Ophthalmic Technician Practice (Micro-Credential)

Level 4, 25 credits

Micro-credential number (if known/NZQA to complete)

Reporting Code (If known/NZQA to complete)

Toitū te Waiora

Community, Health, Education and Social Services Workforce Development Council

(MOE 6048)

Contents

Listing

Title

Ophthalmic Technician Practice Micro-credential

Level and credits

4	25

Classification (NZSCED)

060999 - Health>Optical Science>Optical Science not elsewhere classified

Purpose

This micro-credential is for people working as ophthalmic technicians supporting eye care services in outpatient, hospital or community-based settings and provides learners/ākonga with the knowledge and practical skills required to support clinical ophthalmology services. Ophthalmic technicians are part of the eye care professional team and play a critical role in the delivery of timely access to eye health. Through diagnostic testing and use of technological equipment they provide critical support to Ophthalmologists, Optometrists and Orthoptists.

Outcome

On successful completion of this micro-credential, learners/ākonga will be able to support clinical ophthalmology services by applying knowledge of ophthalmic anatomy and physiology, recognising common ophthalmic conditions, performing a range of routine diagnostic procedures, demonstrate safe use of ophthalmic medications, and accurately recording clinical findings. They will communicate effectively with patients and clinical teams, applying principles of cultural safety and tikanga Māori in eye care settings.

Education pathway

Entry to this micro-credential draws upon individuals' life experience and/or experience as a

support worker, healthcare assistant or from another health and social service role. This micro-credential is intended for learners/ākonga who work as ophthalmic technicians.

Learners/ākonga may already hold or choose to work towards qualifications such as, New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Level 3) with strands in Healthcare Assistance, Support Work, Vision Hearing Screening, or New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing (Advanced Care and Support) (Level 4), or equivalent qualifications and experience relevant to ophthalmology services.

Cultural, community or employment pathway

On successful completion of this micro-credential, learners/ākonga will be able to work as independently as ophthalmic technicians supporting clinical eye care services in outpatient, hospital, or community-based settings, contributing to equitable access to eye care for diverse populations, including Māori, Pacific peoples, and others facing barriers to health services.

The micro-credential promotes culturally safe person-centred care that recognises the values, needs and preferences of individuals and their whānau. It supports whānau, hapu and iwi through health education and screening initiatives.

Ophthalmic technicians may volunteer in outreach programmes or mobile health services within rural or underserved communities.

Assessment standards or skill standards (if applicable)

ID	Title	Level	Credit	Version
4XXXXX	Explain eye anatomy, common conditions and clinical terminology.	4	5	1
4XXXXX	Perform clinical procedures in ophthalmology.	4	15	1
4XXXXX	Demonstrate safe administration of ophthalmic medications.	4	5	1

Review period

November 2026

Approval

Learning outcomes

On completion of this micro-credential, learners/ākonga will be able to:

- Explain the structure and function of the eye using clinical terminology and identify common conditions relevant to ophthalmic technician practice.
- Perform routine ophthalmic procedures in a culturally safe manner.
- Demonstrate the use of commonly used ophthalmic medications.
- Communicate respectfully and effectively with patients, whānau, and clinical staff, by applying principles of cultural safety.
- Accurately record and report clinical findings using appropriate terminology and digital systems.

Need and acceptability

This micro-credential was developed by regional ophthalmology departments and clinical leads at Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora, to respond to training gaps identified during the Health and Wellbeing qualifications review. It is supported by the Ophthalmology services at Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora. It meets the need for a practical, foundation-level award that reflects the core skills required to support clinical ophthalmology services.

Learners/ākonga will be able to work in multidisciplinary eye health teams, performing technical and patient-facing tasks in both public and private settings.

There are currently no ophthalmology-specific unit or skill standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards, and no sub-degree qualifications on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework focused on ophthalmology. This micro-credential fills that gap. It builds workforce capability and supports effective, culturally safe eye care.

It responds to increasing pressure on services due to rising rates of age-related and diabetes-related eye disease. By creating a pipeline of trained ophthalmic technicians, this micro-credential will help alleviate workforce pressures and improve access to eye care, particularly for underserved populations.

Admission

It is expected that the learner/ākonga will be working as an ophthalmic technician.

Providers must verify that international students enrolling in this micro-credential have the necessary English language proficiency to study at Level 3. Rules are outlined in section 22

and 'Appendix: Internationally Recognised English Proficiency Outcomes for International Students' in the NZQA Programme Approval, Recognition, and Accreditation Rules 2022

Credit recognition and transfer, recognition of prior learning

Decisions on cross-crediting, credit transfer, or recognition of prior learning will be made at the discretion of the awarding tertiary education organisation.

Length and Structure

Length

This micro-credential requires a minimum of 250 hours of learning and assessment.

Providers are expected to design a micro-credential that includes delivery mode/method and a breakdown of teaching and learning hours. This could offer learners self-directed options including: a) background reading and resources relating to ophthalmology, b) a range of training scenarios, and c) online tests for self-testing competencies. There must be robust systems in place to ensure learners receive and complete the material prior to the start of the taught programme. Self-directed learning is not appropriate after assessment has occurred.

This micro-credential requires learners to demonstrate competency by:

- Completing a minimum of 20 of each mandatory clinical procedure.
- Practical assessment must be carried out by an Orthoptist, Optometrist, Ophthalmologist, Ophthalmic Nurse, experienced Ophthalmic Technician or Medical Photographer who holds verified competencies.

Structure

This micro-credential has 3 components:

- Explain eye anatomy, common conditions and clinical terminology.
- Perform clinical procedures.
- Demonstrate safe administration of ophthalmic medications.

See details in - Appendix 1 - **Component Descriptor** Descriptors

Assessment methods

Providers must meet the requirements of CMR 24 and the requirements of the skill standard listed in this micro-credential.
NZQA's Aromatawai and the Principles for assessment should be used in this micro-credential - assessment must be fair, valid, consistent, and appropriate given the stated

learning outcomes.
Resubmissions, re-assessments, and appeals should be considered against the provider's QMS.
Please refer to Appendix 1 – Micro-credential Component Descriptor attached to this application for further information.

Pre-assessment moderation
Providers will need to submit skill standard based assessment materials for pre-assessment moderation before they are used, as specified in the current CMR document, and outlined on the Toitū te Waiora website.

Post-assessment moderation
Provider post-assessment moderation of skill standard assessments will use methods outlined on the Toitū te Waiora website.
Further information is available at toitutewaiora.nz.

Providers are expected to have policies in place as part of their Quality Management System (QMS) to carry out their own moderation of micro-credential delivery and assessment.

Completion

All components must be completed to be awarded this micro-credential.

Review process

Toitū Te Waiora will engage with the sector to review content and to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Toitū te Waiora will ensure that:

- Micro-credential content, structure and assessment is current and reflects the needs and key stakeholders in the sector, and learners.
- Micro-credential outcomes for learners, and particularly for Māori and Pasifika learners, are equitable.
- The micro-credential is amended to reflect changes in the sector (e.g., new approaches to practice, theory, and practical application).
- Any changes made to the micro-credential add value for the sector and learners.

Updates to the micro-credential reflect any changes made to skill standards:

- 4XXXX Explain eye anatomy, common conditions, and clinical terminology.
- 4XXXX Perform clinical procedures.

- 4XXXX Demonstrate safe administration of ophthalmic medications.

Appendix 1 - Component Descriptor

Component Title 1: Explain eye anatomy, common conditions, and clinical terminology

Level	4	**Credits**	5
Mode	N/A	**Duration (weeks)**	N/A
Learning outcomes	On successful completion of this component, learners will be able to: LO1: Describe the basic anatomy and physiology of the human eye. LO2: Explain common eye conditions and their effects on vision. LO3: Interpret ophthalmic terminology and abbreviations in clinical documents. LO4: Recognise glossary terms related to eye anatomy and pathology and use them appropriately.		
Topics	• Anatomy of the eye: cornea, sclera, aqueous humour/body, iris, pupil, lens, ciliary body, vitreous humour/body, choroid, retina, fovea, optic nerve. • Physiology of vision: light refraction, image formation on the retina, nerve signal transmission to the brain. • Common eye conditions and their standard treatment or management: myopia, age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), glaucoma, cataract, diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachment, astigmatism, keratoconus. • Common terminology and abbreviations. • Standard ophthalmic glossary terms.		
Methods (optional)	Assessment could include either a written assessment (for example, a workbook or assignments based on case studies) and/or an oral assessment using an assessment tool developed by the training provider.		
Standard(s) (if applicable)	4XXXX: Explain eye anatomy, common conditions, and clinical terminology.		

Component Title 2: Perform clinical procedures in ophthalmology

Level	4	**Credits**	15
Mode	N/A	**Duration (weeks)**	N/A

Learning outcomes	On successful completion of this component, learners will be able to: LO1: Perform ophthalmic procedures.
Topics	Preparing the clinical environment • Health and safety procedures for preparing clinical environments. • Correct setup and use of ophthalmic equipment. • Infection prevention and control: PPE use, workspace cleanliness, preparation of instruments, disposal of materials. Preparing a patient • Confirming the patient identity, common mistakes and ethical issues. • Confirming patient history, what information needs to be collected and what is the information used for. • Privacy and confidentiality requirements (Privacy Act 2020). • Informed consent, purpose and process. • Communication styles, and the importance of checking for understanding. • Culturally appropriate greetings and non-verbal communication. • Involving whānau in care decisions. • Managing patient anxiety or discomfort. • Incorporating tikanga when engaging with patients and whānau during preparation. • Maintaining patient dignity. • Health literacy and the use of plain language to explain procedures. Apply tikanga when conducting procedures • Tikanga Māori, understanding tapu and noa, in relation to the head, in supporting and positioning patients respectfully and safely. • Building trust and rapport (manaakitanga, whakawhanautanga) with patients and whānau. Mandatory ophthalmic procedures • Visual acuity, colour testing, focimetry, autorefraction, corneal topography, biometry, visual field testing, tonometry (non-contact, including Icare), OCT, wide-field retinal photography. Recording and reporting results • Accurate use of ophthalmic terminology and clinical language. • Documentation policies and procedures. • Electronic patient management systems. Maintaining equipment and the clinical environment • Standard operating procedures and safety protocols. • Safe handling and transportation of ophthalmic devices. • Routine maintenance and calibration of ophthalmic equipment. • Safe storage of equipment, reusable items and disposal of single-use items.

	Reflect on practice • Adapting interactions during procedures to meet individual cultural or health needs. • Responding to patient questions and concerns. • Reflecting on personal bias and communication style. • Strategies for improving cultural responsiveness through reflective practice.
Methods (optional)	Assessment could include either a written assessment (for example, a workbook or assignments based on case studies) and/or an oral assessment using an assessment tool developed by the training provider.
Standard(s) (if applicable)	4XXXX: Perform clinical procedures.

Component Title 3: Demonstrate safe administration of ophthalmic medications.

Level	4	**Credits**	5
Mode	N/A	**Duration (weeks)**	N/A
Learning outcomes	On successful completion of this component, learners will be able to: LO1: Describe medicines used in an ophthalmic setting. LO2: Explain safe practices when working with ophthalmic medicines. LO3: Demonstrate correct instillation technique. LO4: Explain legal and ethical responsibilities related to medicine use.		
Topics	• Types of ophthalmic medicines and their uses: mydriatics, cycloplegics, miotics, local anaesthetics, pressure-lowering medications, stains and dyes. • Pharmacological action: how medicines work in relation to eye structure and function • Common uses for each type of medicine. • Contraindications for each type of ophthalmic medication. • Considerations for special populations: Pregnancy, breastfeeding, elderly, children. • Storage requirements for different medicine types, including multi-use and single-use. • Safe handling: hand hygiene, avoiding cross-contamination, checking		

	expiry and integrity. • Instillation technique: pulling down the lower lid, correct placement, avoiding eye contact. • Legal and workplace requirements: Medicines Act 1981. • Standing orders and local procedures: content, application and limitations. • Documentation practices: recording, batch numbers, times and dosage. • Ethical responsibilities: informed consent, respecting privacy. • Knowing boundaries of the role and when to refer.
Methods (optional)	Assessment could include either a written assessment (for example, a workbook or assignments based on case studies) and/or an oral assessment using an assessment tool developed by the training provider.
Standard(s) (if applicable)	4XXXX: Demonstrate safe administration of ophthalmic medications.