



Position Paper- Vision Therapists in Optometric Care

Utah Optometric Association

The Role of Vision Therapists in Optometry

The Utah Optometric Association recognizes Vision Therapists as an important adjunct to the practice of Optometry and the optometric specialty of binocular vision and vision rehabilitation. Vision Therapists are qualified to treat pediatric and adult patients with binocular vision disorders, strabismus, amblyopia and other eye movement disorders under the direct supervision of a licensed Optometrist.

Definition of a Vision Therapist

The Utah Optometry Practice Act defines an Optometric Assistant as “an unlicensed individual working under the direct and immediate supervision of a licensed Optometrist in accordance with the standards and ethics of the profession.”

A Vision Therapist is a specialized Optometric Assistant that has been extensively trained in vision rehabilitation and therapy. The College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD) recognizes a Certified Vision Therapist as a board certified therapist that has demonstrated advanced competency in the areas of vision development, visual information processing, binocular vision, vision therapy and vision rehabilitation.

Vision Therapists as Optometric Assistants

In the field of Optometry, it is standard for a Vision Therapist to work as a specialized assistant under the supervision of an Optometrist, much the same way that an Orthoptist works under the direction of an Ophthalmologist. They are recognized as an extension of the care of the Optometrist and are qualified to work in conjunction with the Optometrist to evaluate and workup a patient, as well as treat the patient with vision disorders that require therapeutic rehabilitation.

Education and Credentialing

The International Examination and Certification Board (IECB) of COVD provides a peer reviewed board certification process for Vision Therapists. They are the sole certifying body for Certified Optometric Vision Therapists (COVT).

To be considered for the certification process, one must be employed by or under the direct supervision of a Fellow of the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (FCOVD) and have worked in active vision therapy for 2000 hours or 1000 hours plus a relevant degree (e.g. behavioral science). Once the candidate is enrolled in the program, they work with their sponsoring Optometrist and COVT mentor to complete 9 open book questions, a multiple choice examination and an oral interview.



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Supervision Requirements

It is the opinion of the Utah Optometric Association that Vision Therapists should only work under the direct supervision of the Optometrist. Direct supervision requires that the Optometrist be physically present in the same facility during care and immediately available to give aid, direction and instruction.

Approved by The Utah Optometric Association Board

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