

Nevada Ophthalmic Apprenticeship Program Requirements

Nevada Ophthalmic Dispensers (also called Opticians) are licensed health care practitioners who design, make, fit, and dispense prescription spectacle and contact lenses for the correction of a person's vision. To become a licensed Ophthalmic Dispenser, you must first obtain an Apprentice License and complete a combination of on-the-job training (apprenticeship) and education. Apprentices have *40 months from the date they are licensed* to complete all their apprenticeship requirements according to one of the following tracks:

Education/Training Requirements

Apprentices have the choice of two education/training tracks:

1) **One year-apprenticeship** – requirements:

- One year of on-the-job training comprising at least 1,000 hours of work at the fitting table and in preparing laboratory orders, verifying processed work from the laboratory and the performance of other duties related to ophthalmic dispensing
- Degree of Associate of Applied Sciences for Studies in Ophthalmic Dispensing

Pre-approved education program:

College of Southern Nevada AAS Degree Program for Ophthalmic Dispensing
(available to all Nevada residents via distance education)

<https://www.csn.edu/programs/ophthalmic-tech>

2) **Three-year apprenticeship** – requirements:

- Three years of on-the-job training comprising at least 2,000 hours of work at the fitting table and in preparing laboratory orders, verifying processed work from the laboratory and the performance of other duties related to ophthalmic dispensing
- Ophthalmic Dispensing and Contact Lens Dispensing home-study or certificate programs

Pre-approved education programs:

Ophthalmic dispensing portion:

- National Academy of Opticianry (NAO) Career Progression Program (home-study)
<https://www.nao.org/cpp/> **OR**
- College of Southern Nevada (CSN) Ophthalmic Dispensing Certificate Program
(available to all Nevada residents via distance education)
<https://www.csn.edu/programs/ophthalmic-tech>

Contact Lens dispensing portion:

- Contact Lens Society of America (CLSA) Contact Lens Manuals (home-study)
<https://clsa.info/Bookstore.aspx> **OR**
- College of Southern Nevada (CSN) Contact Lens Technician Certificate Program
(available to all Nevada residents via distance education)
<https://www.csn.edu/programs/ophthalmic-tech>

Proof of Enrollment Requirement

Apprentices must provide the board with proof of enrollment in one of the board-approved education programs listed above *within 6 months of being licensed*. Failure to do results in the apprentice's license being automatically inactivated. A license may only be reactivated at the discretion of the board.

Hands-on (Practical) Spectacle and Contact Lens Training Requirements

Apprentices must complete 100 spectacle neutralizations and 100 hours of practical contact lens training. This training may be completed on the job or through the apprentice's school. Neutralizations and training hours must be documented on [forms provided by the Board](#).

National Certification Requirements

Apprentices must obtain the **Basic, Advanced, and Practical Certifications** of the **American Board of Opticianry (ABO)** and the **National Contact Lens Examiners (NCLE)**; these certifications, along with a **Nevada Law and Ethics Exam**, are the final requirements an apprentice must meet to become a licensed Ophthalmic Dispenser. Apprentices are eligible to register for the ABO/NCLE exams at any time during their apprenticeships, though they must comply with any exam policies of the certifying organizations.

Other Requirements

- **Supervision:** Each apprentice must have a supervisor of record on file with the board who works for the same employer and at the same location as the apprentice. Apprentices may only dispense prescription lenses when their supervisor of record or a licensed substitute supervisor is physically present to oversee their work. Only dual-licensed opticians, optometrists, or ophthalmologists may supervise apprentices when they dispense contact lenses.
- **Notifications:** Apprentices must notify the Board of a *change of home/ mailing address within 30 days, a change of employment location within 10 days, and a change of their supervisor of record within 7 days.* A change of supervisor request must be accompanied by a new Apprentice Supervision Form. Apprentices may submit these notifications by logging in to their board-provided online accounts.
- **Yearly Renewal:** All apprentice licenses expire on January 31st every year and must be renewed on or before that date. Apprentices who allow their licenses to expire, or who are ineligible to renew their licenses because they did not complete their apprenticeship requirements by the 40-month deadline, *may not obtain a new license for 12 months after the expiration of the license.*

Requests for Previous Experience Credit

If you obtained optical experience or training prior to becoming an apprentice, or during a previous apprenticeship, you may submit a request for credit towards your on-the-job training requirements. The Board may grant up to three years of credit for training obtained during a previous Nevada apprenticeship and up to two years of credit for other experience and training. [The Prior Experience Request Form](#) is available on our website.

For Further Review

For more information on the laws and regulations governing ophthalmic apprenticeships, please visit the [About Us page](#) of our website to review **Chapter 637** of the **Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS)** and **Nevada Administrative Code (NAC)**, as well as our [FAQs page](#). If you still have questions, please contact the board office at info@nvopticians.org.