

Fair Registration Practices Report

Opticians (2019)

The answers seen below were submitted to the OFC by the regulated professions.

This Fair Registration Practices Report was produced as required by:

- the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act (FARPACTA) s. 20 and 23(1), for regulated professions named in Schedule 1 of FARPACTA
- the Health Professions Procedural Code set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) s. 22.7 (1) and 22.9(1), for health colleges.

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1. Qualitative Information

a) Requirements for registration, including acceptable alternatives

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

In 2019, the College began its work on expansion of the database system to migrate the application process and the annual student and intern renewal process online. Both processes are expected to be conducted fully online in 2020.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Migrating processing of applications and the student/intern annual renewal online serves to simplify the process, and ensures a quick response time to applicants.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The College's online database system supports the College's strategic initiative to maintain a paperless registration system. Additionally, processing applications and conducting renewals online will significantly improve processing times and provision of information.

b) Assessment of qualifications

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

1. The Council approved the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians, 4th Edition. The competencies are the entry-to-practice benchmarks that the educational programs are built around and that are tested by the National Examination and the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process. A copy of the revised competencies is available on the College's website. <http://www.coptont.org/docs/National-Competencies-June11-2019.pdf>.

2. The Registration Committee adopted the new bridging modules for applicants who require upgrading prior to taking the national examinations. The modules were developed by the College of Opticians of British Columbia and universally adopted by opticianry regulators across Canada. The new modules are incorporated into an integrated

scorecard, which will allow for differentiation between mandatory and optional modules.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

2. The new bridging modules will be used to assist applicants who do not meet registration requirements to upgrade their knowledge prior to writing the national exams in order to meet the entry-to-practice requirements. In addition to assigning mandatory courses for any unmet criteria, the applicants would also be provided with the list of optional bridging modules if they wish to further develop their knowledge and skills. The optional modules will provide applicants with additional opportunities to bolster their knowledge and ensure success at the examination, while reducing barriers to becoming registered. All bridging modules are available on the NACOR website and can be reviewed by the applicants prior to completing the PLAR process: http://www.nacor.ca/Bridging_Module_Courses.aspx

Interprovincial collaboration in universal application of those modules has meant that assessment and decision-making is conducted in a similar way across Canada, regardless of where an applicant chooses to complete the PLAR.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The College's continuous effort to improve existing tools reinforces the importance of objectivity and reliability of the measurement of applicant competencies within the organization.

c) Provision of timely decisions, responses, and reasons

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

d) Fees

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

Annual registration fees continue to be subject to a 2.5% increase per year as set out in the College's by-laws and approved by Council in 2015. Annual registration fee increases are published in a fee schedule in section 5.2 of the College's by-laws, available on the College's website: <http://www.coptont.org/docs/Legislation/COO-By-laws.pdf>

In 2019, the annual registration fee for registered opticians increased from \$921 (plus HST) in 2018 to \$944 (plus HST). In 2019, the annual registration fee for student and intern opticians increased from \$136 (plus HST) to \$139 (plus HST).

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

The availability of the fee schedule, which shows fee increases from 2016 to 2021 allows applicants and members to anticipate and prepare for the change.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The nominal fee increase allows the College to work towards recovering operational costs associated with the College's regulatory mandate for registration, including investment in improvements to registration processes.

e) Timelines

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

f) Policies, procedures and/or processes, including by-laws

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

1. Delegation of Approval of Initial PLAR Applications

The College implemented delegation of the approval of some initial PLAR applications to staff as a means of expediting the first stage of the application process.

2. Selection of Assessors for PLAR Interviews

The College amended its current process of PLAR interviewer selection and delegated the authority of selecting a PLAR interview panel to staff.

3. Recording Self-Directed Hours Required of Reinstatement Applicants

The College developed and implemented a "Self-Directed Activity Log" document to be completed by reinstatement applicants to record any self-directed hours required by the Registration Committee. This will allow for a more streamlined approach to ensure applications are reviewed in an efficient manner.

4. Application for Reinstatement Flowchart

The College developed and implemented a flowchart to aid the Registration Committee in assessment of reinstatement applications. The flowchart considers the number of years the applicant has been out of practice, types of activities the applicant completed to maintain their skill and knowledge, and any special circumstances, where applicable.

5. Student/Intern Supervision Policy

The College amended its Student/Intern Supervision Policy. The current policy states that a member wishing to supervise student and/or intern opticians is required to "be actively and currently practising for a minimum of three consecutive years". This requirement was amended to a minimum of three of the last five years and/or having a minimum of 750 eyeglass fits within the last five years. The amendment further included that members wishing to supervise the contact lens fittings must meet the requirements of the College's Contact Lens Mentor policy. The amended policy received Council approval in December 2019.

6. Displaying Gender on the Public Register

The College's by-laws currently require collection of gender information for the public register. The College sought recommendation from the Citizen's Advisory Group as to whether the College should continue to post gender information on the public register and, if so, how this may intersect with the rights of health care professionals to not have their gender information displayed. Based on the feedback received from the Citizen's Advisory Group, the Registration Committee determined to recommend that the College remove gender information from the public register. The Committee's recommendation will be considered by Council in early 2020.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Updates to the College's policies, procedures and processes are intended to increase operational efficiency and enforce consistency in College decision-making.

The College is working with its stakeholders to ensure that students, interns, supervisors and educational institutions are fully aware of the amendments to the Student/Intern Supervision policy and have adequate time to make the necessary practice adjustments to ensure policy compliance. It is anticipated that the amendments to the policy will provide students and interns with expanded opportunities to obtain the required practice skills and experience while maintaining public protection. The College shared information about the policy amendments on the website, in newsletters, directly with educators, and during student presentations.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

In the majority of cases, policy revisions are a direct example of the College responding to feedback from a variety of sources. Policy and process clarifications reduce applicant and member inquiries and assist staff in addressing those in a consistent manner. By-law changes relating to the types of information which is published on the public register improves transparency to the public.

g) Resources for applicants

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

PLAR bridging modules are available on the NACOR website and may be reviewed by the applicants prior to completing the PLAR process: http://www.nacor.ca/Bridging_Module_Courses.aspx

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

The accessibility of online bridging modules provides applicants with additional opportunity to bolster their knowledge and ensure success at the national examinations, while reducing barriers to becoming registered.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

Providing additional resources to PLAR applicants reduces applicant inquiries and increases transparency around the PLAR process.

h) Review or appeal processes

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

i) Access to applicant records

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

j) Training and resources for registration staff, Council, and committee members

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

Consistent with previous years, Council, Committee members, and staff participated in numerous training and networking opportunities throughout 2019. Below is a list of the training opportunities provided in 2019:

1. The College's Council underwent a comprehensive two-day governance training session
2. The College's Council underwent a sexual abuse prevention training
3. New public members of Council attended the continuing education and trade show events to observe and understand the profession and to interact with the membership.
4. Committee Chairs and College staff underwent meeting facilitation training.
5. College staff completed a one-day relational regulation writing training.

Additionally, the Registration Committee members underwent an orientation to ensure they are aware of their statutory duties, the core principles of fair registration practices, and their powers under the Health Professions Procedural Code. The Registration Committee training included:

- Legislation related to registration and the registration appeals process
- Fair registration principles and practices
- By-laws, policies and processes of the College
- Labour mobility
- Conflicts of interest/bias
- Cultural differences and accessibility
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

By offering standardized training, the College safeguards objective and impartial decision-making and sustains its focus on providing transparent and fair registration practices for applicants, within the context of its mandate to protect the public interest and commitment to continued improvement of policies and procedures.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

Engaging in continuous learning and training ensures that the College remains current with regulatory trends and developments. It also allows to better understand the current issues that may impact applicants' experience during the registration process.

k) Mutual recognition agreements

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

l) Other (include as many items as applicable)

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

Describe any registration-related improvements/changes to your enabling legislation and/or regulations in the last year

The College's Registration Regulation sets out all requirements for obtaining and maintaining a Certificate of Registration for all classes of licensure with the College. In 2017, the Registration Committee completed its work on a comprehensive review and revision of the College's Registration Regulation and Council approved the final draft regulation at its meeting on January 30, 2017. The College submitted its proposed amendments to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in June, 2017. Some of the highlights of the new regulation include:

- Introduction of a new inactive class of Certificate of Registration intended for existing registered opticians who do not intend to practise the profession (either temporarily or long-term);
- Elimination of the registered student class of Certificate. Pursuant to Section 29(1)(b) of the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)*, students are able to practise under supervision. Removing student registration would bring the COO in line with most other health profession regulators in Ontario;
- Changes to registration requirements (some of which include provisions relating to applicants also registered with another regulatory body and a provision to deal with applicants who make false or misleading statements on their applications); and,
- A new currency requirement for registered optician members and applicants to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge, skills and/or judgment in the profession.

A complete summary of the changes is available on the College's website: <http://coptont.org/docs/Legislation/Proposed-Reg-Reg-App-Jan2017.pdf>.

A summary which includes a side by side comparison between the proposed changes, the current regulation and the rationale for any changes can also be found on the website: <http://coptont.org/docs/Legislation/Registration-Reg-Chart-Changes-Tracked-Jan2017.pdf>.

In 2019, the College undertook the development of two policies to address the changes being proposed under the new Regulation, namely a policy addressing currency requirements and a practicum requirements policy. Both policies are expected to be finalized in 2020.

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2. Quantitative Information

a) Languages

Indicate the languages in which application information materials were available in the reporting year.

Language	Yes/No
English	Yes
French	Yes

Other (please specify)

Additional comments:

b) Gender of applicants

Indicate the number of applicants in each category as applicable.

Gender	Number of Applicants
Male	77
Female	150
None of the above	0

Additional comments:

c) Gender of members

Indicate the number of members in each category as applicable. Select the option that best corresponds to the terminology used by your organization.

Gender	Number of Members
Male	1287
Female	1703
None of the above	0

Additional comments:

d) Jurisdiction where applicants obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education¹ in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
164	57	0	France 1 India 3 S. Africa 1 Tunisia 1 Total 6	0	227

¹ Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

The above numbers exclude individuals who already held a Certificate of Registration as a student optician with the College and were automatically updated to an intern optician certificate by the College.

e) Jurisdiction where applicants who became registered members obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants who became registered members in the reporting year by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education¹ in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
140	53	0	France 1 India 2 Total 3	0	196

¹ Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

f) Jurisdiction where members were initially trained

Indicate the total number of registered members by jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education¹ in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
2593	356	6	Austria 1 China 2 France 1	0	2990

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
			Germany 1		
			Hong Kong 3		
			India 11		
			Iran 5		
			Iraq 1		
			Israel 1		
			Philippines 4		
			S. Africa 1		
			Sweden 1		
			Tunisia 1		
			U.K. 2		
			Total 35		

¹ Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

Members as of December 31, 2019

g) Applications processed

Indicate the number of applications your organization processed in the reporting year:

Jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

from January 1 st to December 31 st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
New applications received	164	57	0	6	0	227
Applicants actively pursuing licensing (applicants who had some contact with your organization in the reporting year)	164	57	0	4	0	225
Inactive applicants (applicants who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year)	0	0	0	2	0	2
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	8	0	0	1	0	9
Applicants who became FULLY registered members	156	57	0	3	0	216
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence³ but were not issued a licence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence³	120	51	0	1	0	172

from January 1 st to December 31 st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
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¹ An alternative class of licence enables its holder to practice with limitations, but additional requirements must be met in order for the member to be fully licensed.

Additional comments:

An alternative class of licence refers to student and intern opticians.

h) Classes of certificate/license

Indicate and provide a description of the classes of certificate/license offered by your organization.

You must specify and describe at least one class of certificate/license (on line a) in order for this step to be complete.

#	Certification	Description
a)	Registered Student Optician	<p>Description (a)</p> <p>Students enrolled in an opticianry program approved by the MTCU, or applicants who have applied to become registered as an optician or an intern optician and who are in the process of completing additional training as ordered by the Registration Committee, may apply for a Certificate of Registration as a student optician. The class of student optician is considered to be an optional class of registration.</p>
b)	Registered Intern Optician	<p>Description (b)</p> <p>In order to apply for a Certificate of Registration as an intern optician, applicants must have successfully completed and graduated from a MTCU approved opticianry program, or one deemed equivalent, or successfully completed additional training ordered by the Registration Committee. Intern opticians are eligible to sit the national opticianry examinations.</p>
c)	Registered Optician	<p>Description (c)</p> <p>Full, independent licensure. A Registered Optician is authorized to perform the controlled act of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses and/or subnormal vision devices. The holder of the license may use the protected title of "Registered Optician" (RO).</p>

Additional comments:

i) Reviews and appeals processed

State the number of reviews and appeals your organization processed in the reporting year (use only whole numbers; do not enter commas or decimals).

Jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

from January 1 st to December 31 st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
Applications that were subject to an internal review or that were referred to a statutory committee of your governing council, such as a Registration Committee	0	4	0	12	0	16
Applicants who initiated an appeal of a registration decision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appeals heard	0	0	0	0	0	0
Registration decisions changed following an appeal	0	0	0	0	0	0

Additional comments:

j) Paid staff

In the table below, enter the number of paid staff employed by your organization in the categories shown, on December 31 of the reporting year.

When providing information for each of the categories in this section, you may want to use decimals if you count your staff using half units. For example, one full-time employee and one part-time employee might be equivalent to 1.5 employees.

You can enter decimals to the tenths position only. For example, you can enter 1.5 or 7.5 but not 1.55 or 7.52.

Category	Staff
Total staff employed by the regulatory body	16
Staff involved in appeals process	2
Staff involved in registration process	4

Additional comments:

*Two part-time staff

3. Submission

I hereby certify that:

Name of individual with authority to sign on behalf of the organization:

Melanie Woodbeck

Title:

Deputy Registrar

Date:

2020/02/28

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