

Fair Registration Practices Report

Optometrists (2017)

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 (FARACTA) s. 20 and 23(1), for regulated professions named in Schedule 1 of FARACTA
- the Health Professions Procedural Code set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) s. 22.7 (1) and 22.8(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.

Starting January 1, 2017, new applicants for registration must be certified to prescribe therapeutic drugs (or be TPA-certified) prior to making their application to the College, and that applicants presently in the system would be accepted under the current requirements.

Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO-ECO) announced on March 2, 2017, that it was changing its name officially to the Optometric Examining Board of Canada (OEBEC). It had announced earlier in January 2017 that it was no longer administering the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO) exam which had been the approved entry-to-practice exam for the College and would begin administering a new exam, the OEBEC Written and OEBEC OSCE, beginning in May 2017.

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

Some internationally educated candidates achieved their TPA-certification prior to challenging the evaluating exam. Achieving TPA-certification prior to challenging the evaluating exam, rendered candidates more prepared for the TPA-related questions on the exam and also on the entry-to-practice exam.

The changes announced by OEBEC necessitated revisions to be made by College staff to registration packages and letters, in addition to the College website. The College had been unaware of the changes being made to the approved entry-to-practice exam for the College. The changes resulted in questions raised by applicants about the new OEBEC written exam and OSCE.

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

The changes announced by OEBEC resulted in questions raised by members of the College's Registration Committee about the new OEBEC written exam and OSCE. The Registration Committee made recommendations to Council regarding whether or not the College should accept the new exam as the standards assessment exam required to meet registration requirements. In addition, it also had to consider whether or not to accept a hybrid of the old written (CACO) exam and the new OSCE exam as the standards assessment exam required to meet registration requirements. Council considered the recommendations and approved both of these new exams for a period of one year.

b) Assessment of qualifications

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.

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.

On October 27, 2017, the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) made the decision to discontinue the Bridging One program due to the steady decrease in Bridging One eligible candidates. The IOBP announced that it would continue to offer the Bridging Two program, and that all current Bridging One eligible applicants would be considered for Bridging Two. Bridging One had been approximately four months long and its advertised fee was \$17,000, while Bridging Two is approximately one year in length and its advertised fee used to be \$34,000. The fee for Bridging Two for 2018 rose significantly until the IOBP was able to secure partial government funding.

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

International applicants who had challenged the evaluating exam, had not anticipated this change. Some applicants contacted the College anxious to understand how this change would impact their chances of being accepted into Bridging Two and the fee for Bridging Two, as there was a limit on the number of candidates being accepted into Bridging Two. Eighteen students accepted offers of admission to Bridging Two for 2018.

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

The College will be working with the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC) and Touchstone Institute to re-state the eligibility to apply for bridging education instead of the eligibility to apply for Bridging One and Bridging Two, as had been the available options in the past.

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.

Guidelines for Eliminating Bias were published on the College website in April 2017 following Council approval. In addition, an Accommodation Request Form was appended to the Special Needs Accommodation policy in 2017.

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

The process by which members of the Registration Committee are vetted and guided in making transparent, objective, impartial and fair assessments, is formalized and made public resulting in greater transparency and peace of mind for applicants. Appending the Accommodation Request Form to the Special Needs Accommodation policy, also results in greater transparency and peace of mind for applicants.

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

By posting the above information, the perception of the College by external stakeholders including applicants, is improved. In addition, questions about the above processes from external stakeholders, are reduced.

g) Resources for applicants

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.

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.

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.

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

Following Council approval, draft amendments to the Registration Regulation (O.Reg. 837/93) as amended under the Optometry Act, 1991, were re-circulated to College members and stakeholders for further input. College staff is compiling its submission of the draft amendments to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The updated Registration Regulation incorporates changes that make the registration process more transparent, objective, impartial and fair while maintaining accountability by the College. The proposed amendments include the addition of a "good character" provision to the Regulation, clarifies the wording to more closely match the College's good character policy as proposed by the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. They provide the College with more robust tools when assessing new applicants; clarifies the registration process for members going from inactive to active status and vice versa; and eliminates discrimination within the registration process for an Academic Certificate of Registration resulting in greater transparency and fairness in the way the College is perceived to carry out its obligations.

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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	No

Other (please specify)
Additional comments:

b) Gender of applicants

Indicate the number of applicants in each category as applicable.

Gender	Number of Applicants
Male	35
Female	67
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	1065
Female	1325
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
47	4	33	U.K. 15 India 1 Puerto Rico 1 Cuba 1 Total 18	0	102

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:

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
55	1	37	U.K. 14 Iran 1 China 1 Benin 1 Cuba 1 Total 18	0	111

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
1487	60	586	Afghanistan 1 Australia 3 Brazil 1 China 18 Colombia 10 Ecuador 1 Egypt 24 U.K. 99 Guatemala 2 Hong Kong 3 India 23 Iran 29 Iraq 3 Nigeria 10 Nicaragua 1 New Zealand 1 Pakistan 3 Philippines 6 Russia 3 Syria 1 Syrian Arab Republic 2 Venezuela 7 S. Africa 4 Cuba 1 Sudan 1 Serbia 1 Total 258	0	2391

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:

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	47	4	33	18	0	102
Applicants actively pursuing licensing (applicants who had some contact with your organization in the reporting year)	64	4	49	30	0	147
Inactive applicants (applicants who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year)	2	0	0	0	0	2
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who became FULLY registered members	55	1	37	18	0	111
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence ² but were not issued a licence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence ²	0	0	0	0	0	0

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:

h) Classes of certificate/licence

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

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

#	Certification	Description
a)	General Certificate of Registration	Description (a) In general, the requirements for a General Certificate of Registration to become a member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario include: 1. Apply and pay the application fee. 2. Meet the established academic criteria. 3. Successfully complete the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry and/or the OEBEC written exam and OSCE. 4. Successfully complete the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence exam. 5. Pay all applicable registration and assessment fees. The above application process must be successfully completed for the issuance of a General Certificate of Registration.
b)	Academic Certificate of Registration	Description (b) In order to be eligible for an Academic Certificate of Registration, the applicant must hold a full time appointment as a faculty member of the University of Waterloo or another university or optometric educational facility in Ontario approved by the College Council. An applicant for an Academic Certificate of Registration must meet specified academic criteria, but is not required to successfully complete the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry and/or the OEBEC written exam and OSCE.

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	0	0	1	0	1
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 31st 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	9.8
Staff involved in appeals process	1.3
Staff involved in registration process	2.0

Additional comments:

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3. Submission

I hereby certify that:

Name of individual with authority to sign on behalf of the organization:
Dr. Paula Garschowitz

Title:
Registrar

Date:
2018/02/28

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