
Minimum Standard for facilities providing ophthalmology and optometry services

Quality Assurance & Regulation Division

Ministry of Health

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This guideline outlines the requirement for facilities providing eye care services in the Maldives. The requirements for human resource, services, infrastructure, equipment & management, safety and security, occupational health and safety and infection prevention are included in the standard.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STANDARD

This standard aims to establish the minimum requirements for providing ophthalmology and optometry services. The objectives are:

- To outline minimum infrastructure requirement for providing ophthalmology services.
- Categorize minimum equipment requirement for the all levels of optometry and ophthalmology services
- To set minimum safety and infection control standards for providing optometry and ophthalmology services.

3.0 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This standard applies to any government or private health facility subject to obtain registration and operating license from the Quality Assurance and Regulation Division (QARD), Ministry of Health (MoH) to provide optometry and ophthalmology services. QARD reserves the right to develop and amend the standards and guidelines for the service under chapter 25 of the “Health services Act” (29/2015).

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Optician	is an allied healthcare professional who adapts and fits corrective eyewear, as prescribed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist.
People of determination	people with personal condition(s) or situation(s) that could make it difficult for them to participate fully in their health care. It includes individuals with disabilities such as (physical, intellectual or sensory), age affected (either elderly or very young), affected by trauma or affected by medications/ drugs.
Eye examination	tests performed by an ophthalmologist (medical doctor), optometrist or orthoptist that measures an individual's eye health and vision to detect any abnormalities and determine the visual status of the person.
Healthcare professional	healthcare personnel working in healthcare facilities and required to be licensed as per the applicable laws in Maldives
Optometrist	is a healthcare professional concerned especially with examining the eye for refractive error problems and prescribing ophthalmic and contact lenses to correct these problems and detecting, diagnosing and managing eye movement abnormalities in both adults and children. They are specialized in eye muscles, squints and binocular vision abnormalities.
Optometry	is the health-care profession concerned especially with examining the eye for defects and faults of refraction, with prescribing correctional lenses or eye exercises, with diagnosing diseases of the eye and referring them for treatment.
Optical Centre	Any healthcare facility which provides eye care services.
Ophthalmologist	is a healthcare professional in the branch of medicine concerned with the study and treatment of disorders and diseases of the eye.

For the purpose of this standard, the auxiliary verb:

“MUST” means that compliance with requirements is mandatory for compliance with this standard and the unit cannot omit or use a part of those points.

“SHALL” means that compliance with a requirement or a test is recommended for compliance with this standard

“MAY” is used to describe a permissible way to achieve compliance with requirement or test.

5.0 INFRASTRUCTURE, FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING LEVEL

5.1 Infrastructure

5.1.1. All Centers providing optometry and ophthalmology services in the Maldives shall observe mandatory infrastructure requirements in chapter 3 of the Regulation No. 2021/R-28

(Regulations on Operating Healthcare Centres). They are:

- S. 10 -Structural standards of healthcare centres
- S. 11- Hygiene maintenance standard
- S. 12- Safety standard
- S. 13- Reception or waiting area
- S. 14- Consultation room
- S. 15- Procedure room
- S. 16- Laboratory, x-ray or other examination rooms
- S. 18- Sterilization and disinfection

5.1.2 All centers shall follow the design and functional requirements stipulated in annex 1 of this standard.

5.2 Grading level

All centers shall be graded as:

5.2.1 Level 1: Primary care

5.2.2 Level 2: Secondary care

5.2.3 Level 3: Tertiary care

6.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION AND LICENSING

6.1 No center shall be established or operated except after obtaining registration and license from Ministry of Health.

6.2 Registration and licensing are required for all centers requesting to establish healthcare services for the first time. Existing healthcare centres/hospitals with a valid operating license requires new service approval.

6.3 Service approval shall be granted by QARD upon meeting requirements set out in this standard and chapter 4 of Regulation no. 2021/R-28 (Regulation on registration and licensing of healthcare Centres) and other relevant laws and regulations.

6.4 All licensed health facilities shall pay the prescribed annual fees as stipulated in Regulation no. 2021/R-28 (Regulation on registration and licensing of healthcare Centres).

6.5 The centers should develop the following policies and procedures; but not limited to:

- 6.5.1 Patient acceptance criteria
- 6.5.2 Patient assessment
- 6.5.3 Patient education and Informed consent
- 6.5.4 Patient health record
- 6.5.5 Infection control measures and hazardous waste management
- 6.5.6 Incident reporting
- 6.5.7 Patient privacy
- 6.5.8 Medication management

6.5.9 Emergency action plan

6.5.10 Patient transfer

6.6 The centers may be registered as a stand-alone or a dedicated unit within a government or a private healthcare centre and graded as 3 (three) levels.

6.7 Level 1 Primary care - Optical Services

All primary care service centers are dedicated optometry services with an oversight of an ophthalmologist and shall:

6.7.1 Have an optometrist during all service hours

6.7.2 Oversight of an ophthalmologist for clinical activities.

6.7.3 Provide all services within the scope of practice of an optometrist as prescribed by Maldives Allied Health Council (Annex - 1).

6.7.4 Establish a referral pathway for secondary care services.

6.7.5 Have all required equipments for the intended services in annex-2

6.7.6 Comply with the infrastructure requirements in annex-3

6.7.7 All Optometrists shall have credentials and experience in optometry and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Allied Health Council.

6.7.8 Provide services but not limited to; eye and vision exams, corrective prescriptions.

6.8 Level 2 Secondary care – Optometry and Ophthalmology services

All secondary care service centers will provide both optometry and ophthalmology services and shall:

6.8.1 Have both optometrist(s) and ophthalmologist(s) during all service hours.

6.8.2 Ophthalmologists actively deliver medical and surgical eye care, while optometrists support vision assessment and primary eye care.

6.8.3 Collaborative service ensures comprehensive eye care at the facility.

6.8.4 Establish a referral pathway for tertiary care services.

- 6.8.5 Have all required equipments for the intended services.
- 6.8.6 Comply with the infrastructure requirements.
- 6.8.7 All Optometrists shall have credentials and experience in optometry and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Allied Health Council.
- 6.8.8 All Ophthalmologists shall have credentials and experience in ophthalmology optometry and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Medical and Dental Council.
- 6.8.9 All Nurses shall have credentials and experience in ophthalmology optometry and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Nursing and Midwifery Council.
- 6.8.10 All technicians shall have credentials and experience in relevant field and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Allied Health Council.

6.9 Level 3 Tertiary care - Optometry and Ophthalmology services

All tertiary care service centers will provide comprehensive optometry and ophthalmology services and shall:

- 6.9.1 Advanced care centers specializing in sub-specialist(s) and complex ophthalmology care in addition to secondary care services.
- 6.9.2 Provide specialized diagnostics, medical, and surgical treatments for a wide range of eye conditions.
- 6.9.3 Staffed primarily by ophthalmologists and sub-specialist(s) in ophthalmology with supporting optometry and ancillary eye care teams.
- 6.9.4 Established referral pathway where deemed necessary.
- 6.9.5 Have all required equipments for the intended services
- 6.9.6 Comply with the infrastructure requirements

- 6.9.7 All Optometrists shall have credentials and experience in optometry and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Allied Health Council.
- 6.9.8 All Ophthalmologists shall have credentials and experience in ophthalmology optometry and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Medical and Dental Council.
- 6.9.9 All Nurses shall have credentials and experience in ophthalmology optometry and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Nursing and Midwifery Council.
- 6.9.10 All technicians shall have credentials and experience in relevant field and have registration and practicing license from Maldives Allied Health Council.

7.0 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- A Health facility intending to establish standalone service shall register and obtain a license from Ministry of Health (MoH) to operate and provide optometry services.
- An existing registered facility shall obtain service approval for optometry and ophthalmology before providing services.
- All Centers shall adhere to the provisions stipulated in medical records Regulation no 2019/R-1070 (Regulation on Operating Healthcare Centres).
- All centers shall obtain informed consent before performing a procedure.

7.0 Fire Safety

- 7.1.1 The health facility shall ensure all signs for fire routes are clearly noticeable and marked.
- 7.1.2 The health facility shall maintain fire extinguishers, fire protection equipment and ensure equipment is working properly.
- 7.1.3 The health facility shall abide by the fire prevention and safety measures required by relevant regulator.

7.2 Infection prevention

- 7.2.1 Availability of handwashing facilities in all clinical areas.
- 7.2.2 Availability of hand rub in relevant clinical areas.
- 7.2.2 Hygiene procedures and precautions shall be in place, up-to-date and accessible to prevent exposure and reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases within the eye examination area.
- 7.2.3 Chinrests and headrests on slit lamps, field screeners, keratometers, auto refractors, or any other equipment should be cleaned with a sterile wipe before use by each patient.
- 7.2.4 The bridge and sides of trial frames and forehead and cheek rests of auto refractor and slit-lamp heads are cleaned anew for each patient.
- 7.2.5 Items coming into contact with a patient's eye shall not be reused.
- 7.2.6 Diagnostic solutions such as sterile saline or contact lens soaking solutions shall be clearly marked with the date first used and stored with caps on and not used beyond the recommended dates.

8.0 ENFORCEMENT AND SANCTIONS

- 8.1 All centers must comply with law, the terms and requirements of the standards, regulations and standard for healthcare facilities by the Ministry.
- 8.2 QARD may impose sanctions in relation to any breach of requirements under this standard and as per the related legislations and regulations, Health Services Act 29/15, regulations made pursuant to the Act, Ministry's regulations and standards for healthcare facilities.

9.0 REFERENCES

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Annex 1: Scope of practice for Optometrists

<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>MALDIVES ALLIED HEALTH COUNCIL MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALÉ, REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES</p>  <p>Maldives Allied Health Council <i>passion for excellence - raising lives</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">MAHC/2026/SCP/CPT/OPT/9-005-b/158-V3</div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Scope of Practice: Optometrists</p> <p>The following are the scope of practices of Bachelors and Master's degree level Optometrists</p> <p>Qualification: Bachelor's Degree, Doctor of Optometry (OD)</p> <p>Job purpose: Primary eye care practitioner. Perform comprehensive eye examination. Comprehensive eye examination will include;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Detailed history (ocular / general). 2. Visual acuity assessment. 3. Carry out refractions and prescribe eyeglasses, contact lenses. 4. Use diagnostic medications namely, mydriatics and cycloplegics (in indicated patients only). 5. Slit lamp examination. 6. Intra ocular pressure check (non-contact tonometry). 7. Fundus examination. 8. Examine patients with problems related to ocular motility, binocular vision, amblyopia, or strabismus and advise appropriate vision therapy. 9. Prescribe artificial tears / tears supplements for dry eye disease. 10. Conduct low vision assessment and provide low vision aids and low-vision rehabilitation. 11. Diagnosis and management of amblyopia. 12. Perform diagnostic ophthalmic procedures such as visual field testing, OCT, fundus photography, corneal topography. 13. Refer or co-manage patient whenever appropriate. 14. Perform vision screening of children in schools or community health centers. 15. Promote eye and general health by counseling patients. <hr/> <p>H. Reaal Sosun Magu, Malé, Rep. of Maldives</p> <p>Website: www.health.gov.mv Email: mahc@health.gov.mv</p> <p>Tel: 3014480 Page 1 of 2</p>	<p>Qualification: Master's Degree,</p> <p>Job purpose: A Master's-qualified optometrist can independently manage more complex cases, make independent clinical decisions due to advanced education and training and professional capability beyond entry-level optometry. A Master's degree qualified optometrist may, in addition to all Bachelor-level optometry duties.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independently diagnose ocular disease, including formulation of differential diagnoses 2. Provide clinical sign-off for cases beyond routine primary eye care 3. Provide advanced contact lens services, including management of irregular corneas and post-surgical eyes 4. Provide advanced myopia control therapies in children 5. Lead advanced binocular vision and strabismus management, including non-surgical treatment and post-operative care 6. Deliver vision therapy and prism therapy for complex binocular vision disorders, including amblyopia 7. Lead or be clinically in charge of subspecialty optometry clinics (e.g. binocular vision, low vision, pediatric optometry, contact lenses) 8. Develop, authorize, and review optometric clinical protocols, referral pathways, and management guidelines 9. Lead clinical audits, quality assurance, and patient safety initiatives for optometry patients 10. Act as primary clinical supervisor for Bachelor-qualified optometrists, interns, and students 11. Lead mentoring and professional development activities 12. Provide education and training to health and medical students, interns and optometrists 13. Lead continuing professional development programs in optometry 14. Lead or independently conduct clinical and health-services research in optometry and eye care 15. Design, lead, and evaluate community and national eye-health programs, including screening initiative. 16. Provide expert input into eye-health policy, service planning, and workforce development <p>Important reminder: As for all allied health professionals' optometrists registered with the Maldives Allied Health Council are expected to follow the councils Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics. In particular optometrists must act within the limits of their knowledge, skill and experience and appropriately refer a patient for further professional advice or treatment if the task is beyond the scope of his/her practice. Also, they should also act in the best interest of the patient and must not do, or allow anything harmful or dangerous to be done to a patient.</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  <p>Maldives Allied Health Council <i>passion for excellence - raising lives</i></p> </div> <hr/> <p>Scope of Practice – 07 January 2026</p> <p>H. Reaal Sosun Magu, Malé, Rep. of Maldives</p> <p>Website: www.health.gov.mv Email: mahc@health.gov.mv</p> <p>Tel: 3014480 Page 2 of 2</p>
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Annex 2: General Equipment list

1. Slit lamp
2. Trials lenses with trial frame Phoropters
3. Keratometer
4. Direct Ophthalmoscope
5. Auto refractor
6. Retinoscope
7. VA chart box
8. Tonometer

Annex 3: General Infrastructure List

Areas	Requirements
Reception and Waiting Area	A designated counter for registration/billing and a comfortable waiting area with public utilities (toilets with disability access, drinking water).
Consultation/Examination Room	A private room designed for eye exams and consultations with hand-washing facilities.
Optical Dispensing area	A dedicated space for displaying frames and lenses, where measurements and fittings are conducted.
Contact Lens Fitting Area	Designated clean area Handwashing facilities Adequate lighting and ventilation
Display Area	Shall have shelves or cupboards to display optical frames, glasses and lenses
Utilities & Environmental Controls	Reliable electricity supply Backup power source (recommended) Adequate ventilation / air-conditioning Safe water supply
Record Management	Computer system Secure patient record storage (electronic or manual) Data privacy and confidentiality measures
Staff Facilities	Staff workspace Toilet facilities for staff and patients