

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)

# Application Guidelines for Indigenous Spectacle Supply Scheme



## Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) - Application Guidelines for Indigenous Spectacle Supply Scheme

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An electronic version of this document is available at [health.qld.gov.au/mass](https://health.qld.gov.au/mass)

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# Introduction

The Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) is responsible for the management and administration of the Indigenous Spectacle Supply Scheme (ISSS), a program funded by the Australian Government through Vision 2020 Australia. The ISSS project will run until the **end of December 2022**, aiming to provide spectacles to indigenous clients who do not currently meet the eligibility requirements of the Spectacle Supply Scheme (SSS).

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with optometrists, ophthalmologists, administrative staff and other key stakeholders.

## Definition of Terms

Term	Definition
Applicant	Any person applying for provision of Spectacles under the scheme.
Contractor	Manufactures, repairs, and supplies spectacles to Dispensing Agents and holds a binding legal contract with Queensland Health.
Dispensing Agent	The Contractor has nominated service providers who also provide a measuring and fitting service for clients once spectacles have been delivered to them by the Contractor. These service providers may or may not be an Optometrist.
Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)	The Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) provides access to subsidy funding to purchase MASS endorsed aids and equipment.
Prescriber (Optometrist/ Ophthalmologist)	Undertakes the initial eye examinations for the client and may also be a Dispensing Agent. In the majority of cases an Applicant will attend an Optometrist. Ophthalmologists are Doctors who specialise in eye disorders and on rare occasions may provide a prescription to an ISSS Applicant. However, the Applicant must attend a Dispensing Agent to complete the ISSS Application form.
Spectacles	Refers to any optometric aids supplied under the scheme.
ISSS	Refers to the Indigenous Spectacle Supply Scheme.

## Privacy Statement

The Queensland Health, MASS is collecting administrative, demographic and clinical data as part of the MASS and ISSS application processes, in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009 and Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, in order to assess the applicant's eligibility for funding assistance for the supply of aids and equipment. Vision 2020/Australian Government will not be collecting personal information.

The information will only be accessed by Queensland Health officers. Some of this information may be given to the applicant's carer or guardian; other government departments who provide associated services; the prescribing health professional for further clinical management purposes; and to those parties (e.g. commercial suppliers, community care and repairers) requiring the information for the purpose of providing aids, equipment and services.

Your information will not be given to any other person or organisation except where required by law. If the information provided in the application is not complete or accurate, MASS may not be able to properly assess the application. If any details change, or if the applicant finds the personal information MASS holds is inaccurate, the applicant must contact MASS and reasonable steps will be taken by MASS to ensure the information is corrected.

Queensland Health has a long-standing commitment to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of personal information collected by the department. That commitment is supported by nine National Privacy Principles in the Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) ([legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2009/09AC014.pdf](http://legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2009/09AC014.pdf)) (in relation to all personal information held by the department) and strict confidentiality obligations found in Part 7 of the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 (Qld) ([legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2011-032](http://legislation.qld.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/act-2011-032)) (in relation to health information held by the department).

## ISSS Contact Details

Address: 41 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill QLD 4170  
Postal Address: PO Box 281, Cannon Hill QLD 4170  
Phone: 07 3136 3696  
Fax: 1300 362 276  
Email: [SSS184@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:SSS184@health.qld.gov.au)

## AIM of ISSS

ISSS provides a comprehensive range of basic prescription spectacles to indigenous Queensland residents who do not meet the eligibility requirements of the Spectacle Supply Scheme (SSS). All eligible applications to ISSS will be assessed through an equitable process based on clinical need. The guidelines have been developed to provide quality, consistency and standardisation in the administration of ISSS. In managing and administering ISSS, MASS on behalf of the Federal Government aims to provide a consistent centralised service with improved service delivery to clients and increased participation of Prescribers.

# Objective of ISSS

The objectives of the Scheme are:

- Eligible indigenous people have access to assistance through the Scheme.
- Enhance consumer service'.
- Effective management of existing resources.
- Equitable and consistent service to as many eligible people as possible.
- Increased participation of Optometrists/Ophthalmologists.

## Eligibility

### Administrative Eligibility

To be administratively eligible for assistance from ISSS, a person must be a permanent indigenous resident of Queensland, and not be eligible for the Spectacle Supply Scheme (SSS) through MASS.

## Entitlements

Eligible clients are entitled to the provision of spectacles based on clinical need as assessed by the Prescriber who completes the eye examination.

Once an Applicant has received spectacles/lenses from ISSS, they are ineligible to apply to the Scheme again unless further clinical need can be demonstrated (i.e. a change in their prescription that meets the clinical criteria and indicated a clinical need for new spectacles/lenses) on examination by the Prescriber.

If an Applicant has a clinical need in relation to both distance and reading spectacles, this may be dealt with as two separate clinical needs within two pairs of single vision spectacles ordered to meet the two requirements. Alternatively, the Prescriber may discuss the option of bifocal lenses with the Applicant and order accordingly based on clinical specification should the Applicant agree. An applicant cannot receive both bifocal lenses and single vision lenses.

### Purchase of Limited Extras

There is provision under ISSS for Applicants to purchase limited extras. Extras include tinting, photochromatic lenses, UV protection, protective coating, and hardening for glass lenses.

The Applicant is responsible for all incurred costs associated with the purchase of any extras.

Choice and payment arrangements for any extras to be purchased must be made directly between the Applicant and the Dispensing Agent at the time the spectacles are selected. The Dispensing Agent will provide details of any extras purchased by the Applicant under part seven (7) “Optional Extras” on the ISSS Clinical Assessment form and will be invoiced separately for these by the Contractor.

There is also provision under ISSS for lenses to be fitted to an Applicant’s existing or privately purchased frames or for ISSS frames to be fitted to existing or privately purchased lenses.

\*ISSS will not be responsible for any breakages or loss that may occur when an Applicant’s existing frames or lenses are being fitted to the ISSS spectacles. ISSS will also not accept responsibility for frames lost in the process of being delivered to or from the Contractor for the manufacture of the spectacles.

The Applicant is also liable for any extra costs that may be associated and are outside the normal ISSS frames or lenses as determined by the contractor e.g. regular size ISSS lenses being fitted to an Applicant’s larger type frames, lenses being fitted to rimless/half rim or “nylon fit” frames, and all freight costs.

## Application Process

### Prescriber (Optometrist/Ophthalmologist) Role

ISSS operates through a prescriber model, in that Prescribers complete a prescription for the Applicant’s spectacles/lenses and submit an application on behalf of the Applicant to ISSS for consideration of approval.

The list of participating Prescribers who are also “Dispensing Agents” is available at [health.qld.gov.au/MASS/prescribe/spectacles](https://health.qld.gov.au/MASS/prescribe/spectacles). This list is subject to change without notice and will be regularly updated and available via the MASS website and the 13 Health Contact Centre (13 432 584).

### Prescriber (Optometrists/Ophthalmologist) Responsibilities

- Ensure the accuracy of the prescription section of the application and verification that the Applicant’s concession card details are correct.
- Maintain current registration with their relevant state Registration Board.
- Knowledge of the ISSS Guidelines.
- Involve the Applicant fully in the prescription/application process.
- Advise the Applicant of all available options.
- Conduct a full assessment of the Applicant’s need and consider all available options under ISSS for the client.

- Ensure that the prescription is clearly legible and unambiguous in presentation on the ISSS application form.
- Ensure that they do not indicate to the Applicant that ISSS approval will be automatic and that they will definitely receive the spectacles/lenses through ISSS.
- Provide additional information if requested to do so by ISSS.
- Establish arrangements for direct private payment by the Applicant if an Applicant requires optional extras. ISSS will not accept responsibility for either the payment of optional extras or for payment arrangements between the Applicant and the Prescriber.
- If an Applicant wishes to have new lenses due to clinical need put into their own frames, the process described below should be followed:
  - The completed application form should be forwarded to MASS for processing.
  - On receipt of the application, MASS will either approve or reject the application and contact the Dispensing Agent.
  - On approval, the MASS Office Use Only section of the Clinical Assessment form will be completed, and the form will be faxed back to the referring Dispensing Agent with approval indicated.
  - The Applicant's own frames and the approved application are then forwarded to the Contractor via the Contractor's courier service, or via Australia Post.
- If the Prescriber is a Dispensing Agent, see next section.
- If the Prescriber is not a Dispensing Agent, see section on Applicant Responsibilities.

## Prescribers who are Dispensing Agents for ISSS

On Applicant presentation, the Prescriber performs an eye examination to determine clinical need for spectacles.

- If the Applicant meets clinical criteria as indicated on the ISSS prescription form, the Prescriber completes the prescription section of the form.
- The Prescriber requires the Applicant to complete the Applicant Details section on the application form.
- The Prescriber's dispensing staff will assist the client to select a suitable spectacle frame from the available ISSS range.
- The dispensing staff complete the Dispensing Agent section of the form which indicates the frame style and type, as well as other information required by the Contractor.
- When the relevant sections of the ISSS application form have been completed by the Prescriber, the form should be faxed, emailed, mailed or submitted online through MASS-eApply to ISSS for approval and processing.

## Applicant Responsibility

An Applicant wishing to apply for spectacles under ISSS must have an eye examination completed by a Prescriber (Optometrist/Ophthalmologist) of their choice to determine clinical eligibility for ISSS application. It is strongly recommended that, for convenience, Applicants attend a Prescriber who is a Dispensing Agent.

- ISSS is not responsible for any costs associated with, nor making appointments for, an Applicant's eye examination.
- Once the Applicant has had their eye examination and clinical need for spectacles has been established, the Applicant is required to complete the Part B - Applicant Details section of the ISSS prescription form.
- Where an Applicant has appointed someone as Power of Attorney or Enduring Power of Attorney under the Power of Attorney Act 1998, or as a Guardian or an Administrator under the Guardian and Administration Act 2000, that person can complete all the Applicant sections and sign the application form on the Applicant's behalf without needing a separate letter of authorisation.
- If an Applicant attends an Optometrist who is not a Dispensing Agent and the need for spectacles is indicated, the Applicant must obtain a copy of the prescription on the Optometrist's business prescription stationery and attend an ISSS Dispensing Agent. The ISSS Dispensing Agent will then generate the application, attach the Optometrist's prescription and submit the application to ISSS for processing.
- The Applicant is expected to take adequate steps to prevent loss of, or damage to, their supplied spectacles. The spectacles should be kept in the supplied case when not in use and should be cleaned regularly as per manufacturer's instructions. ISSS supplied spectacles should not be used inappropriately; they are to be used as a visual aid to correct a visual deficit. For example, they should not replace safety glasses when performing an industrial activity such as welding or grinding.
- Applicants applying for replacement spectacles must have a new ISSS Application Form completed by a Dispensing Agent.

## ISSS Staff Responsibility

On Applicant presentation, the Prescriber performs an eye examination to determine clinical need for spectacles.

- ISSS staff must not assess eligibility for ISSS until the Applicant has had an eye examination to determine clinical eligibility.
- ISSS applicants should be processed efficiently.
- Any incomplete areas on an application should be resolved as rapidly as possible to prevent extended manufacture and Applicant waiting times.

## Incomplete Application Forms

- Application forms that are considered by ISSS to be incompletely documented will be returned to the Prescriber/Dispensing Agent and will remain the property and responsibility of the Prescriber until completed.
- This may result in processing and delivery delays for Applicants. This applies to both initial and re-applications for both new and existing ISSS Applicants. Every attempt will be made to promptly resolve incomplete forms at a local level via the ISSS Senior Client Officer.

## Acquittal

- ISSS will implement an acquittal process to ensure that the Applicant receives the best possible service outcome. The aim of the acquittal process is to link payment of aids and equipment to the satisfaction of the Applicant and the Prescriber.
- MASS will forward a summary excel spreadsheet to a selection of Dispensing Agents on a weekly basis, listing the ISSS applications received.
- The Dispensing Agent is to initial the section upon delivery to the applicant.
- The summary form is then faxed, mailed or scanned and emailed back to the MASS Brisbane Service Centre for acquittal of the application.
- If the spectacles/lenses are not as required by the Applicant or are not as prescribed by the Prescriber, ISSS must be notified immediately.
- Prescribers should be aware that ISSS will not pay for a replacement item that has been inappropriately prescribed. ISSS will refer these cases back to the original Prescriber for funding.

## Standing Offer Arrangements

- There is a Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA) in place for the supply of spectacles, lenses and frames provided through ISSS. The SOA is a formal arrangement, following a competitive offer and evaluation process, with a commercial supplier for the supply of these products at an agreed price for an agreed period.
- The SOA is in place for the exclusive right to supply these products for ISSS and must be used by ISSS, regardless of the expenditure value of individual purchases or the cost that the product might be able to be obtained from other suppliers.

(See list of Approved Lenses, Frames and Accessories).

## Warranty and Delivery Time

- Spectacle frames supplied by the contractor shall be free from manufacturing defects for a period of two (2) years, from the date of acceptance by the Applicant. All lens coatings have a two (2) year guarantee against cracking, peeling or crazing.
- Any spectacles found to be faulty within the warranty period shall be replaced, repaired or adjusted as necessary at the expense of the contractor.
- Warranty will not extend to instances where, in the opinion of ISSS, the repair, adjustment or replacement has been occasioned by:
  - Changes certified as clinically necessary by the prescriber. Dispensing agents are able to undertake replacement of frame parts and minor repairs without voiding the warranty
  - Fair wear and tear
  - Applicant mishandling.

- The manufacture time for spectacles by the contractor will be a maximum of ten (10) working days from the receipt of the order from ISSS. Additional time should be allowed for postage.

# Client Feedback, Complaints and Appeals

## Complaints regarding ISSS

ISSS recognises that consumer feedback, both positive and negative, is essential in order to provide a quality service that meets the needs of our consumers. Compliments and complaints can be made both verbally and in writing or by using the forms as detailed below.

Consumers such as Applicants, Dispensing Agents, and Prescribers are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the service they have received from ISSS and the Contractor supplying the spectacles/lenses/frames.

Feedback can assist in resolving specific issues of concern. It also assists ISSS to identify areas where there is an opportunity to improve services provided by ISSS.

ISSS will treat all complainants with respect, sensitivity and confidentiality. Complainants will not be subjected to any prejudicial treatment as a result of making a complaint about the standard of service received.

The consumer's privacy is protected in accordance with the ISSS Privacy Statement and Information Standard 42A (IS42A). ISSS is committed to maintaining strict confidentiality in respect of information provided to it and will not divulge such information without consent of the consumer.

ISSS will endeavour to provide feedback to the complainant on the progress of their complaint at regular intervals throughout the complaint management process.

## Compliments and Complaints Mechanism

To assist the process, consumers are encouraged to provide factual and full information regarding their concerns. The compliments and complaints management process generally depends on the nature of the issue as follows:

- Issues concerning the performance of ISSS while providing the ISSS service. These types of issues are investigated and resolved, where possible, at local ISSS level via the ISSS Service Manager or Assistant Manager.
- Issues concerning the outcome of an application to ISSS. These types of issues are reviewed by ISSS/MASS administrative, clinical and management personnel, and if necessary, with advice from expert clinicians who have a holistic knowledge of ISSS client population, ISSS procedures, and services delivered under ISSS. The aim is to objectively review the issues of concern relative to ISSS

providing an equitable and consistent service to all applicants within the scope of ISSS service provision.

- Complaints that cannot be resolved at the local level are referred to the Director of MASS for consideration.
- Compliments can be forwarded via email to [sss184@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:sss184@health.qld.gov.au).

## Complaints regarding Prescribers who are not Dispensing Agents under ISSS

Applicants dissatisfied with the service provided by an Optometrist should initially discuss and try to resolve the matter directly with the Optometrist. If the client believes that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily, they can address the complaint to:

Optometry Board of Australia  
GPO Box 9958  
Melbourne Vic 3001

Ph: 1300 419 495  
Website: [optometryboard.gov.au](http://optometryboard.gov.au)

## Complaints regarding Prescribers who are Dispensing Agents under ISSS

Clients who are dissatisfied with the service provided by an Optometrist who is also a Dispensing Agent under the MASS ISSS should contact ISSS, either via phone, feedback form or email.

## Complaints regarding the Contractor

Clients who are dissatisfied with the service provided by the Contractor should also advise ISSS staff. The complaint process should be as above.

(Note: A client may choose to exercise their right to independently access a range of other dispute resolution mechanisms. They can contact the Health Quality and Complaints Commission or write directly to the Minister for Health or the State Ombudsman. They can also seek the assistance of the Justice Department's Community Justice Program. However, processes involved with those systems generally require that the above steps are taken initially.)

# List of approved lenses, frames and accessories

## Lenses conforming to AS228.1-1992

- Bifocal, D Segment, White, CR39
- Bifocal, Round Segment, White CR39

- Single Vision, White, CR39
- Special High Powered, Grind +/- 6, Single Vision, White, CR39
- Trifocal, D Segment, White, CR39
- Polycarbonate, for children, for protection of an only eye

## Plastic Frames

- Frames shall comply with AS2228.2-1992 and must be capable of repair.
- Eye Size:
  - The width of the greater diagonal (i.e. the maximum dimension of the lens space) shall not exceed 56mm in adult's or children's frames. The depth of each lens space must be such that it can adequately accommodate bifocal/trifocal/graduated lenses.
- Bridge:
  - a keyhole bridge or open bridge shall be supplied.
- Colours:
  - Frames must be available in a minimum of four (4) different colours for adolescent male, adolescent female, adult male and adult female types to allow Applicants a choice.
  - Nylon frames for infants – supply all colours available.
- Types:
  - Infant, Single Piece Nylon (Comoframe or similar)
  - Child, Female
  - Child, Male
  - Adolescent, Female
  - Adolescent, Male
  - Adult, Female
  - Adult, Male

## Metal Frames

- Frames must comply with AS2228.2-1992 and must be capable of repair.
- Frames must be suitable for optical prescription lenses.
- Types:
  - Child, Female
  - Child, Male
  - Adolescent, Female
  - Adolescent, Male
  - Adult, Female
  - Adult, Male

## Spectacle Repair Materials

- Joints
- Sides
- Spectacle Cases
- Rigid Spectacle Case
- Soft Spectacle Case

## Options for CR39

- Photochromatic
- Tinting
- UV Guard
- Anti Reflective (Crizal Alize)

## Additional Requirements in the SOA

The Dispensing Agents will attempt to have the full range of contracted frames available for assessment by the Applicants.

Applicants approved for optometric aids under this scheme are entitled to privately purchase limited extras, such as half frames, and the above-mentioned options for lenses. The Applicant is responsible for the costs associated with the purchase of extras if no clinical need is indicated.

Applicants wishing to retain existing frames and have lenses fitted or vice versa may do so. In the instances where the Applicant chooses and pays for his/her own frame outside of the contract, it is anticipated that such frame/s will accompany the approved order from the Prescriber and the Contractor will be required to fit lenses to the non-contract frame and be responsible for postage costs. Applicants are responsible for costs associated with transfer of lenses into rimless/half rim or “nylon fit” frames.

Any damage caused to the non-contract frames whilst in the possession of the Contractor will not be met by ISSS.

The cost of incorrect prescriptions will not be met by ISSS or the Applicant. Incorrect prescriptions are a matter for the Prescriber/Dispensing Agent and the Contractor to resolve.