

Type:	Registration		
Name:	Additional Credentials Policy and Use of Designations by Optometrists Policy		
Status:	Approved	Version:	1
Date Approved:	December 13, 2024	Date Revised:	March 7, 2025

Purpose

This policy explains the additional credentials policy and the designations optometrists in Ontario are now permitted to use. It also explains how the additional designations earned by optometrists can be verified. It is to be reviewed once a year by the Registration Committee.

Background (condensed)

Before this policy was approved by the College Council, the only designations Ontario optometrists were able to use were their optometric academic degrees and the Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry (FAAO) optometric qualification.

Paragraph 20 under Part 1 of the General Regulation under the Optometry Act, 1991, as amended (O.Reg. 119/94) reads as follows:

“Using, in the course of providing or offering to provide professional services, any reference to the member’s education or educational achievement other than the member’s university degree, unless the use of the reference is approved by Council.”

Additional Credentials Policy

Optometrists registered in Ontario who successfully complete fellowships or other educational achievements that have been vetted by the College’s Registration Committee and approved by the College Council, can use additional designations associated with the approved fellowships or other educational achievements in the course of providing professional services. To be approved, these educational achievements or fellowships must have a vigorous credentialing process, which may include the submission of case reports, poster presentations, and is certified by a formal examination requirement as well as ongoing maintenance of certification (i.e. further continuing education, exams, reports).

The additional designations that optometrists can use as approved by the College Council can be viewed on the respective website of the organization that granted the designation. Before optometrists can use the additional designations, they need to provide the College evidence of their certification by the American Board of Optometry (ABO) (<https://americanboardofoptometry.org/general-public/locate-a-board-certified-optometrist/>) or the Optometric Vision Development & Rehabilitation Association (OVDR) (<https://locate.covd.org/>) or the American Academy of Optometry (<https://aaopt.org/>), by emailing info@collegeoptom.on.ca. The College will be verifying the additional designations achieved by Ontario optometrists, and complaints associated with misrepresentations by optometrists will be investigated. It can take up to ten (10) business days for the College to conduct the necessary verification before responding to an optometrist who submits their

certification information for verification. The certification information will not appear for the respective optometrist on the College's public register, but the information will be retained by the College.

Academic degrees, fellowships, certificates, and diplomas earned by examination from programs formally recognized by the College may be stated, but only in a manner that does not present the optometrist as possessing superior competencies.

Use of Additional Designations by Optometrists in Ontario

Optometrists in Ontario can use the following designations or their historical equivalents:

- For ABO: Diplomate, American Board of Optometry or Dipl. ABO or Board Certified, American Board of Optometry
- For OVDR: FOVDRA
- For AAO: FAAO or Dipl AAO

The additional designations must follow the "OD" or "Optometrist" designation after the optometrist's last name.