignment of training products with industry practice, emerging technologies, and changing consumer health needs. A mixed methods approach was used, incorporating desktop research, employer interviews and workforce data analysis.

The functional analysis findings reveal that although employers typically prefer staff to hold the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, a shortage of qualified professionals has prompted shifts in recruitment practices. Many employers now recruit individuals with strong retail experience and customer service backgrounds, providing in-house training to build the required technical skills. While this approach helps meet immediate staffing needs, it also raises concerns about inconsistent service quality due to variations in training and skill development.

Several key factors are influencing the evolution of the optical dispensing industry. Technological advancements, digital measurement devices and innovative lens technologies are reshaping the role of optical dispensers, creating an urgent need for upskilling. Growing competition from personalised eyewear services, online retailers, and specialised care models, is also driving the need for more diverse skill sets. Additionally, deregulation has contributed to inconsistencies in professional standards and service quality across the sector.

The research identified several challenges facing the optical dispensing workforce, including skill gaps in operating automated dispensing equipment, the need for stronger communication and customer service skills, and difficulties in adapting to emerging technologies such as smart eyewear and multifocal lenses. The growing demand for paediatric and geriatric optical care is also offering new career pathways for skilled dispensers. Employers highlighted a rising need for dispensers to assist clients with complex visual needs, particularly in the areas of myopia management and the accurate dispensing of

progressive and multifocal lenses. As these clinical and optical demands increase, dispensers must demonstrate both technical expertise and strong communication skills to deliver safe, tailored and evidence-based product recommendations.

Workforce data and job advertisements indicate that employers highly value a combination of technical knowledge, communication skills, adaptability, and customer service. However, stakeholders have identified skill gaps in key areas such as foundational numeracy, digital literacy, and practical dispensing techniques. While in-house training is essential in addressing these gaps, its effectiveness varies significantly across workplaces, particularly in terms of delivery and assessment consistency.

The Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing must evolve to meet the changing needs of the workforce. Stakeholder feedback highlights the need for updated content, specialisations, and skill sets that reflect advances in technology, diverse client needs, and expanding professional roles. Strengthening collaboration between industry and training providers, enhancing access to professional development, and aligning qualification outcomes with industry expectations are critical steps in preparing a future ready workforce.

# 1. Introduction

Since the last review of *HLT47815 Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing* in 2015, the optical dispensing sector has experienced substantial transformations driven by technological innovation and changes in consumer expectations. Updating the qualification is essential to ensure that future optical dispensers acquire the skills needed to thrive in a dynamic marketplace and maintain the industry's competitive edge.

A comprehensive functional analysis has been undertaken to critically review and modernise the *HLT47815 Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing* qualification with the aim of:

- ensuring that it is aligned with current industry needs and regulatory requirements
- facilitating clear and sustainable career pathways/ specialisations to support existing and future growth in the industry
- enhancing the relevance and applicability of qualifications, thereby increasing the industry's capacity to meet growing demand and evolving challenges.

## 1.1 Purpose of the functional analysis

The functional analysis is a critical step in pinpointing the precise skills, knowledge and capabilities required to perform job tasks effectively within the optical dispensing sector. It establishes a robust foundation for the design of training products and targeted workforce development. By directly aligning qualifications and units of competency with real-world occupational outcomes, the analysis ensures that training is industry-relevant, future-focused, and capable of addressing current and emerging skills demands.

This process is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- **Identifying and addressing workforce requirements** to ensure individuals are equipped with the practical skills and knowledge essential for effective performance in real-world roles.
- **Identifying deficiencies in current training products** to ensure qualifications are responsive to the evolving demands of optical dispensing industry, employer expectations, and future workforce capabilities.
- **Mapping career progression pathways** within the optical dispensing sector and across related health and optical industries to support workforce mobility, upskilling and long-term professional development.
- **Reviewing and refining training design principles** to ensure qualifications remain future-focused, adaptable, and aligned with evolving technologies, industry practices, and changing consumer expectations.

The functional analysis process is presented in *figure 1*.

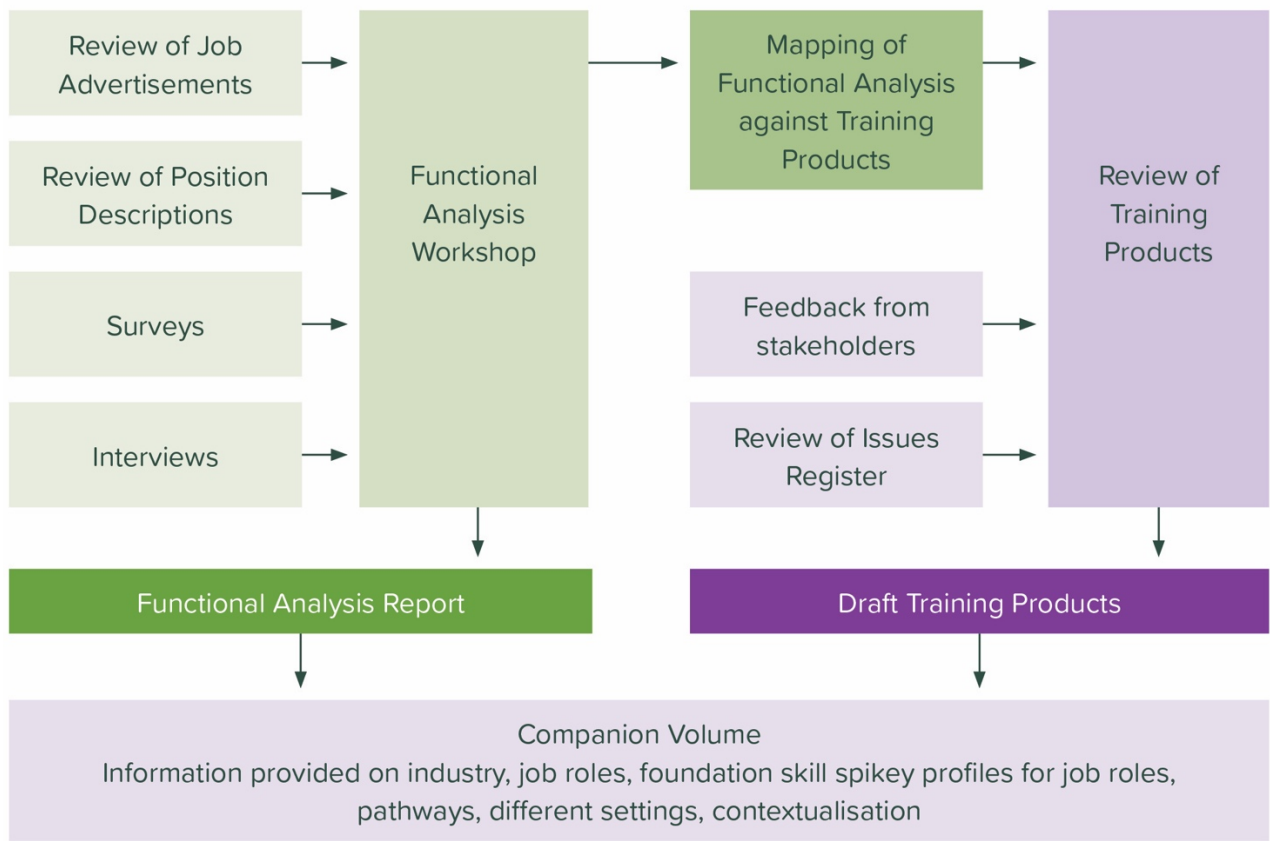


Figure 1: The functional analysis process

To ensure that training and assessment in the field of optical dispensing align with industry requirements, this analysis will form the basis for reviewing the following:



## 1.2 Intended audience

This report is designed to inform a broad range of industry stakeholders of the current and emerging skills requirements within the optical dispensing sector. It delivers evidence-based insights to support strategic training development, workforce planning, and policy formulation, ensuring the sector remains responsive, competitive and future-ready. The intended audience includes, but is not limited to:

- HumanAbility, to build on evidence-based practices and contribute to broader workforce research and training package review.
- peak bodies, industry associations, and professional networks, to support advocacy, professional standards, and sector-wide coordination
- industry stakeholders and employers, to ensure workforce development initiatives are aligned with real-world occupational needs and future directions
- registered training organisations (RTOs) and vocational education and training (VET) professionals, to assist in developing and delivering training programs that are relevant, up to date, and outcomes focused
- skills ministers and relevant government representatives, to support informed decision-making on workforce development priorities and training policy
- Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), to contribute to national skills strategies and program design.

By engaging this diverse stakeholder group, the report aims to foster a shared understanding of workforce challenges and opportunities, and to ensure that training solutions are industry-relevant, practical, and aligned with real-world demands.

## 2. Methodology applied

This functional analysis draws on diverse data sources and input from stakeholders across the optical dispensing sector. It focuses on identifying current and emerging job roles, qualification requirements, and skills expectations to guide workforce development and inform future revisions of the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing. The methodology involved:

- reviewing publicly available job advertisements to determine workforce skills in demand
- analysing position descriptions and organisational structures from employer websites and industry sources
- identifying trends and gaps in knowledge and practice based on desktop research and stakeholder input
- capturing employer insights through employers' interviews.

### 2.1 Desktop research

Research was conducted using a desktop analysis methodology, with a focus on examining publicly available online sources. Desktop research involved 3 months review of public documents between July

2025 to September 2025, including job advertisements, position descriptions and industry standards.

**(Appendix A: Job Advertisements Analysis Spreadsheet)**. The aim was to identify common qualifications, workforce skills requirements, and job role structures within the optical dispensing sector. This approach supports evidence-based workforce planning and informs the potential development or revision of Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing.

The analysis focused on:

- reviewing position descriptions for roles related to optical dispensing across a range of employment levels (e.g. dispensers, assistants, store managers)
- analysing job advertisements to identify recurring technical, interpersonal, and foundational skills in demand
- examining organisational structures and team hierarchies as presented on company websites and industry publications
- identifying emerging trends, future-facing job requirements, and potential gaps in workforce capabilities
- synthesising findings to provide actionable insights for qualification development and sector-specific skills planning.

### **Job Boards and Advertisements**

- Seek, indeed and LinkedIn were used to gather a wide sample of job advertisements for roles across the optical dispensing workforce.
- Job descriptions were reviewed to extract details on required qualifications, certifications, technical competencies, soft skills, and experience levels.

### **Company Websites**

- Optical retail and healthcare providers' websites, such as Specsavers, OPSM, Bailey Nelson, and independent practices, were reviewed for:
  - organisational charts and role hierarchies
  - career pathway information and training expectations
  - insights into in-house training models and workforce development practices.

## **2.2 Employer interviews**

To identify the current and emerging skill needs within the optical dispensing sector, a series of interviews were conducted with employers and other key stakeholders. These interviews provided valuable first-hand insights into the practical functions, tasks, and workforce requirements across various industry settings, including retail practices, optical laboratories, and lens manufacturing facilities. **(Appendix B: List of organisations that participated in the functional analysis interviews)**

Employers discussed a range of topics, including current job roles, day-to-day responsibilities, career progression pathways, and the specific competencies they prioritise when recruiting and developing staff. **(Appendix C: Employer interview questionnaire)** These conversations highlighted both technical

and non-technical skill needs, as well as the challenges faced in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce in a sector experiencing rapid technological and service delivery changes.

The qualitative data gathered through these interviews helped clarify the real-world expectations of employers and shed light on the practical application of skills in diverse workplace contexts. The insights were instrumental in defining the core and supporting functions of optical dispensing roles, and in shaping a more accurate understanding of how the workforce operates at different levels.

Importantly, the findings from these interviews aims to inform workforce development and training strategies, ensuring that qualifications and skill sets are designed in alignment with current and future industry needs. The outcomes contribute directly to the functional analysis process and support evidence-based recommendations for updates to the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing and other training products in this sector.

## **2.3 Functional analysis workshop**

The functional analysis workshop brought together stakeholders, employers, and training providers from the optical dispensing sector to review, validate, and refine the findings from the research and employer consultations. The workshop aimed to confirm the identified functions, sub-functions, and skill requirements of optical dispensers, while also capturing additional insights into emerging trends, new competencies, and evolving role expectations. This collaborative process ensured that the analysis is aligned with both current industry demands and anticipated workforce developments.

## **3. Functional analysis outcomes: Key findings**

The desktop research provided valuable insights into the evolving skills requirements of the workforce, the configuration of job roles, and how these roles are positioned within organisational structures. By systematically analysing position descriptions and company frameworks, the research identified recurring qualifications and core competencies in demand across the sector. It also uncovered emerging trends in job responsibilities and structural models, offering critical evidence to inform strategic workforce planning, role design, and future training development.

### **3.1. Overview of the optical dispensing industry**

The optical dispensing industry in Australia plays a crucial role in delivering vision care services, bridging the gap between optometrists and consumers by providing tailored eyewear solutions. Optical dispensers are skilled professionals responsible for interpreting optical prescriptions, fitting and adjusting eyewear, and advising customers on lens types, frames, and coatings to meet their vision needs. The growth in eyewear demand, influenced by lifestyle changes, different age group populations, and advancements in lens technology, has contributed to the evolving role of optical dispensers.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2022<sup>1</sup> an estimated 14.4 million Australians were living with long-term eye conditions suggesting that more than half the population may require corrective eyewear. Demand is shaped by demographic and behavioural trends, including population ageing and rising childhood myopia driven by increased screen time. These factors continue to influence both service delivery and product development.

The industry serves a broad customer base that has corrective vision needs, occupational requirements, and cosmetic preferences. It encompasses a wide range of services provided by optical retail chains, and specialised labs that are involved in lens production and manufacturing. The industry is fragmented, comprising independent practices, corporate-owned outlets, franchised chains, and buying groups. Despite this diversity, several large players such as Specsavers, OPSM, George & Matilda, and Oscar Wylee dominate the market. Industry revenue has grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 0.4 % over the past five years, to reach an estimated \$4.5bn in 2025<sup>2</sup>.

### 3.1.1 Occupation description and workforce characteristics

Optical dispensers interpret optical prescriptions and fit and service optical appliances such as spectacle frames and lenses. Registration or licensing may be required.

#### ANZSCO classification<sup>3</sup>

- Classified under unit group: 3999 Other Miscellaneous Technicians and Trades Workers
- Occupation group: 399913 Optical Dispenser/Dispensing Optician
- Skill Level: 3 (Requires a level of skill commensurate with AQF level III or IV, including at least 2 years of on-the-job training. At least 3 years of relevant experience may substitute for formal qualifications.)

The market is expected to continue its growth trajectory, driven by trends in digital device usage and the growing demand for lens technologies, highlighting the need for training that keeps pace with these advancements. As of May 2025, the workforce is predominantly female (79%) and younger than average, with a median age of 35 compared to 40 across all occupations. Only 34% of optical dispensers work full-time, with average full-time hours at 39 per week. The occupation is concentrated in larger states, with New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland accounting for approximately 75% of the workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023, December 15). *National Health Survey: Latest release* (Reference period: 2022). <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/national-health-survey/latest-release>

<sup>2</sup> IBISWorld. (2025, April). Optometry and optical dispensing in Australia (Australia Q8532). Arna Richardson. Melbourne.

<sup>3</sup> 3999 Other Miscellaneous Technicians and Trades Workers, ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation, (2022)

## Optical Dispenser workforce characteristics

Hours worked	Optical Dispensers*	All Occupations
Share of workers who work full-time hours	34%	69%
Average full-time hours worked per week	39 hours	44 hours
Median full-time earnings per week	No data	\$1697
Median age	35 years	40 years
Female share of employment	79%	49%

(Source: ABS Labour Force Survey, 2024)

The industry faces challenges such as a lack of standardised training pathways and an emerging skills gap, particularly in newer technologies that are not adequately covered by the current training framework. The casualisation of the workforce and high turnover rates further complicate the landscape, making it difficult to maintain a consistently skilled workforce.

Additionally, the sector needs to adapt to the increasing diversity of its clientele and workforce, including better access to training for diverse groups such as Indigenous communities and those living in remote areas. Challenges such as these underscore the urgent need for a training framework that not only meets the technical demands of optical dispensing but also addresses broader social inclusivity and accessibility concerns.

Entering the optical dispensing profession does not necessarily require formal qualifications in Australia, as some workers commence their careers with on-the-job training only. However, possessing a Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing can significantly enhance a job seeker's prospects, equipping them with a competitive edge and potentially leading to better compensation, job stability and possibility for career advancement. This qualification solidifies foundational skills and instils advanced technical knowledge that is increasingly valued in this evolving industry.

## Regulation and Policy

### Deregulation of optical dispensers

Optical dispensers are unregulated in Australia. Prior to 2010, only Western Australia, South Australia, and New South Wales regulated optical dispensing. All 3 states repealed their laws afterwards, with New South Wales being the last on July 1, 2010. Since deregulation the industry has become more fragmented, leading to increased demands for a strong national voice and the creation of uniform standards. Optical Dispensers Australia, the main professional organisation, upholds a Code of Ethics that its members are expected to adhere to through responsible self-regulation.

While optical dispensing is not regulated as optometry in Australia and there is no national registration via Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra), optical dispensers are still expected to comply with relevant standards and professional guidelines. These standards guide safe practice, product quality, and consumer protection.

## **Factors Shaping the Optical Dispensing Workforce**

The optical dispensing industry in Australia is undergoing significant transformation, driven by a combination of technological innovation, evolving consumer demands, and broader systemic developments. These changes are influencing both the nature of work in the sector and the expectations placed on professionals. A summary of the key influencing factors is provided below:

### **1. Technological advancements**

Rapid technological progress is redefining how optical dispensing services are delivered. The integration of digital measurement tools, advanced lens design technologies, automated fitting equipment, and AI-powered diagnostic tools is enhancing precision and efficiency in the dispensing process. These tools not only improve clinical accuracy but also enable greater personalisation of eyewear solutions.

While these developments offer clear benefits, they also require optical dispensers to acquire new technical skills. Moreover, as technology raises the standard of service delivery, consumer expectations are rising, putting pressure on dispensers to deliver faster, more personalised, and more sophisticated services.

### **2. Increased competition and consumer expectations**

The optical industry is facing growing competition from both online retailers and diversified service providers. This competitive landscape requires traditional optical businesses to adapt quickly and differentiate themselves. Dispensers must not only possess strong technical skills, but also excel in customer service, product knowledge, and personalised consultations.

### **3. Limited access to services in remote areas**

Access to optical dispensing services remains uneven across Australia, particularly in remote and rural regions. Geographic isolation, workforce shortages, and limited infrastructure contribute to reduced service availability in these areas. This poses a challenge in terms of workforce distribution, while also highlighting opportunities for alternative service delivery models such as mobile clinics and telehealth-enabled dispensing support.

### **4. Deregulation of the optical dispensing industry**

The absence of a licensing body or regulatory authority for optical dispensers in Australia has several implications for the profession:

- **Variability in service quality:** Without national registration or mandated minimum standards, service delivery can differ widely across providers.
- **Market saturation and inconsistency:** Deregulation has opened the door to more providers, including those with minimal or no formal training. While this may increase accessibility, it also raises concerns about competency, product safety, and consumer trust.

Many stakeholders believe that without clear benchmarks, it becomes harder for skilled, formally trained dispensers to distinguish themselves, and for customers to confidently assess the quality of care they receive.

## 5. Workplace and workforce trends

The changing expectations of the workforce—especially younger generations—are influencing how optical businesses attract and retain staff. Trends include:

- demand for flexible working conditions
- desire for clearer career pathways
- preference for ongoing professional development
- need for improved workplace culture and leadership.

Employers are increasingly expected to provide structured career progression, skills development, and supportive working environments to attract and retain talent.

### 3.1.2. Key job roles in optical dispensing

The desktop research revealed a range of interrelated roles within the optical retail and broader eye health sector. While optical dispensers form the core of the dispensing workforce, their work is supported and complemented by other key positions in retail, clinical, and management settings. Each role contributes to delivering comprehensive vision care and eyewear services.

#### Optometrists

Optometrists are university-qualified eye health professionals responsible for conducting comprehensive eye examinations, diagnosing and managing a range of visual and ocular health conditions, and prescribing optical appliances such as glasses and contact lenses. They often provide clinical referrals to ophthalmologists and other health specialists as needed. In clinical and retail practice environments, optometrists work alongside optical dispensers to ensure the correct interpretation of prescriptions and high-quality patient outcomes.

#### Optical dispensers

Optical dispensers play a critical technical and customer-facing role. They interpret prescriptions provided by optometrists, advise clients on suitable lens types and frame selections, take precise facial and lens measurements, and ensure correct fitting and comfort of eyewear. Their responsibilities also include understanding visual needs (e.g., for night driving, computer use, sports, or safety eyewear), performing repairs and adjustments, and explaining complex lens technologies such as multifocal and progressive lenses. In some contexts, they may also handle inventory management and contribute to team training.

#### Optical and retail assistants

Often the first point of contact in optical retail settings, optical/retail assistants perform a hybrid role involving customer service, sales support, and clinical assistance. Their duties may include welcoming clients, conducting preliminary testing before eye examinations, assisting in frame selection, and supporting the dispensing process under supervision. They are also frequently involved in administrative tasks such as appointment booking, stock control, and processing health fund claims. Many employers recruit individuals into these roles as a pathway to further training and upskilling in optical dispensing.

## **Store managers**

Store managers are responsible for leading operational and business functions within optical retail practices. They oversee staff performance, manage workflow and service quality, and ensure compliance with business goals and customer service standards. Store managers also play a key role in workforce development by mentoring junior staff, coordinating in-house training, and supporting onboarding. In larger organisations, they may be involved in budgeting, marketing, and strategic planning to align business performance with client needs.

### **3.1.3. Core skill categories**

Analysis of job advertisements for optical dispensing roles revealed 5 key categories of skills consistently sought by employers. These categories reflect a combination of technical capability, customer engagement, and operational competence, indicating the multifaceted nature of roles in this sector.

#### **Communication and interpersonal skills**

Effective communication emerged as a foundational requirement across nearly all job levels. Employers placed a strong emphasis on the ability to communicate clearly and confidently with both customers and team members. Optical dispensers must be able to explain complex lens technologies, frame options, and prescription-related information in a way that is accessible and reassuring to clients. The ability to build rapport, manage expectations, and provide empathetic service, especially for paediatric or elderly clients, was also frequently cited as a key competency.

#### **Customer service skills**

High-quality customer service remains a cornerstone of success in the optical dispensing industry, particularly in retail settings. Job advertisements stressed the need for staff to deliver a professional and positive customer experience, from initial consultation to post-sale follow-up. Skills such as active listening, tailoring recommendations to lifestyle needs, handling customer complaints, and offering informed product advice were commonly referenced. These skills are critical not only for individual client satisfaction but also for building brand loyalty in a highly competitive market.

#### **Organisational and administrative skills**

Many roles require proficiency in administrative and organisational tasks that support the smooth operation of the practice. This includes managing appointment schedules, stock control, ordering products, maintaining patient records, and supporting day-to-day store operations. Attention to detail, time management, and the ability to multitask in a fast-paced environment were frequently listed as essential attributes, particularly for senior optical assistants and store managers.

#### **Technical and practical skills**

Technical capability is a distinguishing requirement for optical dispensers and technicians. Job advertisements regularly cited the need for hands-on skills in lens fitting, frame adjustment, knowledge of latest lens technologies including multifocal and progressive lenses, repair and troubleshooting skills, use of diagnostic and measurement tools (for example lensometers and vertometers), and operation of

edging and cutting machines. The ability to accurately interpret prescriptions and translate them into suitable eyewear solutions reflects the technical precision expected of qualified dispensers.

### **Flexibility and adaptability**

The ability to respond to shifting workplace demands was another frequently highlighted requirement. Dispensers and assistants are often expected to work flexible hours, cover additional shifts, and adapt to rapidly changing customer needs or technology updates. In addition, staff must be prepared to handle a diverse range of client presentations, from routine vision corrections to more complex clinical requirements. Adaptability also includes a willingness to engage in ongoing learning and to upskill in response to industry changes, such as the integration of AI, telehealth, and smart eyewear.

## **3.1.4. Major sectoral considerations and emerging needs**

The desktop analysis of job advertisements and employer websites identified several broader trends influencing the optical dispensing workforce. These trends point to a sector that is evolving in response to technological, demographic, regulatory, and consumer changes. Each of these emerging factors has implications for training, recruitment, and professional development.

### **Advanced customer service and patient care**

Employers increasingly value dispensers who can deliver not only technical precision but also a high standard of interpersonal care. This includes the ability to:

- communicate clearly and empathetically with clients of varying needs
- tailor product recommendations based on lifestyle, health status, and visual demands
- support vulnerable groups, such as clients with low vision or age-related conditions.

As a result, employers are seeking candidates with strong emotional intelligence and the ability to explain complex information in an accessible way. This is particularly critical when working with children, elderly clients, or individuals with low health literacy.

### **Sustainability and eco-friendly practices**

Sustainability is becoming a differentiator in the optical retail space. Some organisations are incorporating eco-conscious practices into their operations and product offerings, such as:

- promoting recyclable frames or sustainable lens materials
- reducing packaging waste or partnering with eco-focused eyewear brands.

While not yet a universal requirement, sustainability knowledge is an emerging skill area for dispensers—particularly in organisations positioning themselves as environmentally responsible.

### **Multi-skilling for sales and technical roles**

Job advertisements commonly list a combination of technical and sales responsibilities within single roles. For example, dispensers may be expected to:

- conduct fittings and repairs
- operate point-of-sale systems

- provide retail advice on fashion trends
- manage inventory and coordinate appointments.

This indicates a shift toward **hybrid roles** that blend clinical precision with commercial acumen. Employers are seeking flexible, cross-functional team members who can adapt to multiple tasks within a store setting.

### Telehealth and remote consultation

The growth of telehealth in eye care—particularly in rural and remote areas—is influencing how optical services are delivered. Optical dispensers may be expected to:

- support remote consultations by assisting clients with basic pre-testing
- coordinate communication between clients and optometrists
- manage digital records and upload diagnostic data.

This emerging trend requires digital confidence and familiarity with remote care protocols, especially in locations with limited access to face-to-face services.

Understanding of regulatory compliance and health standards

While optical dispensing in Australia remains largely unregulated, employers increasingly emphasise adherence to:

- workplace health and safety standards
- infection control protocols
- best practices in eyewear prescription and fitting.

Dispensers are expected to act professionally and ethically, even in the absence of a formal licensing system. This underscores the need for qualifications to address legal awareness and compliance training.

### Cultural competence and equity in service delivery

Several employers highlighted the importance of cultural awareness when working with diverse clients, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Key expectations include:

- the ability to provide culturally safe and respectful care
- sensitivity to linguistic or social barriers affecting service delivery
- awareness of community-specific health challenges.

Training programs must reflect these competencies to ensure the sector delivers equitable care across all population groups.

### Integration of digital tools and AI in optical dispensing

Employers increasingly report the use of advanced digital technologies such as automated lens measurement tools and AI-driven diagnostic equipment.

These tools require dispensers to be digitally literate and comfortable with data entry, device calibration, and troubleshooting. The pace of innovation means dispensers must commit to continuous learning to remain effective in their roles.

### **Specialisation in paediatric and geriatric optical care**

Demand is rising for dispensers who can support clients at both ends of the age spectrum. This includes:

- fitting frames for children with fast-changing prescriptions and specific safety needs
- supporting older adults with comorbidities that affect frame choice or fitting processes.

Specialised care requires patience, communication skills, and knowledge of product adaptations, creating new opportunities for dispensers to specialise in these client segments.

### **Upskilling in advanced optical technologies**

With increased availability of progressive and multifocal lenses, there is strong demand for dispensers who understand:

- complex prescription interpretation
- lens fitting for various focal zones
- client education on adaptation and care.

Employers noted this as a common gap among new graduates, reinforcing the need for advanced dispensing competencies in formal training programs.

### **Shifting consumer expectations**

Consumers are more informed, style-conscious, and service-driven than ever. Dispensers are expected to:

- provide product recommendations that balance clinical need with aesthetic preference
- stay updated on eyewear trends and customisation options
- offer a retail experience that matches modern consumer standards.

These expectations challenge dispensers to blend technical accuracy with personalised, client-focused service.

### **Responding to emerging health issues such as myopia**

Myopia is now recognised as a growing public health concern, particularly among children and adolescents. Employers expressed a need for dispensers to:

- understand the causes and risks associated with myopia progression
- provide product advice aligned with myopia control (e.g., specific lens types, coatings)
- assist in client education and early intervention.

This trend reflects the increasing overlap between optical dispensing and broader eye health management.

## **3.1.5. Implications for training and workforce development**

The findings from the desktop research have several implications for the design, delivery, and future development of training in the optical dispensing sector. These insights should inform both national

qualifications, such as the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, and in-house industry training programs. The key implications are outlined below:

#### i. Gaps in graduate readiness and practical skills

Employers consistently reported that while graduates may hold a qualification, many are not job-ready upon entry. In particular, there are gaps in:

- hands-on experience with progressive and multifocal lenses, which require greater precision in fitting and adjustment
- confidence in using digital tools and optical dispensing equipment, such as lensometers, fitting systems, and edging machines
- knowledge of myopia management, especially given its increasing prevalence in children, and the range of lens options designed to address it.

This suggests a need for more practical, workplace-based assessment tasks in training programs, and potentially the inclusion of specialised electives or skill sets.

#### ii. Strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy skills

Several employers noted challenges with foundational skills among entry-level staff, particularly:

- performing accurate measurements and calculations, which are essential in lens fitting, ordering, and interpreting prescriptions.
- writing clear and accurate customer records and communicating instructions clearly to both customers and colleagues.

Training providers may need to incorporate stronger embedded support for literacy and numeracy, particularly for learners entering the sector from non-academic pathways or diverse backgrounds.

#### iii. Cultural competence and inclusive practice

With growing awareness of the importance of equitable service delivery, particularly to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, employers highlighted a need for:

- training in cultural awareness and responsiveness to build empathy, improve communication, and reduce barriers to care
- inclusion of scenarios and role-plays in training that reflect the diverse populations served by optical dispensers.

Embedding these skills into qualifications would support inclusive, person-centred care, and align with broader health sector priorities.

#### iv. Variation in in-house training quality and scope

Many employers rely on on-the-job training to fill knowledge and skills gaps, especially when hiring individuals without formal qualifications. However, the quality and depth of this in-house training vary considerably. Some organisations offer structured development pathways and internal certifications,

while others provide only minimal informal support. This variation leads to inconsistencies in skill levels across the workforce and challenges in ensuring uniform service quality.

This highlights the importance of nationally recognised qualifications, supported by strong industry partnerships to align formal learning with real workplace expectations.

#### v. Need for future-focused training content

As the industry evolves, training programs must keep pace with emerging trends and technologies. Areas identified for enhancement include:

- digital literacy and AI integration, such as familiarity with automated lens measurement, digital fitting tools, and telehealth systems
- sales and business acumen, including inventory management and upselling techniques, particularly for those progressing into managerial or multi-skilled roles.

Incorporating future-focused content and electives would ensure graduates are equipped not only for current roles but also for emerging career opportunities in the optical sector.

#### vi. Industry Engagement and Training Pathway Flexibility

Employers strongly supported closer alignment between training providers and industry, including:

- opportunities for work-integrated learning, internships, or placement-based assessment
- modular or stackable training options, allowing learners to build skills progressively or specialise in areas like paediatric care, retail leadership, or lab operations.

A more flexible and responsive training system would better support lifelong learning and workforce mobility across the sector.

### 3.1.6. Training and education

The optical dispensing sector offers structured training and educational pathways to prepare individuals for a wide range of roles. The key qualification, HLT47815 Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, serve as foundational credentials for workforce readiness, equipping candidates with the technical and practical skills required to meet industry demands.

There is currently one privately operated registered training organisation (RTO) and one technical and further education institute (TAFE) that deliver HLT47815 Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing.<sup>4</sup> In 2019, there were 560 enrolments in HLT47815 Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing, which increased to 960 enrolments in 2023.<sup>5</sup>

## 3.2. Findings of interviews with employers

To complement the desktop analysis, targeted interviews were conducted with a diverse group of employers from the optical dispensing sector, including representatives from retail chains, independent

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<sup>4</sup> <https://training.gov.au/training/details/HLT47815/rto>

<sup>5</sup> NCVER. (2023), Total VET students and courses 2023.Data Builder.

practices, and optical manufacturing environments. These conversations provided in-depth, qualitative insights into how optical dispensing roles operate in practice, the specific tasks carried out day-to-day, and the real-world expectations of the workforce. The employer interviews also helped validate the findings from job advertisements and expanded the understanding of the challenges and opportunities currently facing the industry.

### 3.2.1. Key roles and functions in the optical sector

Employer interviews provided a comprehensive view of the various roles that contribute to the effective delivery of optical services. While the focus of this project is on optical dispensers, the discussions highlighted the importance of understanding how these roles interact within broader organisational structures. Employers described a range of job functions, from optometrists and optical dispensers to optical assistants and store managers, each playing a distinct yet interconnected role in customer care, technical service delivery, and business operations. This holistic perspective is essential to accurately define workforce expectations, inform training priorities, and support workforce planning across the optical sector. The comprehensive list of functions and sub-functions has been provided in section 4.1.

### 3.2.2. Workforce “skills” requirements

During employer interviews, participants were asked to identify the essential skills and attributes required of today’s optical dispensing workforce. Their feedback reflects both the technical competencies and interpersonal qualities necessary for success in an industry that is becoming more customer-driven, digitally enabled, and clinically aligned.

The following table outlines key performance requirements, along with illustrative examples and the corresponding skill or attribute classification.

Table 1: key performance requirements

Performance Requirements		Examples	Skill/Attributes
1.	Clear verbal communication and active listening	Explaining optical products, services, and technical information in simple, customer-friendly language to cater to individual needs.  Understanding customers’ needs, preferences, and concerns regarding eyewear and vision care.  Actively listening to customers to identify their visual and lifestyle needs and offering tailored advice.	Skills
2.	Technical capability	Dispensing prescription lenses, interpreting prescriptions accurately, and advising on lens types, coatings, and frame compatibility.	Skill

		Applying knowledge of current lens technologies, performing frame adjustments, and using optical tools like lensometers and pupillometers. Operating edging machines and other lab equipment when in-house finishing is required.	
3.	Patience	Responding calmly to customers who are indecisive, confused, or unhappy with their purchase. Taking the time to explain options without rushing.	Attribute
4.	Empathy	Demonstrating care and understanding, particularly with elderly clients, children, or those with complex vision needs. Building trust and rapport with customers who may feel anxious or vulnerable about their vision.	Attribute
5.	Problem solving	Addressing customer complaints or product-related issues (for example dissatisfaction with frame fit or visual clarity) in a calm and professional manner. Identifying root causes and proposing practical, customer-focused solutions.	Skill
6.	Administrative and business skills	Managing orders, processing health fund claims, monitoring stock levels, and coordinating with suppliers. Maintaining accurate patient records, ensuring data entry compliance, and supporting store operations.	Skill
7.	Digital and technological proficiency	Understanding and operating digital lens crafting technologies, electronic measuring devices, and AI-supported diagnostic tools. Using e-commerce platforms, online ordering systems, and customer management software	Skill
8.	Cultural sensitivity	Respecting and recognising cultural differences when working with customers from diverse backgrounds, including indigenous clients. Demonstrating cultural awareness in communication style, product recommendations, and customer care practices.	Attribute

### Employer response: sample statements

"Strong communication skills and the ability to engage with people of all ages are essential."

"A background in maths and science provides a helpful foundation."

"Teamwork, empathy, and understanding of technology applications are increasingly important."

"There's a noticeable decline in technical repair skills such as edging, and frame adjustments."

"Technological advancements such as AI and lens innovations are rapidly changing expectations."

"There is a need for foundational training in digital lens technologies and frame systems."

### 3.2.3. Workplace settings

Optical dispensers are employed across a range of professional settings, each requiring a combination of technical, interpersonal, and contextual knowledge. While their primary work environment remains within optical retail practices, the growing complexity of client needs and service models has expanded their scope of practice across varied contexts.

#### Retail optical practices and independent stores

The majority of optical dispensers work in either independent optical practices or larger corporate retail chains. In these settings, they provide direct customer service by:

- assisting clients with frame selection tailored to prescription needs and personal preferences
- fitting, adjusting, and repairing eyewear on-site
- interpreting prescriptions and recommending suitable lens types, coatings, and specialised solutions (for example blue light protection, progressive lenses)
- supporting the overall operation of the store, often contributing to sales, customer education, and inventory management.

These settings demand strong communication, sales, and technical dispensing skills, particularly as dispensers are often the primary point of contact for customers after an eye examination.

#### Aged care facilities and nursing homes

Some optical dispensers provide mobile or outreach services to aged care facilities, where they support elderly residents with visual needs. These roles require a sensitive and patient-centered approach due to the challenges associated with ageing, such as mobility issues, cognitive decline, or complex prescriptions. In this environment, dispensers:

- conduct fittings and adjustments on-site
- ensure comfort and functionality for residents who may have unique ergonomic or safety requirements
- liaise with family members or aged care staff to ensure continuity of care.

#### Satellite clinics and remote outreach settings

In response to the need for equitable access to vision care, particularly in regional and remote communities, some optical dispensers work in satellite clinics or on mobile teams. These roles contribute significantly to public health by:

- delivering services in areas where permanent optical practices are unavailable
- supporting optometrists and eye health professionals in delivering vision assessments, eyewear fittings, and product education
- adapting dispensing techniques to mobile setups and variable clinic conditions.

This setting requires adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and a strong understanding of community needs, particularly when serving Indigenous or rural populations.

### Optical manufacturing laboratories

Though less common, some optical dispensers work closely with manufacturing laboratories, especially those involved in custom lens crafting and complex optical solutions. Their tasks in these settings include:

- liaising with technicians to ensure the accuracy of orders based on prescription specifications
- troubleshooting fitting or production concerns related to frames or lens types
- reviewing quality control and ensuring product standards align with customer requirements.

This role draws on deep technical knowledge of lens materials, surfacing processes, and frame compatibility, and may also involve collaboration with product designers and supply chain teams.

In summary, optical dispensers operate across diverse settings, each contributing to a holistic vision care system. These varied environments require not only core dispensing skills, but also the ability to adapt to different client groups, physical settings, and collaborative care models. Understanding these workplace contexts is essential for developing responsive, inclusive and future-ready training programs.

## 3.2.4. Career pathways

Career progression for optical dispensers is flexible and often shaped by a combination of on-the-job experience, in-house training, and personal interests. While many start in entry-level dispensing roles, there are a range of opportunities for advancement across clinical, technical, managerial, and commercial functions within the optical sector. The structure and size of the workplace, such as a large retail chain versus an independent practice, also influence available career paths. (Figure 2)

### In-house advancement and role diversification

Most employers offer in-house training programs to support staff development and upskilling. As a result, optical dispensers can progressively take on broader responsibilities, including:

- supervising junior staff or trainees
- performing more complex fittings (for example, progressive or multifocal lenses)
- providing guidance on advanced lens technologies and specialised eyewear solutions.

### Transition to store management

With experience and demonstrated leadership capability, many optical dispensers move into store management or assistant management roles. This pathway typically involves:

- overseeing daily operations and sales performance
- managing staffing, rostering, and training
- handling inventory control, supplier relationships, and business reporting.

In retail chains, this can also open opportunities to move into regional or multi-store management positions.

### Employer response statements

"Qualified dispensers can move into store management, training roles, or manufacturing support."

"Customer service, hand skills, and IT proficiency are crucial for career progression."

### Technical laboratory roles

Some dispensers choose to specialise in the technical and manufacturing side of the profession. In these roles, they may work in optical laboratories involved in:

- lens surfacing, edging, and finishing
- customising or assembling prescription glasses
- quality assurance and troubleshooting product issues.

These roles require strong technical skills and familiarity with optical machinery and software systems.

### Pathway to optical business ownership

Experienced dispensers with an entrepreneurial mindset may choose to open or co-manage an independent optical store. This requires a blend of business acumen, retail knowledge, and customer loyalty-building strategies. Support may be available from franchised networks or mentoring from senior professionals.

### Specialisation in client segments

There is also increasing demand for dispensers who specialise in particular client groups, such as:

- paediatric optical dispensing, requiring patience and expertise in working with children and families
- geriatric or aged care services, where mobility, communication, and safety considerations are paramount
- myopia management and complex prescriptions, where additional knowledge of lens design and fitting is essential.

Figure 2: Optical dispensing career path

### 3.2.5. Industry preference for qualifications

The results of the functional analysis indicate that the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing remains the preferred qualification among employers across the industry. This nationally recognised qualification is viewed as the standard benchmark for ensuring that staff possess the technical knowledge, practical skills, and professional competencies required to deliver safe and effective optical dispensing services. However, in practice, many employers report difficulty in recruiting staff who hold this qualification. Factors contributing to this include:

- limited availability of qualified graduates entering the workforce
- geographic constraints, particularly in regional or remote areas
- high industry demand, which outpaces the current supply of trained personnel.

#### Employer response statements

"We prefer candidates who are already qualified but are also willing to support those eager to train."

"Attributes like motivation and long-term career interest matter more than unrelated qualifications."

"Sales or medical device experience may help, but those candidates often lack optical-specific knowledge."

As a result, many employers have adopted a more flexible approach to recruitment, prioritising strong customer service skills, retail experience, and the potential to learn over formal qualifications. It is common for individuals with backgrounds in sales, fashion retail, pharmacy, or general customer service to be employed as optical assistants or trainee dispensers. These individuals are then supported through:

- structured in-house training programs, which introduce key dispensing techniques and product knowledge
- mentoring by experienced staff, such as senior dispensers or optometrists
- progressive upskilling, allowing employees to take on more complex dispensing tasks over time.

This approach helps to bridge immediate workforce gaps and supports business continuity. However, it also creates variability in the level of technical expertise among staff across the sector, particularly in relation to:

- interpreting prescriptions and advising on advanced lens options
- fitting complex or specialised eyewear (for example progressive lenses or myopia management)
- adhering to clinical or safety standards, especially in the absence of formal training.

Employers also acknowledge that formal qualifications like the Certificate IV offer long-term value by:

- raising the professional standard of the workforce
- improving customer outcomes through better technical service

- supporting career progression within the sector (for example into store management, technical lab work, or specialised dispensing).

For this reason, many employers are supportive of training pathways that allow staff to transition from in-house learning to formal qualifications, often through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), workplace-based assessment, or part-time study models.

In summary, while the Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing is highly valued, the current workforce model in many businesses relies on a hybrid approach, recruiting for potential, training internally, and supporting progression toward formal qualifications. Any future workforce development strategy should aim to improve access to accredited training while recognising the important role that in-house training continues to play across the sector.

### 3.2.6. On the job training

The optical dispensing sector places significant emphasis on practical, workplace-based learning as a means of developing and sustaining its workforce. Given the hands-on nature of the role and the need for dispensers to stay current with evolving product lines, technologies, and customer expectations, on-the-job training is a critical component of workforce development. This includes both formal traineeships and in-house training models that support staff from entry-level positions through to advanced or specialised roles. Employers across the sector consistently highlighted the importance of ongoing, contextualised training to ensure staff are equipped with the skills and confidence required to deliver high-quality service.

#### Traineeship provision

The Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing is currently approved as a traineeship across all Australian states, providing a structured pathway for individuals to earn while they learn within the optical sector. Based on employer interviews, conducted as part of this research, it appears that formal traineeship models are usually offered by larger optical chains, such as Specsavers and Carl Zeiss Vision. These organisations typically have the infrastructure and resources to support trainees through nationally recognised qualifications alongside practical workplace experience.

#### In-house training

Provided across the sector, in-house training is a common and vital component of workforce development. Most optical retailers — whether large corporate chains or small independent practices — deliver structured internal training programs tailored to the organisation's processes, products, and service models.

Even when businesses employ staff who already hold formal qualifications, contextualised in-house training is preferred to ensure alignment with brand-specific procedures, technology use, and customer service expectations. For example, graduate and onboarding programs like the one offered by

Specsavers (Graduate Program – Specsavers Careers) help bridge the gap between formal learning and workplace practice.

In-house training is also viewed by employers as an essential element of continuous professional development (CPD). It enables staff to stay up to date with:

- new lens technologies and equipment
- evolving product ranges and clinical procedures
- retail and customer service innovations
- regulatory and safety requirements.

In summary, on-the-job learning is deeply embedded in the optical dispensing sector, with in-house training playing a central role in both initial workforce development and ongoing upskilling. While formal traineeships are valued, particularly by larger employers, the sector continues to rely on internal training to meet operational needs and support staff progression.

### 3.2.7. Challenges identified

Through interviews with employers and industry representatives, several critical challenges have been identified that impact the performance, quality, and sustainability of the optical dispensing workforce. These challenges reflect both the changing demands of the profession and the evolving expectations of consumers, particularly in response to technological advancement, deregulation, and emerging health trends such as myopia. Employers consistently emphasised the need for more targeted training, better-defined career pathways, and greater consistency in practice standards. The following table outlines key challenges highlighted during consultations and their implications for workforce development.

Table 2: Challenges identified

Challenge	Description and context
Proficiency with automated dispensing equipment	Employers reported that new and existing staff often lack confidence and competence in using modern optical technologies, such as lens-cutting machines, digital measuring devices, and automated edging systems. These technologies are central to improving efficiency and accuracy, but their use requires targeted, hands-on training, which is often not covered in foundational qualifications.
Enhanced communication skills	Many employers stressed the growing need for dispensers to communicate technical information, such as lens options, multifocal features, or coatings, in clear, simple language. This skill is essential to improving customer understanding and satisfaction, especially among elderly clients or those unfamiliar with optical terminology. Communication gaps were cited as a common barrier to effective service delivery.

Expanding market for specialised optical products	There is a rising demand for niche products such as sports eyewear, low-vision aids, and prescription safety glasses. Employers noted that dispensers often lack sufficient knowledge to advise on or confidently recommend these specialised solutions, highlighting a need for expanded product training and upskilling in this area.
Deregulation of optical dispensing in Australia	The absence of a national regulatory framework allows optical appliances to be sold by individuals with minimal or no formal qualifications. Employers expressed concern about the inconsistency this creates in service quality, customer safety, and the reputation of the profession. Some emphasised that while in-house training can help bridge gaps, it cannot fully substitute for a regulated, competency-based qualification.
Emerging health challenges like myopia	A recurring theme in interviews was the growing prevalence of myopia, particularly in children and young adults. Employers indicated a strong need for dispensers to understand basic myopia control options, lens types, and referral protocols. Many saw this as an area requiring urgent curriculum and professional development updates.
Competition from online retailers	Employers reported that online eyewear retailers are placing pressure on brick-and-mortar businesses to deliver added value through superior customer service and technical expertise. Dispensers now require not only traditional retail skills but also the ability to differentiate services, solve complex visual needs, and educate clients on why professional fitting is critical.
Understanding smart eyewear technologies	With the growth of smart eyewear, employers noted that dispensers are increasingly expected to be familiar with these technologies. However, they often lack adequate exposure or training to effectively sell, adjust, or troubleshoot these products in-store.
Advanced skills for dispensing multifocal lenses	Employers highlighted that dispensing progressive and multifocal lenses requires a high level of skill, particularly for elderly patients or those with complex prescriptions. Mistakes in fitting or poor communication can lead to discomfort, returns, and dissatisfaction. As such, this area was identified as a priority for advanced practical training.

## 4. Functional mapping

This section presents the outcomes of the functional analysis conducted as part of the research into the optical dispensing workforce. Functional mapping is a structured process that identifies and breaks down the core functions and sub-functions performed by individuals in key job roles within the sector. By defining the actual tasks carried out in the workplace, this process provides an evidence-based foundation for aligning qualifications and units of competency with real-world job demands.

## 4.1 Functions and subfunctions

To support the functional mapping process, this section outlines the primary roles identified within the optical dispensing sector, including optometrists, optical dispensers, optical/retail assistants, and store managers. Drawing from desktop research and employer interviews, each role is described in terms of its primary purpose and associated tasks. A visual functional map has been presented in figure 3.

Table 3: Functions and subfunctions

Roles	Functions performed	Sub functions
<b>Optometrists</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide eye examinations and diagnose vision conditions</li><li>• Diagnose eye conditions and diseases</li><li>• Prescribe corrective lenses and treatments</li><li>• Refer patients for specialist care</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate with optical dispensers on prescriptions</li><li>• Evaluate and diagnose common and complex eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy</li><li>• Write prescriptions for glasses, contact lenses, or other vision aids, customised to meet patients' individual needs</li><li>• Identify signs of systemic health conditions (for example diabetes, hypertension) that affect eye health and refer patients to general practitioners or specialists as needed</li><li>• Operate specialised equipment</li><li>• Track and manage eye health for patients with chronic illnesses such as diabetes or autoimmune disorders that may impact vision</li><li>• Refer patients to ophthalmologists or other healthcare professionals when advanced medical or surgical care is needed</li><li>• Provide follow-up care for patients who have undergone eye surgeries, such as cataract removal or LASIK procedures.</li></ul>
<b>Optical Dispenser</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Client interaction and support</li><li>• Optical assessment and pre-testing support</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book appointments and passing details to optometrist</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lens and frame dispensing</li> <li>• Ordering, inventory, and product management</li> <li>• Practice Operations and Promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct pre-testing, eye pressure and other eye measurements</li> <li>• Conduct screening tests/ optical coherence tomography (OTC) images/digital Retina photography</li> <li>• Read and analyse optical prescriptions</li> <li>• Work closely with the optometrist and other team members to ensure smooth day-to-day operations</li> <li>• Communicate with customer regarding their lifestyles and other individual needs</li> <li>• Guide clients through the entire process from frame selection to lens fitting</li> <li>• Recommend appropriate lens types and coatings (for example single vision, progressive)</li> <li>• Take measurements such as pupillary distances (PDs) and lens heights</li> <li>• Adjust frames for comfort and visual accuracy</li> <li>• Provide custom fittings and adjustments</li> <li>• Cut and edge lenses and fit them into a frame</li> <li>• Communicate specifications to lens manufacturers</li> <li>• Conduct quality checks on finished lens</li> <li>• Educate customers in eyewear care, lens options and aftercare services</li> <li>• Order products from labs</li> <li>• Problem solving/trouble shooting (for example when the customer does not like the glasses)</li> <li>• Offer customers frame styling advice</li> <li>• Deliver client service over the phone and face-to-face</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage social media accounts and create/maintain merchandising and creative displays</li> <li>• Work closely with optometrists and dispensers to support vision therapy and myopia management.</li> </ul>
<b>Optical/Retail assistant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisting in customer service-frame and lens selection</li> <li>• Pre-testing, and dispensing eyewear</li> <li>• Manage inventory and display setups</li> <li>• Process sales and handle transactions</li> <li>• Perform basic eyewear adjustments and fittings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book appointments and pass details to optometrist</li> <li>• Greet and assist customers upon entering the store</li> <li>• Pre-testing support</li> <li>• Order preparation and processing</li> <li>• Assisting with fittings and adjustments</li> <li>• Help optical dispensers, practitioners or customers choose frames that suit clients' preferences and prescription needs</li> <li>• Organise product displays and ensure adequate stock levels</li> <li>• Operate point-of-sale systems, take orders and complete payments</li> <li>• Assist with minor adjustments to frames for customer comfort</li> <li>• Work closely with the optometrist and other team members to ensure smooth day-to-day operations</li> <li>• Answer phones</li> <li>• Conduct pretests such as autorefraction, tonometry and visual fields test</li> <li>• Perform day to day administration tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Store Manager /Business Owner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee daily operations of the optical store</li> <li>• Ensure customer satisfaction and address complaints</li> <li>• Drive sales and meet business targets</li> <li>• Manage supplier relationships and product orders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain store appearance and atmosphere to enhance customer satisfaction and overall, in-store experience</li> <li>• Manage staff scheduling and performance</li> <li>• Handle customer inquiries and resolve issues</li> <li>• Guide the team through effective after-sales services including</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure store compliance with industry standards and regulations</li> <li>• <i>The store manager might also perform functions of optical dispenser as below:</i></li> <li>• Advise customers on lens and frame selection</li> <li>• Providing technical expertise in dispensing and fitting eyewear</li> <li>• Educate customers on eyewear care and lens options</li> </ul>	<p>following up with customers' feedback and offering technical services such as frame adjustments and basic repairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse sales data and develop marketing strategies</li> <li>• Oversee stock ordering and supplier negotiations</li> <li>• Implement health, safety, and eyewear quality regulations</li> <li>• Motivate the team regularly and work together to achieve store sales targets</li> <li>• Implement roster changes and drive sales through KPIs</li> <li>• Coach and developing the retail team in delivering exceptional customer service.</li> </ul>
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Figure 3: Optical dispensing: visual functional map



## 4.3 Mapping to qualifications

Mapping between functions and subfunctions to the training products under review was conducted to highlight the alignment between industry requirements and the competencies provided in the qualifications. This mapping is intended to ensure that units of competency address foundational skills for essential tasks and specialised capabilities for advanced or niche roles.

The findings from the recent functional analysis have highlighted several areas where additions or enhancements could strengthen the qualification. These observations point to opportunities for improving the relevance, currency, and alignment of training products with evolving industry needs and practices. The following are the key observations and findings that support these potential improvements.

Table 4: Key Gaps and Opportunities for Enhancement

<b>Workforce requirements</b>	Current coverage in training products	Functional analysis outcomes indicating opportunities for improvement
<b>Core dispensing skills</b>	HLTOPD001 Provide advice on optical appliances HLTOPD002 Dispense optical appliances HLTOPD003 Dispense atypical prescriptions	Feedback suggested a stronger focus is needed on hands-on application and practical troubleshooting for early-stage learners.
<b>Advanced dispensing – multifocal and progressive lenses</b>	HLTOPD002 Dispense optical appliances HLTOPD003 Dispense atypical prescriptions	Stakeholders suggested that more detailed coverage is required as this is a high-demand skill area requiring both theory and practice. Dispensers must confidently handle complex prescriptions and dispense advanced lenses like multifocal and progressive lenses.
<b>Dispensing for myopia</b>	Not covered specifically	Rising rates of myopia, especially in children, require dispensers to understand myopia control options, frame/lens choices for children, and how to support early intervention strategies.
<b>Dispensing for children</b>	Partially addressed in HLTOPD002 Dispense optical appliances	Stakeholder feedback highlighted that dispensers must be trained in general children's dispensing by appropriately engaging with young

		clients, selecting suitable frames, and managing prescription safety and comfort. A more structured focus is recommended.
<b>Use of advanced technologies and AI in dispensing</b>	HLTOPD002 Dispense optical appliances HLTOPD003 Dispense atypical prescriptions HLTOPD004 Edge and fit ophthalmic appliances HLTOPD005 Process and manage optical appliance orders	Content needs to be updated. The stakeholders highlighted the need to keep pace with rapid advancements in AI-based tools, smart eyewear, and digital diagnostics.
<b>Practice management support functions</b>	BSBOPS304 Deliver and monitor a service to customers (currently superseded) HLTOPD011 Process and manage optical appliance orders Elective units such as SIRWSLS303 Analyse and achieve sales targets and SIRXINV005A Control inventory (currently superseded)	Feedback suggested that optical dispensers increasingly support sales functions, stock management, and customer service. Stakeholders recommended to include more on handling customers effectively and problem-solving skills.
<b>Entry-level skills</b>	Not covered specifically	Employers consistently reported a shortage of skilled entry-level staff who are job ready. There can be targeted training for the entry-level skills gap that might support job readiness in customer service, product handling, and basic lens/frame knowledge.

## 5. Recommendations and next steps

### 5.1 Recommendations for updates in qualifications and units

Based on the functional analysis outcomes and the table provided, here is a list of recommendations for updates to the qualification and units within the optical dispensing training package. These recommendations aim to ensure alignment with current industry needs, address workforce gaps, and incorporate stakeholder feedback.

- focus on foundational and advanced dispensing skills
- targeting advanced appliances, including multifocal and progressive lenses

- introduce or embed content on myopia management by including knowledge and skills on myopia awareness and control options, especially relevant for paediatric dispensing, within existing or new units
- equip learners to support optometrists in implementing early interventions and advising customers accurately
- strengthen children's dispensing training by developing clearer content and performance criteria relating to dispensing for children
- update training products to reflect emerging technologies including advanced digital measurements
- review and update practice management and business support units
- consider inclusion of more customer service, problem-solving, and inventory control content relevant to optical practice management
- review and streamline the elective unit list
- reduce the number of electives in the qualification to strengthen focus on core industry competencies.
- address entry-level skills gaps by considering an entry-level skill set to support job-readiness for those entering the workforce without prior experience or qualifications
- incorporate structured troubleshooting scenarios, equipment handling, and repair techniques into early-stage units
- maintain mandatory workplace requirements (MWR) and strengthen guidance around quality placements, supervision, and assessment practices
- consider optional learning related to specialisation areas like geriatric or paediatric care.

## 5.2 Next steps

Based on the outcomes of the functional analysis and supporting research, the qualifications and units within the optical dispensing training package will now undergo review in consultation with members of technical committee. Draft training products reflecting the proposed updates will be made publicly available for feedback. This will be followed by a national consultation process engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including training providers, industry peak bodies, employers, subject matter experts, and other key representatives. These consultations will ensure the revised training products are industry-informed, practical, and fit for purpose to meet the current and emerging needs of the optical dispensing sector.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Job Advertisements Analysis Spreadsheet

Job Advertisements/ Position Descriptions Review

Key Job Role	Core Responsibilities	Workforce Skills Requirements	Required Qualifications	Advertised by/organisation name	Source/date
Optical Assistant	From meeting and greeting customers, providing advice on products, or placing specialised orders, this exciting role will see you become a vital part of our store team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An interest in retail or optics</li> <li>Previous experience in a customer service/retail role or similar</li> <li>A high standard of personal presentation</li> <li>Punctuality and reliability</li> <li>An ability to build rapport with customers</li> <li>An ability to work well under pressure</li> <li>Flexibility to work retail hours, which may include night and weekends</li> </ul>	In-house training provision	Specsavers Frankston, Melbourne VIC	Seek/18-09-24
Optical Assistant/Optical Dispenser	<p>An experienced person who can be a part of a small team providing high quality eye care and products.</p> <p>This is an important job supporting Richard and an experienced dispenser whilst caring for our patients.</p>	The ideal candidate will have qualifications and experience as an optical assistant or dispenser and experience in client care. Knowledge of Rodenstock products would be an advantage. Team work and customer service values will be essential.	Relevant qualification is required	Collin & Kirk Thornbury Ideology Consulting Pty Ltd Thornbury,	Seek/18-09-24

				Melbourne VIC	
Optical Dispenser	<p>Customer Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide exceptional service to our clients, guiding them through the entire process from frame selection to lens fitting.</li> <li>• Create a seamless and enjoyable experience, making sure every client feels valued and cared for.</li> </ul> <p>Technical Expertise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispense and fit optical products with precision.</li> <li>• Use your hands-on skills to adjust, repair, and maintain eyewear.</li> <li>• Stay up-to-date with the latest in optical technology, including lenses, coatings, and frame materials.</li> </ul> <p>Team Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with the optometrist and other team members to ensure smooth day-to-day operations.</li> <li>• Share your knowledge and skills, contributing to a positive and collaborative team environment.</li> </ul>	<p>Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous experience in optical dispensing is a big plus, but we're open to those with hands-on skills from other areas (like jewellery making, electronics, instrument repair or even bicycle servicing!).</li> <li>• A background in retail or customer service would be beneficial.</li> </ul> <p>Passion for Innovation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You're interested in the latest tech, especially in areas like virtual and augmented reality.</li> <li>• You're curious about quantum physics, holistic health, or anything in the realm of "weird" science.</li> </ul> <p>Attention to Detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have a steady hand and an eye for detail, ensuring every pair of glasses is fitted perfectly.</li> <li>• You're thorough in your work, ensuring our clients get the best possible outcomes.</li> </ul>		Microprism Vision Docklands, Melbourne VIC	Seek/18-09-24

Optical Dispenser	The dispensers and optical assistants are responsible for pre-screening all patients, contact lens fittings, contact lens insertion and removal instruction, paediatric dispensing and contact lenses, frame selection as well as reception and administration duties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynamic - be open for change, be able to work flexibly with others</li> <li>• Well presented, caring and compassionate</li> <li>• Up for a new challenge - be a quick thinker, multi-tasker, team player</li> <li>• Willing to learn and implement new concepts</li> <li>• Willingness to work with all age groups from children to the mature customer</li> </ul>	Ideally from a medical or optical background, and someone who is interested in doing more than “just dispensing!”	Eyecare Recruitment	Seek/20-09-24
Shop In Charge/ Optical Dispenser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the team to deliver a seamless customer experience at all touchpoints of the customer journey from eye care to dispensing</li> <li>• Maintain store appearance and atmosphere to enhance customer satisfaction and overall in-store experience</li> <li>• Guide the team through effective after-sales services including following up with customers’ feedback and offering technical services such as frame adjustments and basic repairs</li> <li>• Understand our branding and keep up to date with our key products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have at least 2 years’ experience in the optical industry</li> <li>• Possess positive and engaging communication skills</li> <li>• Be committed to providing customer service excellence</li> <li>• Have passion for eye care and eye health</li> <li>• Thrive in a collaborative team environment</li> </ul>	Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing (preferred)	Eye Trend Burwood East, Melbourne VIC	Seek/20-09-24

	<p>and eye care services, in order to increase brand awareness and deliver informative product knowledge when engaging with customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee daily operations of a store and delegate operational duties</li> <li>• Assist and support other team members with technical knowledge</li> <li>• Motivate the team on a daily basis and work together to achieve store sales targets</li> <li>• Build collaborative relationships with your peers (i.e. optometrists, optical dispensers and other optical professionals) in order to provide a seamless eye care experience for customers</li> </ul>				
Optical Dispenser		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a team player</li> <li>• Have excellent communication skills</li> <li>• Be willing to assist customers with frame selection and lens recommendations</li> <li>• Familiar with Optomate</li> </ul>	preferably Certificate IV in Dispensing	HC Eyecare Camberwell, Melbourne VIC	Seek/23-09-24
Optical Dispenser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support our Optometrists with pre-testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical Abilities: Must have a minimum of 3 months optical</li> </ul>	Certificate IV Dispensing qualification is	Specsavers Ringwood,	Seek/23-09-24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer our customers frame styling advice</li> <li>• Dispense glasses with various lens options</li> <li>• Build strong rapport and create a memorable customer journey</li> </ul>	<p>experience and retail/customer service experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiasm: Passionate about creating meaningful connections and supporting the wider community through eye health</li> <li>• Communication Skills: Excellent verbal skills with strong attention to detail</li> <li>• Teamwork: Ability to build genuine and supportive relationships with colleagues to thrive and achieve goals together</li> </ul>	highly desired, but not essential	Melbourne VIC	
Optical Dispenser	The role and environment involves the provision of optometry clinics to the aged care industry using a customised software and equipment setup	The combination of optical experience and a strong customer service focus will place the successful candidate in good stead.		Healthcare2 You Ringwood, Melbourne VIC	Seek/18-09-24
Optical Assistant/ Dispenser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide exceptional customer service to patients of all ages</li> <li>• Dispense and fit eyewear with precision and care</li> <li>• Operate a manual vertometer with confidence</li> <li>• Use Sunix software for efficient patient management</li> <li>• Work closely with our Optometrists and Dispensers to support vision therapy and myopia management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience with a manual vertometer is preferred</li> <li>• Strong sales experience is essential</li> <li>• Ability to work effectively with children and patients of all age groups</li> <li>• Flexibility to cover additional days when team members are on leave</li> </ul>	Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing is an advantage, but not essential	Bayside Eyecare Brighton, Melbourne VIC	Seek/18-09-24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to the positive, fun, and supportive atmosphere within our team</li> </ul>				
Ophthalmic Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist the Ophthalmologist in all aspects of patient care to enable efficient and effective patient management</li> <li>Consultation with the patient to carry out screening tests and medical history</li> <li>Ability to be able to answer patient queries under supervision of the Ophthalmologist</li> <li>Maintaining medical stock supplies</li> <li>Surgical counselling and administrative duties involved in organising operating lists.</li> <li>Administration and reception as required</li> <li>Sterilisation of surgical equipment</li> <li>Set up and assist the Ophthalmologist during minor surgical procedures performed within the clinic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A positive and proactive attitude</li> <li>Exceptional attention to detail</li> <li>The ability to work as part of a team and autonomously</li> <li>A high level of customer service</li> <li>Be reliable, efficient and able to work under pressure.</li> <li>Impeccable presentation</li> <li>Have a clear understanding of patient confidentiality</li> </ul>		Newcastle Eye Centre Newcastle, Newcastle, Maitland & Hunter NSW	Seek/18-09-24
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with the Store Manager in coaching the retail team and ensuring professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Management Skills:</i> Demonstrated leadership or training experience in a retail/customer service setting</li> </ul>	Certificate IV in Optical Dispensing is highly desired,	Specsavers East Maitland, NSW	Seek/20-09-24

	<p>customer service is always provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist the retail team with pre-testing and dispensing</li> <li>• Maintain store presentation and inventory control</li> <li>• Implement roster changes and drive sales through KPIs</li> <li>• Support the day-to-day operations of the store and be front of house support</li> <li>• Develop their optical knowledge as an essential part of the role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Practical Abilities:</i> Experience within the optical industry. Cert IV in Optical Dispensing is highly desired, but not essential</li> <li>• <i>Teamwork:</i> Contribute to a thriving store culture by inspiring and motivating your team</li> <li>• <i>Proactivity:</i> An efficient response to changing circumstances and delegating tasks effectively</li> </ul>	but not essential		
Modern Workplace Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This role specialises in Microsoft Modern Workplace Technologies, especially SharePoint, Teams, Identity and Power Platform</li> <li>• You be responsible for providing high-level support and troubleshooting, whilst also collaborating with our Systems Designers to influence technological changes within the business.</li> <li>• You will be considered as a subject matter expert and mentor for our more junior team members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3+ years of demonstrable experience delivering solutions in one or more of the following technology groups:</li> <li>• Office 365 Platform (Exchange Online, Microsoft Teams, SharePoint Online, Office)</li> <li>• Power Platform (Power Apps, Power Automate, Power Virtual Agents, Power BI)</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to think strategically and understand the practical application of technology infrastructure.</li> </ul>	Highly desirable – outlined current, formal certifications on Microsoft technologies including SharePoint, Teams, Identity, Azure, and Power Platform	Specsavers, Melbourne (Support office)	Organisational website/ 2-10-24

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong stakeholder management skills with the ability to build rapport cross-functionally.</li> <li>• Active self-initiated learner with a sound approach to finding solutions to technical challenges and actively pursue knowledge of industry best practice.</li> <li>• Aptitude or experience in mentoring/training team members to build capability across the business.</li> </ul>			
Store Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing front of house support to Retail Partners by managing daily operations of the store and embedding company values</li> <li>• Implementing roster changes and driving sales through KPIs</li> <li>• Coaching and developing the retail team in delivering exceptional customer service</li> <li>• Assisting the retail team with customer service, pre-testing and dispensing</li> <li>• Supporting the Retail Director in complaint resolution</li> <li>• Maintaining store presentation standards and stock management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Skills: Experience as a Store Manager or Assistant Manager, with proven ability to multitask between operational responsibilities whilst simultaneously developing a team</li> <li>• Practical Abilities: Evaluating and implementing new measures in enhancing store performance. Optical experience is highly desired, however full optics training will be provided!</li> <li>• Teamwork: Encourage &amp; motivate the team throughout their development journey</li> <li>• Proactivity: An efficient response to changing circumstances and delegating tasks effectively</li> </ul>	N/A	Specsavers ACT	Organisational website/ 2-10-24

Store Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing front of house support to Retail Partners by managing daily operations of the store and embedding company values</li> <li>• Implementing roster changes and driving sales through KPIs</li> <li>• Coaching and developing the retail team in delivering exceptional customer service</li> <li>• Assisting the retail team with customer service, pre-testing and dispensing</li> <li>• Supporting the Retail Director in complaint resolution</li> <li>• Maintaining store presentation standards and stock management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Skills: Experience as a Store Manager or Assistant Manager, with proven ability to multitask between operational responsibilities whilst simultaneously developing a team</li> <li>• Practical Abilities: Evaluating and implementing new measures in enhancing store performance. Optical experience is highly desired, however full optics training will be provided!</li> <li>• Teamwork: Encourage &amp; motivate the team throughout their development journey</li> <li>• Proactivity: An efficient response to changing circumstances and delegating tasks effectively</li> </ul>	N/A	Specsavers Queensland	Organisational website/ 2-10-24
Store Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing front of house support to Retail Partners by managing daily operations of the store and embedding company values</li> <li>• Implementing roster changes and driving sales through KPIs</li> <li>• Coaching and developing the retail team in delivering exceptional customer service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management Skills: Experience as a Store Manager or Assistant Manager, with proven ability to multitask between operational responsibilities whilst simultaneously developing a team</li> <li>• Practical Abilities: Evaluating and implementing new measures in enhancing store performance. Optical experience is highly desired, however full optics training will be provided!</li> </ul>	N/A	Specsavers NSW	Organisational website/ 2-10-24

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting the retail team with customer service, pre-testing and dispensing</li> <li>Supporting the Retail Director in complaint resolution</li> <li>Maintaining store presentation standards and stock management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teamwork: Encourage &amp; motivate the team throughout their development journey</li> <li>Proactivity: An efficient response to changing circumstances and delegating tasks effectively</li> </ul>			
Assistant Store Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support, coach, and motivate your team to meet and exceed store targets.</li> <li>Cultivate a culture of continuous improvement through coaching and training.</li> <li>Manage retail operations, including stock control, store policies and procedures, staff scheduling, and tracking sales team performance.</li> <li>Deliver memorable customer service and exceptional product knowledge.</li> <li>Create an engaging and positive working environment.</li> <li>Recruit, lead, and inspire your team to succeed in store.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a sales superstar with a proven track record of strong achievements within a KPI structure.</li> <li>Proven problem-solving ability and excellent relationship-building skills.</li> <li>Exceptional time management and organisational skills</li> <li>Previous leadership experience, ideally in retail We're always in the sun.</li> </ul>	N/A	EssilorLuxottica Centrepont Sydney	Organisational website/ 2-10-24
Associate Dispenser	You will be involved in the customer's journey from initial consult and pre-testing, to customising High-Fashion frames (from Luxury Brands such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retail experience – optical desired but not essential</li> <li>Strong communication skills and a quick learner</li> </ul>	N/A	OPSM Shepparton	Organisational website/ 2-10-24

	CHANEL, Tiffany & Co. and Gucci) to suit their lifestyle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passion to help others see the beauty in life</li> </ul>			
Customer Service and Optical Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smash Sales Goals: Actively engage with customers to identify their needs and deliver top-notch service, aiming not only to meet but exceed sales targets.</li> <li>• Expert Recommendations: Utilise your training to offer eyewear styling advice.</li> <li>• Energise the Atmosphere: Bring a dynamic energy into the store, making every customer's visit an enjoyable and memorable one.</li> <li>• Team Spirit: Consistently offer your support to fellow team members, contributing to a harmonious work environment.</li> <li>• Boost Brand Presence: Take proactive steps to elevate the visibility and awareness of our brand.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail Acumen: Proven background in a fast-paced retail setting.</li> <li>• Crystal-Clear Communication: Your communication is direct and easy to understand, complemented by outstanding listening skills.</li> <li>• Driven and Upbeat: Your high level of motivation is infectious, and you bring a positive and friendly vibe wherever you are.</li> <li>• People Savvy: You have the innate ability to connect with people, marked by approachability and empathy.</li> <li>• Customer-Centric: You're passionate about delivering top-tier customer service in every interaction.</li> <li>• Flexible Schedule: Your availability extends to late evenings and weekends.</li> </ul>	You'll receive comprehensive training, and our dedicated team will be right beside you, offering support every step of the way.	<a href="#">Oscar Wylee Chatswood, NSW</a>	Organisational website/ 2-10-24
Optical Dispenser ? Expressions of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As an Optical Dispenser, you will deliver high level customer service whilst being informative, and providing personalised, quality optical services in a professional environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With your previous experience as an Optical Dispenser you will be skilled in assisting our customers with all their eye care solutions from our range of high quality and fashionable products.</li> </ul>	N/A	<a href="#">National Pharmacies</a>	LinkedIn/2/10/24

Optical Dispenser- The Focal Point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome patients and visitors in a bright, friendly manner and promptly attend to their needs.</li> <li>• Engage with patients to ascertain individual needs through lifestyle questions.</li> <li>• Deliver exceptional patient service over the phone and face-to-face.</li> <li>• Assist patients with frames and lens selections using up-to-date product knowledge.</li> <li>• Manage social media accounts and create/maintain merchandising and creative displays.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong interpersonal skills for engaging with patients and visitors, including a bright, friendly demeanor.</li> <li>• Exceptional patient service skills both over the phone and face-to-face.</li> <li>• Proficiency in managing appointment bookings and patient enquiries efficiently.</li> <li>• Comprehensive product knowledge (frames, lenses, sunglasses, contact lenses, accessories).</li> <li>• Sales skills for optical products (frames, lenses, sunglasses).</li> </ul>	N/A	ProVision Eyecare Jolimont, Western Australia, Australia	LinkedIn/2/10/24
Optical Dispenser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a full-time role for an experienced Optical Dispenser looking to step up in their career.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optical Dispensing Certificate IV is highly desirable but not essential</li> <li>• Highly responsible and passionate about eye care</li> <li>• The abilities to influence, mentor, support and motivate your team members</li> <li>• Excellent communication in both written and verbal forms</li> </ul>	Optical Dispensing Certificate IV is highly desirable	Eyecare Recruitment  frankston, Victoria	LinkedIn/2/10/24

## Appendix B: List of organisations that participated in the functional analysis interviews

Interview Attendees	State	Number of attendees
The OPTICAL Superstore	TAS	1
Specsavers	VIC	2
Carl Zeiss	NSW	1
Eyecare Plus	NSW	1
CR Labs	VIC	1
Opticare	NSW	1
Former employer, now employee at Specsavers.	VIC	1
ACOD	NSW	1
See Side Optical	NSW	1
Hoya	NSW	1
Victor Eye Centre (SA)	SA	1
George and Matilda Eyecare	NSW	1
Provision	VIC	1
Northam Optical	WA	1
Total Participants		15

## Appendix C: Employer interview questionnaire

Your organisation	
1. How big is your organisation?	
a. How many collection sites do you have?	
b. In which states and territories do you operate?	
How many staff do you have that are:	
a. Optical Dispensers	
b. Optometrists	
c. Admin	
1. Contact lens specialists/Lab technicians	
2. Do your employees (optical dispensers) work in each of the following areas?	
• Store	
• Medical clinic	
• Mobile service	
• Aged Care Facilities	
• Hospitals and Day Surgery Centers (working in opthamological departments- post surgery eye care needs)	
• specialised clinics and services focused on providing eye care to Indigenous communities	
3. Do you work with diverse groups of people? Such as people with disability, children, older people, people experiencing mental health issues etc?	

4. Do you prefer experienced employees in this area?	
5. Do you only employ people that are already qualified, or do you train on the job? Or a combination – prefer trained, but may employ untrained due to skill shortages?	
6. If people train on the job, how do they receive that training?	
7. Are you an in-house RTO?	
8. Do you offer traineeships and are these completed?	
9. Do your optical dispensers undertake the following tasks?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telehealth and remote consultation</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paediatric and Geriatric Optical Care/Myopia specific skills</li> </ul>	
Working with different designs of lenses	
<b>Job Roles and Functions</b>	
1. What does a typical day look like for an optical dispenser? Are there steps/procedures they must complete daily?	
2. What functions do each of the roles perform – what would a typical day look like for the person?	
3. How long do people generally work as a optical dispenser? Do they follow any particular career path? optical assistant/ optical sales assistant)	
4. Which 5 skills and qualities do you think are most valuable or critical to be a Optical Dispensers?  These are not glasses related skills	

5. If dispensers travel to the homes of those who are housebound or to onsite workplaces such as construction sites, aged care facilities and more? Are there special skills required?	
6. Do your employees work and interact with children at work? In what way? Do they receive special/specific training?	
7. Do optical dispensers work remotely and alone? Are there provisions (such as special training) for these environments?	
8. Where do you feel the workforce is lagging behind in terms of skills or capabilities?	
9. What are the latest technologies or tools you are currently using or considering in your practice? / How important is it for your staff to have skills in digital lens crafting, AI-powered diagnostic tools, or telehealth?	
10. How do you visualise next 5 years in this industry? Emerging trends/technologies/any specialisations required	
11. What skills /knowledge do you think are necessary for optical dispensers to effectively manage and educate patients about myopia and other emerging eye health issues? (Employer specific)	
12. How important are sustainability practices in optical business?	

Attracting and Retaining Staff	
1. Who is your typical candidate/applicant ?	
Male	
Female	
Approx. Age group	

Culturally and linguistically diverse people	
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	
2. What are the key skills and experience you look for in candidates?	
3. Are there qualifications, other than optical dispensing, that you consider so people have the skills you are looking for?	
4. Would you be willing to share your optical dispensing roles position descriptions with us?	
5. If qualification not required or you employ an unqualified person, what are the first skills you teach them so they can commence work?	
6. Is training offered for working with people with special needs?	
If so, what training is offered in this area?	
7. Are you familiar with the optical dispensing qualification that is available?	
8. If qualifications are not preferred for new employees, how is the qualification not fit for purpose?	
9. Is there a clear career pathway for people with optical dispensing qualifications? Do optical dispensers extend into other roles, for example store management, or area managers or do they become optometrists?	
What are the pathways available?	
What training is provided to support these pathways?	
Do people tend to move through the pathways?	
10. What type of training is provided to support pathways and retention of staff?	