

Fair Registration Practices Report

Optometrists (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.

Consultations with College members and stakeholders were initiated in November 18, 2019, for an alternate entry-to-practice (ETP) exam proposal by Touchstone Institute. Following a review of the feedback received from members and stakeholders including other provincial optometric regulatory authorities and the Ontario Office of the Fairness Commissioner, the motion to approve this proposal did not go forward to the January 17, 2020, Council as originally planned. The College is willing to work with the other provincial optometric regulatory authorities to discuss making changes to the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) and the OEBC exam.

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

Should the discussions with the other provincial optometric regulatory authorities not result in the required changes to OEBC and the OEBC exam, this ETP exam once developed, would be Canadian therefore eliminating the need for candidates to cross the US border; be made available in English and French; and be priced competitively.

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

The impact of the ETP exam proposal consultation resulted in additional work for College staff in preparation for the January 17, 2020, Council meeting.

b) Assessment of qualifications

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

The Therapeutics Prescribing Assessment for Optometry (TPAO) to assess appropriate drug prescribing competencies in conjunction with the existing Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Exam (IGOEE), was piloted in 2019. The Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC) approved the College's recommendation to accept the TPAO exam component as part of the IGOEE exam at its July 13, 2019, meeting.

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

Applicants who score high enough on the TPAO exam component as well as on the IGOEE exam, are able to by-pass bridging.

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

The College is keeping the pathway to licensure for high performing internationally trained optometrists open when bridging opportunities are being significantly reduced.

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

d) Fees

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

As of September 3, 2019, the credential assessment fee administered by FORAC increased from \$1,900/candidate to \$2,250/candidate.

As of June 20, 2019, the OEBC exam fee was reduced from \$5,900 plus HST to \$5,100 plus HST in Canadian funds.

The National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) announced that the fee for each of Part I, II, and III, of the NBEO exam will increase by \$100 in US funds as of August 1, 2020.

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

In the case of the FORAC credential assessment fee increase, international candidates are paying \$350 more before taxes in order to get their credentials assessed by FORAC. However, candidates are paying \$800 less to challenge the OEBC exam.

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

The fee changes have had no measurable impact on our College, but the reduction in the OEBC exam fee is welcomed by the College.

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

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

The College launched its first online Jurisprudence seminar the week of May 27, 2019.

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

Applicants for registration can now review the Jurisprudence seminar material at their convenience and for as many times as needed without having to travel to attend a seminar. This has made it easier for applicants to access and complete this registration requirement.

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

There were initial development and implementation costs to the College. Now there are ongoing monthly costs to maintain the e-learning portal but reduced labour to prepare for Jurisprudence seminars.

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

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

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

Some Council members and College staff attended regulatory governance training, for example, training hosted by the Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation (CLEAR). The new member on the Registration Committee also attended the Managing Cultural Differences workshop hosted by the Ontario Regulators for Access Consortium (ORAC). The Registration Committee support staff attended several educational workshops at the annual Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR) conference in October 2019.

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

Applicants benefit from having Registration Committee members and support staff more educated on regulatory governance and various issues including cultural differences and their impact.

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

Staff, Council and Registration Committee members are more educated on regulatory governance and cultural differences.

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.

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

I) Other (include as many items as applicable)

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

1. College staff arranged to have the Application Form and Information Package translated into French and posted on the College website on May 22, 2019.
2. The International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) announced that it is pursuing a self-sustaining model and developing an advanced standing program that is scheduled to commence in 2022 admitting fewer than six students per year. The last bridging program is being offered in 2020 with 18 candidates.
3. A task force was established to re-structure Part III of the NBEO exam and the restructuring project is expected to continue in 2020. Also, candidates must now receive a passing score on the NBEO® entry-level examination within the first six attempts.
4. The College Council approved the development of a national competency profile between the College and Touchstone Institute with input from optometrists from every Canadian province at a cost of \$45,000.

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

1. Less barriers for applicants whose first language is French encouraging them to apply for registration at the College.
2. Significant decrease in the pathway for licensure available for internationally trained optometrists in Canada. However, as of 2022, there will be three pathways available for internationally trained optometrists: a) ability to challenge the OEBC exam directly if they perform significantly well on the IGOEE; b) ability to apply for the Advanced Standing Optometry program at WOVS; and c) ability to apply for advanced standing at four known accredited US optometry schools.
3. Unknown at this time.
4. Once the national competency profile is developed and implemented, applicants will benefit by either having the OEBC or the proposed ETP exam updated with an updated blue print generated from the competency profile.

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

1. The College can offer more services in French.
2. Increased calls and e-mails to College registration staff from internationally trained candidates who are currently in the bridging pool wondering about their options.
3. Unknown at this time.
4. The developed national competency profile would be a foundational framework that will support competency-based education, assessment and guide remediation.

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

No changes this year

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:

Both the application form and application information package were made available in French in 2019.

b) Gender of applicants

Indicate the number of applicants in each category as applicable.

Gender	Number of Applicants
Male	49
Female	85
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	1125
Female	1482
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
71	3	87	Australia 1 Egypt 1 Iran 1 Nigeria 1 U.K. 11	0	176

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
			Total 15		

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
57	1	59	Australia 1 Egypt 1 Nigeria 1 U.K. 11 Total 14	0	131

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
1560	67	686	Afghanistan 1 Australia 4 Brazil 1 China 19 Colombia 10 Cuba 1 Ecuador 1 Egypt 25 U.K. 125	0	2607

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
			Guatemala 2		
			Hong Kong 3		
			India 26		
			Ireland 2		
			Iran 30		
			Iraq 3		
			Nigeria 11		
			Nicaragua 1		
			New Zealand 1		
			Pakistan 3		
			Philippines 6		
			Russia 3		
			S Arabia 1		
			Sudan 1		
			Syrian Arab Republic 2		
			Venezuela 7		
			Serbia 1		
			S. Africa 4		
			Total 294		

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	71	3	87	15	0	176
Applicants actively pursuing licensing (applicants who had some contact with your organization in the reporting year)	67	3	81	15	0	166
Inactive applicants (applicants who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year)	2	0	2	0	0	4
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	57	1	59	14	0	131
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	0	0	0	0	0	0

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:

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
		Description (a)
a)	General Certificate of Registration	<p>In general, the requirements for a General Certificate of Registration to become a member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 OEBC written exam and OSCE and/or the NBEO exam. 4. Successfully complete the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence exam. 5. Pay all applicable registration and assessment fees. <p>The above application process must be successfully completed for the issuance of a General Certificate of Registration.</p>
		Description (b)
b)	Academic Certificate of Registration	<p>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 OEBC written exam and OSCE and/or the NBEO exam.</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	0	1	1	0	2
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	11.4
Staff involved in appeals process	1.3
Staff involved in registration process	2.0

Additional comments:

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I hereby certify that:

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

Maureen Boon

Title:

Registrar and CEO

Date:

2020/02/28

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