

Annual Report 2021



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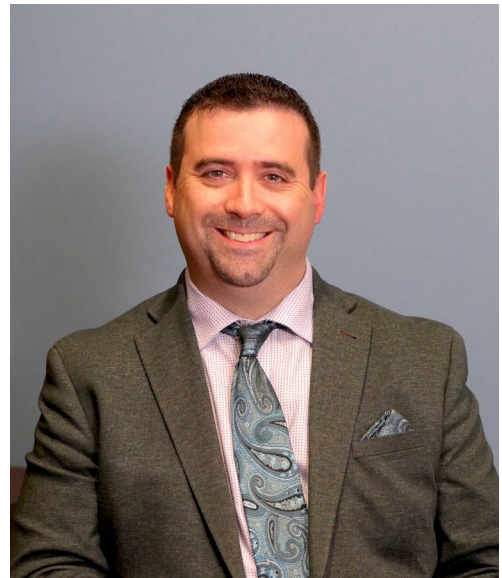
Letter from the President

At the College of Optometrists of Ontario, 2021 was a year of game-changing transformations. Among other things—and perhaps most significantly—it saw us transition from living “under” COVID to living alongside it in what many are now considering a post-pandemic world.

The College underwent a leadership transformation at the beginning of 2021 as well with Mr. Joe Jamieson stepping into the role of Registrar. Mr. Jamieson has an extensive background in the regulatory realm that includes 20 years of experience at the Ontario College of Teachers. This experience has served him well and has allowed for a smooth and effective transition into the College. His passion for our mandate, his natural leadership skills, and his commitment to an ethical and diverse work culture, have been crucial to his success in leading the College through a demanding and complex public health crisis.

Early in his leadership, Mr. Jamieson began addressing the outlying areas of the College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF). This framework is used to report on different performance areas within health regulatory colleges and in turn, report on the ability of the colleges to achieve their mandate. Mr. Jamieson operationalized the strategic plan and marshalled concentrated effort towards the requirements that were either “partially met” or “not met” in our 2020 CPMF report. His leadership has been invaluable in completing these remaining requirements and successfully securing Council’s support in this endeavor.

The College and Council also worked together this year to assess the possibility of using a Building Acquisition Fund, which was set aside to aid in the purchase of a new office building. After much deliberation, the College and Council decided to abandon the purchase option and continue to rent the current office space. The Building Acquisition Fund has now been reallocated to various areas, including a one-time fee reduction for optometrists. The goal of this one-time fee reduction was to help alleviate some of the financial strain that stemmed from the pandemic, while continuing to support the relationship between the College and its members.



*Dr. Patrick Quaid
President*

Alongside the one-time fee reduction, Council also approved a motion to form an ad hoc research grant panel in 2022, whose purpose will be to review and approve grants for research related to optometry, vision care, regulation, and related areas. This is an exciting opportunity for the College to invest in innovative research and to build a strong base for future evidence-based decision-making in our mandate areas. Our internal research projects, which also spun out of the Building Acquisition Fund, will complement external investments by exploring key issues in health regulation. Again, the goal here will be to facilitate evidence-based decision making in key areas related to the College’s mandate areas. These are innovative and cutting-

Letter from the President continued

edge endeavors for a health regulatory college.

While our Council members adapted to the post-pandemic world, they also never wavered on their dedication to the College and its mandate. Thank you to all of our Council and committee members for the time and effort you put towards maintaining safe eye care and supporting the progression of optometry.

It was a privilege to serve as President for the College these past few years, and an honour to work alongside staff and Council as we adjusted to working during COVID-19. As my term of Presidency ends, I wish the best of luck to the College, Council and the incoming President, Dr. Areef Nurani. The College will benefit from his dedication to the profession and his passion for the College's mandate.

2021 was a year of transition, both for the College and society, as we began adjusting to the post-pandemic world. Regardless of the obstacles that may come, I am confident the College will remain dedicated to its mandate and steadfast in its desire to be a leading regulator in its field.



Letter from the Registrar

I am honored to have joined the College of Optometrists this year. While COVID-19 continued to create obstacles in 2021, it also provided the opportunity for the College to re-evaluate its practices and identify areas for improvement.

Among other things, the pandemic allowed us to change the way we work, communicate, and support one another within an evolving set of complex circumstances. Part of this involved a commitment to providing our staff with a flexible and safe work environment by creating an operational Return to Work policy and moving to a hybrid work model. This shift allowed internal operations to continue while adapting to restrictions and lockdowns that changed frequently. Council and committee meetings were also transitioned into a hybrid model and can now move between in-person and virtual meetings as needed. Throughout these changes, Council has remained committed to the College and eager to assist staff in achieving a shared mandate. The hybrid model has proven to be an effective way of continuing College operations while prioritizing health and safety for our staff and Council.



*Joe Jamieson, M.Ed., OCT
Registrar & CEO*

We also continued to achieve our mandate through our three core areas of work: Registration, Quality Assurance, and Investigations. It is our duty as the College to ensure applicants are qualified to join the profession, that they adhere to our professional standard throughout their career and, when necessary, address issues as they arise by investigating and providing follow-up. This year, we became focused on regulating our members through right-touch regulation: the idea of using the minimum amount of regulatory authority while achieving our mandate. This model of regulation, which is now an international paradigm, takes the risk of harm into account, as well as having a response that is proportionate to the level of risk. The College strives to address issues in regulation and

address them using right-touch regulation.

The work we do could not be done without our staff, as well as our dedicated Council and committee members. Thank you for your dedication to regulating eye care in the public interest. To all optometrists, I thank you for your adaptability and for staying steadfast in your dedication to excellence in eye care and vision health.

My smooth transition into leadership at the College was largely due to the on-boarding wisdom and support from our Deputy Registrar, Hanan Jibry. Thank you for your commitment to the College.

As we move into 2022, we will continue to provide evidence as a College that is a leading regulator in the regulation community. This sometimes requires us to be bold, progressive, and forward-thinking.

COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

2021 Council

Our Council remained committed to their work, and flexible in how they achieved that work in 2021.

2021 Council

Dr. Patrick Quaid (President)
Mr. Bashar Kassir (Vice-President)
Ms. Suzanne Allen
Ms. Kathryn Biondi
Dr. Linda Chan
Dr. Lisa Christian
Mr. Ravnit Dhaliwal
Dr. Mark Eltis
Dr. Camy Grewal

Ms. Winona Hutchinson
Mr. Howard Kennedy
Dr. Richard Kniaziew
Dr. Lindy Mackey
Dr. Annie Micucci
Dr. Areef Nurani
Mr. Narendra Shah
Dr. William Ulakovic

Committees

More than four dozen committee members support and facilitate the College's work. Our sincere thanks for the time, skill, and thoughtfulness they bring to their work on the following committees:

Executive Committee

Dr. Patrick Quaid, President
Mr. Bashar Kassir, Vice President
Ms. Kathryn Biondi

Dr. Linda Chan
Dr. Camy Grewal

The Executive Committee works with the Registrar to ensure that College resources are allocated properly, and that staff and committees are advancing College work and supporting Council priorities.

Audit/Finance/Risk

Dr. Linda Chan, Chair
Ms. Suzanne Allen
Mr. Ravnit Dhaliwal

Dr. Mark Eltis
Dr. Lindy Mackey

The Audit/Finance/Risk (AFR) Committee reviews and advises Council on the College's financial affairs, including the investment strategy, auditor review and financial planning. The Committee also oversees the College's overall risk management framework.

Governance/HR

Ms. Kathryn Biondi, Chair
Dr. Lisa Christian
Dr. Richard Kniaziew

Dr. Areef Nurani
Mr. Narendra Shah

This Governance/HR Committee is a standing committee that aids Council in achieving high standards in transparent and ethical self-governance through policy development, recruitment, training, evaluation, and succession planning.

Inquiries, Complaints, and Reports Committee

Dr. Richard Kniaziew, Co-Chair
Dr. David White, Co-Chair
Dr. Jenna Astorino
Ms. Kathryn Biondi
Mr. Ravnit Dhaliwal
Mr. Bashar Kassir

Dr. Vanesh Kathiravelu
Dr. Norris Lam
Dr. Dino Mastronardi
Dr. Annie Micucci
Mr. Narendra Shah

The Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC), which sits as two independent panels, investigates and makes decisions on allegations of professional misconduct, incompetence, or incapacity brought against members of the College. These allegations proceed from formal complaints, information brought to the attention of the Registrar, mandatory reports, or referrals from the Quality Assurance Committee.

Fitness to Practise Committee

Dr. Annie Micucci, Chair
Mr. Howard Kennedy

Dr. Jay Mithani
Dr. Karin Schellenberg

The Fitness to Practise Committee receives referrals from the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee and conducts a hearing when there is evidence that an optometrist might be incapacitated due to a mental or physical condition.

Discipline Committee

Dr. Dennis Ruskin, Chair	Mr. Ravnit Dhaliwal	Dr. Lindy Mackey
Ms. Suzanne Allen	Dr. Marian Elder	Dr. Donald MacQueen
Dr. Lorne Berman	Dr. Mark Eltis	Dr. Mohamed Moussa
Dr. Amit Bhatia	Dr. Camy Grewal	Dr. Areef Nurani
Ms. Kathryn Biondi	Dr. Vivian Habib	Dr. Patrick Quaid
Dr. Krista Bruni	Dr. Jameel Kanji	Dr. Karin Simon
Dr. Linda Chan	Mr. Bashar Kassir	Mr. Narendra Shah
Dr. Lisa Christian	Mr. Howard Kennedy	Dr. William Ulakovic
Dr. Michelle Cvercko	Dr. Anita Kumar	Dr. Marta Witer

The Discipline Committee hears allegations of professional misconduct and/or incompetence made against a College member. The Committee considers evidence in each case and decides whether to order a range of penalties, including reprimands, suspensions, fines or revocation of an optometrist's Certificate of Registration.

Patient Relations Committee

Ms. Suzanne Allen, Chair	Mr. Howard Kennedy
Dr. Manveen Bedi	Dr. Angela Kyveris
Dr. Mark Eltis	Dr. Olga Savitska
Mr. Bashar Kassir	Dr. Yuan (Mike) Yang

The Patient Relations Committee (PRC) oversees a program that promotes awareness of and includes measures to prevent sexual abuse of patients. The Committee also administers a fund for therapy and counselling for patients who have been sexually abused by an optometrist. The Committee reviews issues of an ethical nature that occur in professional practice and develops education and information program for the public and optometrists.

Registration

Dr. William Ulakovic, Chair	Dr. Naomi Kong
Ms. Suzanne Allen	Dr. Harninder Sandhu
Dr. Pooya Hemami	Dr. Abraham Yuen
Mr. Howard Kennedy	

The Registration Committee is responsible for the College's entry-to-practice process, ensuring that anyone who wishes to practise in Ontario possesses certain skills, knowledge, credentials and is of good character.

Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee helps optometrists maintain and enhance their knowledge, skill, and judgment to ensure the public continues to access safe, high-quality eye care. The Committee consists of two panels, the Quality Assurance Panel (QAP) and the Clinical Practice Panel (CPP).

Quality Assurance Panel (QAP)

Dr. Linda Chan, Chair

Mr. Ravnit Dhaliwal

Dr. Nadine Furtado

Dr. Natalja Ilic

Dr. Larry Ng

Dr. Karin Schellenberg

Dr. David Traynor

The Quality Assurance Panel (QAP) works with optometrists, offering tools and feedback to continually maintain and improve their competence. The QA program includes Continuing Education (CE), practice assessment, practice evaluation, and remediation, among other components.

Clinical Practice Panel (CPP)

Dr. Camy Grewal, Chair

Dr. Bill Chisholm

Dr. Shirley Ha

Mr. Howard Kennedy

Dr. Lindy Mackey

Dr. Sarah Maciver

Dr. Leah Markin

The Clinical Practice Panel (CPP) establishes and clarifies new and existing standards of practice, regulatory requirements, and clinical practice guidelines in the Optometric Practice Reference (OPR).

Quality Assurance Subcommittee

Ms. Ellen Pekilis, Chair

Dr. Patricia Hrynchak

Dr. Areef Nurani

Dr. Olga Savitska

Mr. Narendra Shah

Mr. John Van Bastelaar

Dr. William Ulakovic

The Quality Assurance Subcommittee was struck to conduct an independent evaluation of the QA Program; develop various member resources and tools, such as a self-assessment and continuing professional development component; and increase member engagement in the program.

COLLEGE PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

What is the CPMF?

The College Performance Measurement Framework (CPMF) is a reporting tool designed by the Ministry of Health in Ontario to assess health regulatory colleges on their performance and how well they are achieving their mandate. The report covers a multitude of mandate areas including governance, registration, collaboration with other stakeholders, diversity, equity and inclusion, and how well the organization is doing overall. There are 50 requirements colleges must report on, and for each requirement colleges are given a rating of ‘fully met’, ‘partially met’, or ‘not met’.

The CPMF also includes statistics and data about regulated health professionals, their practice and information about the complaints a college receives: both the type of complaint and the number of complaints they receive in a year.

Each health regulatory college is asked to report on the CPMF annually. All improvements, regressions, and changes will be noted in the report, which allows for comparisons to be made year to year. The report also contains a commentary for each of the requirements, stating how the College is meeting the requirements, or what the course of action is to meet the requirements that are ‘partially met’ or ‘not met’.

This report is available to the public on each college’s website and is a way that health regulatory colleges are demonstrating their commitment to transparency, to meeting high standards, and to the protection of the public.

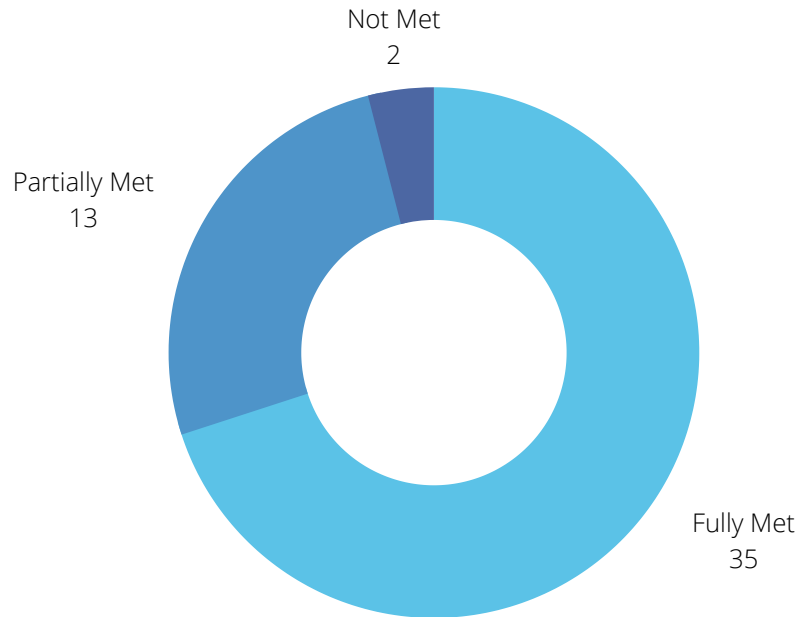


2021 CPMF Results

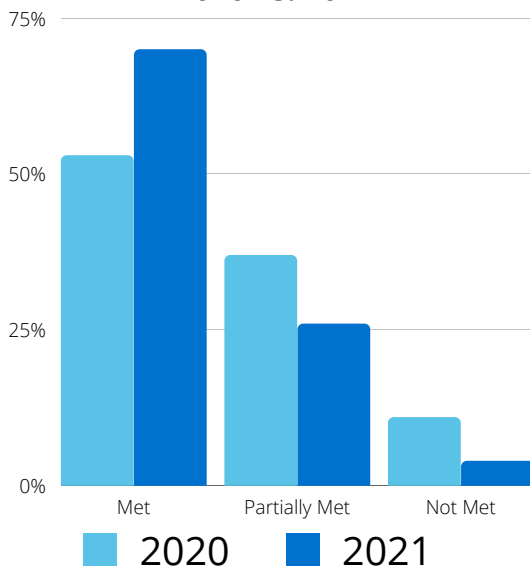
The College of Optometrists of Ontario was one of eight colleges that was recognized for having commendable practices in relation to the CPMF. We met 35 requirements, partially met 13 requirements, and did not meet two requirements. In comparison to our 2020 report, the College generally made improvements in every domain, with the most significant improvements in the governance domain.

In the 2020 report for governance, we met 10 requirements, partially met 4 requirements, and did not meet 1 requirement. In 2021 we were able to improve those requirements to 17 requirements met, two partially met, and two not met. The number of requirements that were not met increased from 1 to 2 because a new requirement was added to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) section. The two areas that were not met are related to DEI, which was introduced in this year’s reporting tool and is one of the College’s new focus areas for 2022.

2021 CPMF Responses



Distribution of CPMF Responses 2020 vs. 2021



Measurement, Reporting, and Improvement is another domain in which the College substantially improved. Although it only contains four requirements, the College was not fully meeting any of the requirements in 2020, as we had two requirements that were partially met, and two requirements that were not met. In 2021, the College was able to commit to the improvement plans outlined in the previous CPMF report and improved to fully meeting two requirements and partially meeting two requirements.

We hold the CPMF in high regard and use it to help guide our decisions as we fulfill our mandate and inspire public confidence. We look forward to completing the report in years to come and continuing the trend of progress in future reporting cycles.

Registration

Registration

Registration is the first core area that allows us to achieve our mandate, and one of the first interactions future optometrists have with the College. Through administering the jurisprudence exam, as well as assessing entry-to-practice exams, the registration process ensures candidates are qualified to enter the profession.

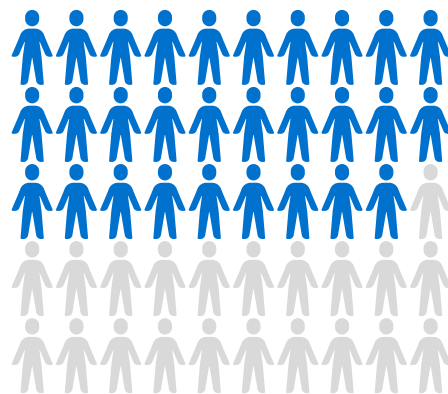
While COVID-19 continued to cause disruptions to registration processes, we maintained our flexibility through an extension of the two-year application time limit and providing candidates their formal registration notifications electronically. Our aim has been to make the registration process as flexible as possible for candidates while simultaneously maintaining a robust testing process. We continued to offer a remotely proctored online Jurisprudence exam; it is available 24/7 over a three-day period, and candidates are welcome to write the exam at their convenience within the time frame.

Entry-to-practice exams were still being disrupted from the previous year. As a result, the 2021 OEBC/OSCE exam was re-scheduled to the spring of 2021. To accommodate this change in scheduling for new registrants, we extended the deadline for 2021 annual pro-rated membership fees until October 2021.

We also held our first virtual meeting with applicants for registration on July 2. We provided an in-depth overview of registration and answered questions applicants had about the registration process.

We continued the work for an online registration application and initiated the planning for three Youtube videos set for release in early 2022. One video will focus on how to register as an optometrist in Ontario, and the second will explain the regulatory role of the College. The third video will welcome new registrants to the optometry profession in Ontario.

2,758 Members



■ 58% Female

■ 42% Male

131

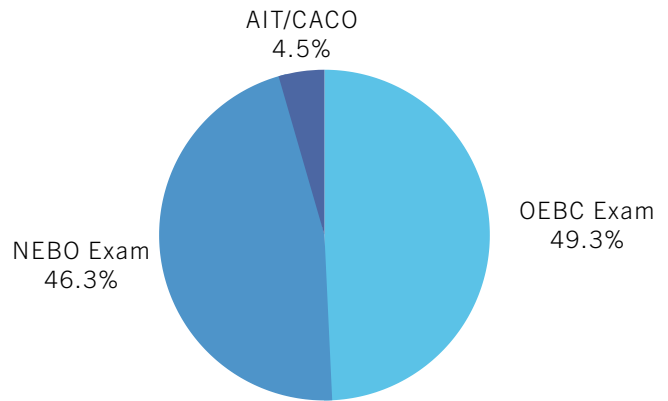
Newly Registered
Optometrists in 2021



Entry to Practice

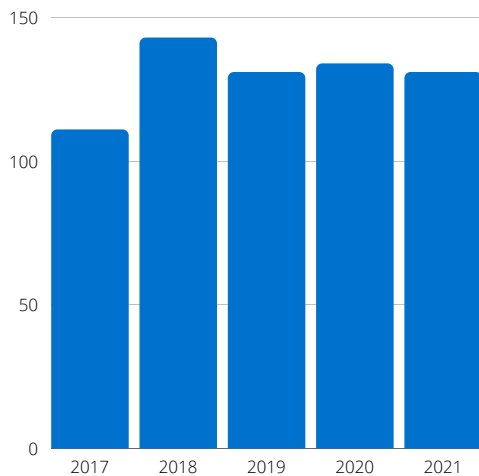
Completing an entry-to-practice exam is one of the main requirements for registering with the College. The College approved both the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) exam as well as the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) exam as entry-to-practice exams, providing more exam choices for applicants. As demonstrated in the figure to the right, both exams are equally sought after by applicants.

Type of Exam Applicants Completed



**AIT/CACO: applicants using labour mobility*

New Registrants - Last Five Years



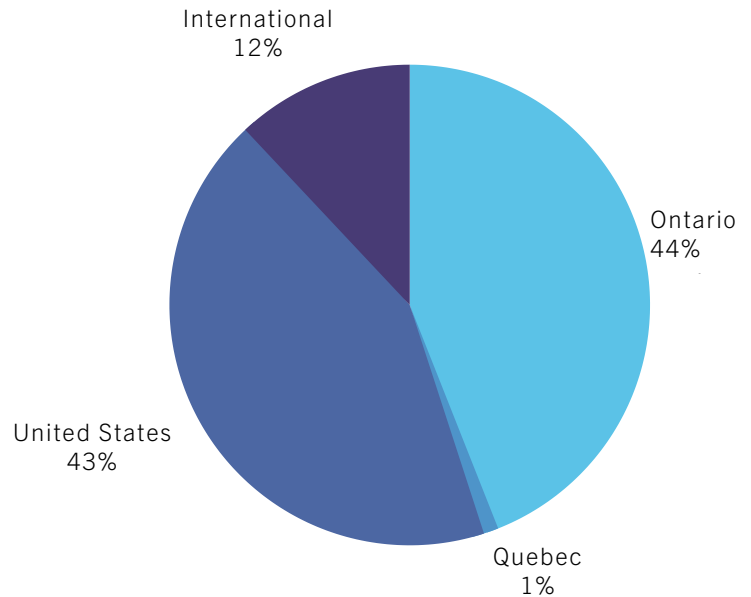
Additionally, the College also signed a licensing agreement with OEBC to oversee its use of the Optometry Competency Framework that was developed for the College by Touchstone Institute. The College engaged in discussions with OEBC about potential changes to OEBC exam and how those changes were being piloted. Such changes include how the Optometry Competency Framework would be reflected in the OEBC exam blueprint, and revisions to the new scoring system for the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) portion.



International Candidates

A portion of our applicants are internationally educated and we strive to ensure these applicants have options when it comes to registering with the College. A fund was created in 2020 to help ensure internationally graduated optometrists can continue to have the option to write the Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGOEE), should registration fall below the break-even number. Registrations for the IGOEE in summer 2021 were sufficient and therefore the fund approved by the College was not required.

Internationally Educated Applicants



Updates to the IGOEE

The IGOEE is an important option for internationally educated optometrists and this year it underwent some changes. The written components of the IGOEE and the short OSCE were transitioned to remotely proctored administration in June 2021 to accommodate the disruptions cause by COVID-19. Additionally, IGOEE results are now taken into consideration when candidates apply to the Advanced Standing Optometry Preparatory Program administered by the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science.



Quality Assurance

The College's Quality Assurance (QA) Program allows us to assess optometrists' competence on an ongoing basis, while also helping them seek out new learning opportunities.

Our QA Program consists of:

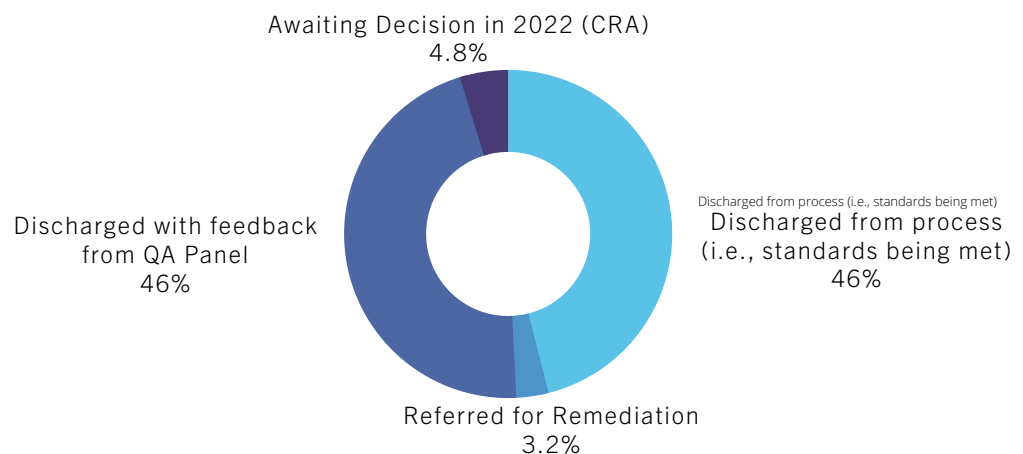
- A mandatory Continuing Education component and subsequent audit process.
- Peer-conducted Practice Assessments to appraise the practice of members.
- A Practice Evaluation component to evaluate members' clinical ability.
- A Remediation component to assist members in correcting deficiencies in practice or clinical ability.

Practice Assessments

Practice Assessments are a tool used to help educate and inform our members about areas they could improve in. It is intended as a supportive learning experience and is not punitive in nature. Some adjustments were made in 2020 to help accommodate the disruption of COVID-19 such as extending the deadline for submitting the practice assessments from 60 days to 90 days. These adjustments carried over into 2021 to help support our members and make the practice assessment process flexible. In 2021, we reviewed a total of 189 practice assessments.

Practice assessments are analyzed by QA Assessors, who undergo regular training to maintain consistency and accuracy across assessments. In 2021, the first virtual assessor workshop was held which included this regular training, and served as an initial training for a number of prospective assessors who were needed due to the increase in assessments. The workshop was delivered to 35 existing assessors, as well as 20 prospective assessors.

Practice Assessments 2021



Continuing Education (CE)

2021 was the start of the new CE cycle which incorporated the modified CE policy that was approved last year. It included a shift of Category A and B lecture credits to Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE)-approved credits, as well as an addition of 20 hours of flexible learning opportunities. These learning opportunities can include lectures, distance learning, or conferences, which increase the flexibility in the topics that suit the learning needs and practice of Ontario optometrists.

QA Redevelopment Project

We selected the vendors who will assist the College in the redevelopment of its QA program, specifically developing a new self-assessment component in compliance with the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (RHPA) and revising the practice assessment protocol to be more robust. This stems from Council's endorsement of several Quality Assurance Sub Committee (QASC) recommendations in 2019, including to:

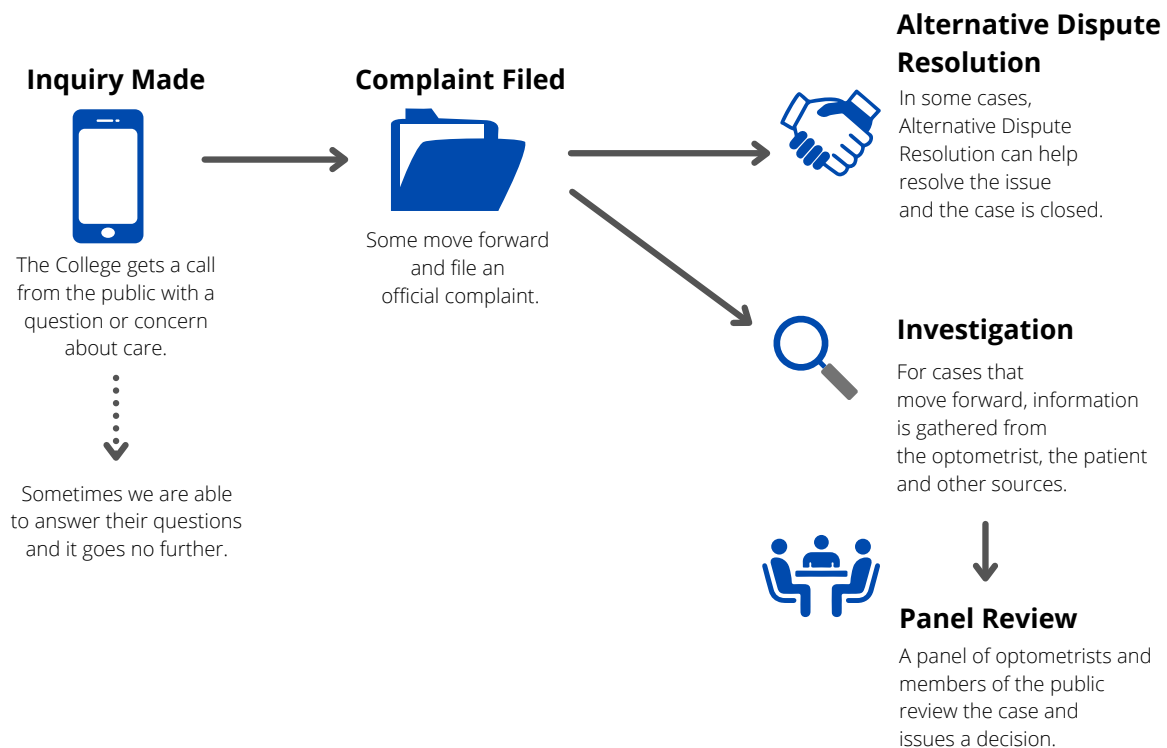
- Develop a self-assessment module;
- Revise the practice assessment protocol; and
- Hire a health education expert or audit expert to assist with the QA Program redevelopment.



Investigations and Discipline

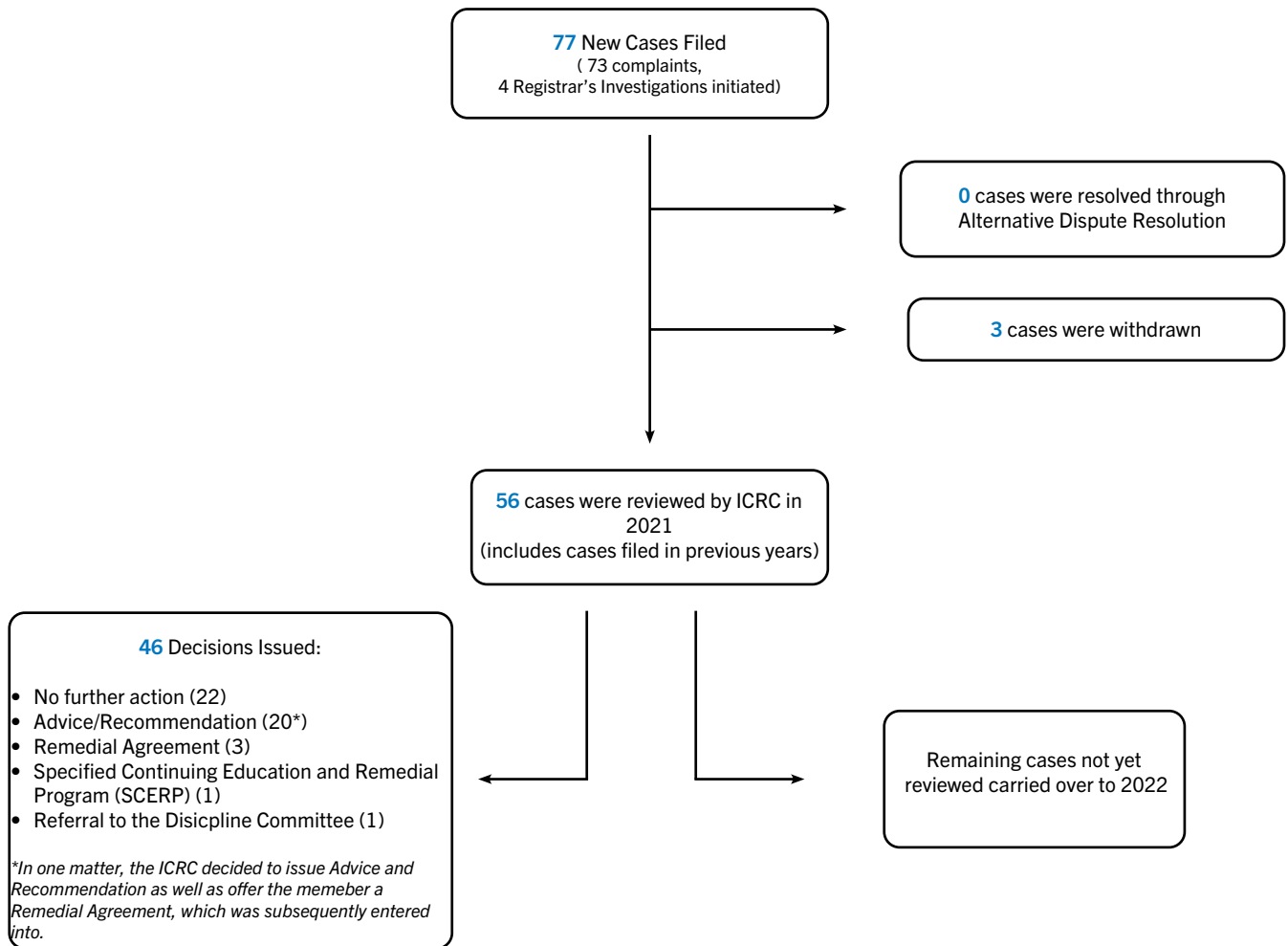
The role of the College is to regulate the profession of optometry in the public interest. Quality Assurance helps optometrists maintain the standards that enables them to provide safe, ethical, and quality eye care. When a patient feels an optometrist has not provided adequate care, or has conducted themselves inappropriately, the patient informs the College and the Investigations department begins to investigate and respond to the issue in a timely and professional manner.

Complaints Process

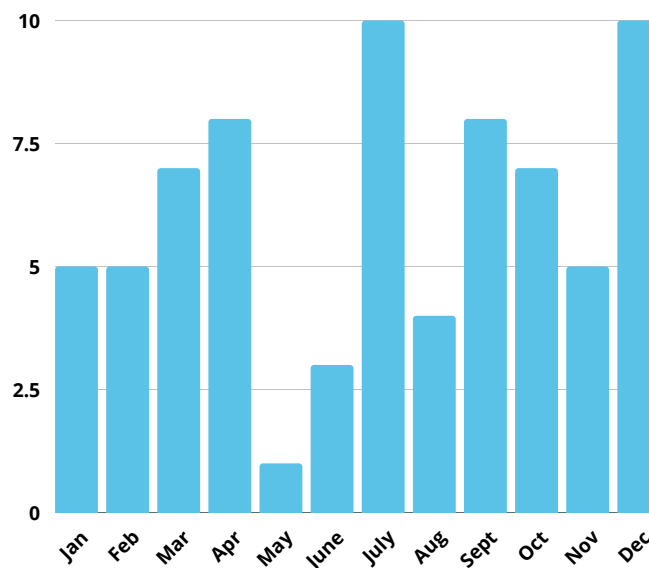


When a College receives a complaint from a member of the public, or a Registrar's Report is filed, we investigate the allegations and make decisions. The decisions can include: actions an optometrist must take to resolve the issue and improve their practice, move the case to the Discipline Committee for further investigations, or no further action is required.

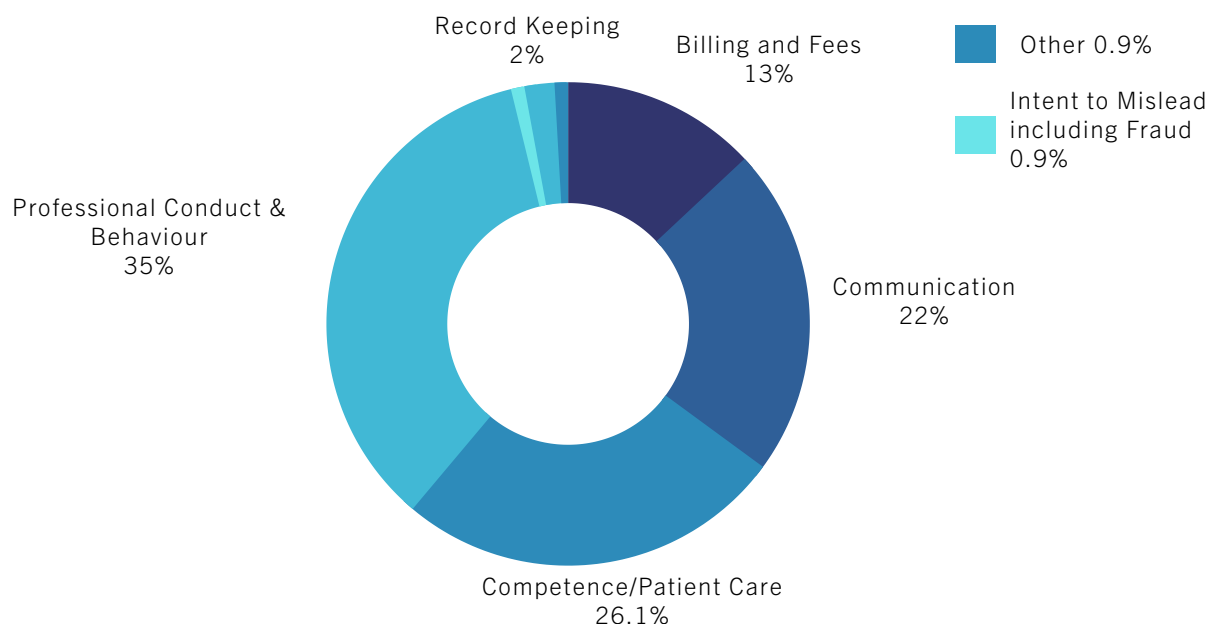
How Investigations Proceeded in 2021:



Number of Complaints per Month



Top Complaints



The majority of the complaints received in 2021 fell into two broad categories: Professional Conduct & Behaviour and Competence & Patient Care.

Professional Conduct & Behaviour includes allegations of unprofessionalism and unethical conduct, allegations of a failure to maintain the standards of practice of the profession, and breach of patient confidentiality.

Competence & Patient Care includes allegations of inadequate care, issues related to eyeglasses or contact lens prescriptions, failure to refer to a specialist, failure to diagnose/misdiagnose, failure to obtain informed consent, and allegations of unsafe practices.”

Discipline

In 2021, the Discipline Committee held one discipline hearing into allegations of professional misconduct/incompetence.

Read the full decision on our website: [Dr. Jon Barnes](#).

Finances

The College Council approved the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021, at the June 25, 2022, Council meeting. See the [full audited financial statements](#) on the College website.



Membership for 2021*

Retirements

Antonio Dipasquale	Reg. # 7824
George Bociurko	Reg. # 7402
Donna Bojeczko	Reg. # 8301
Albert Brisson	Reg. # 8501
John Capell	Reg. # 7403
Susan Capitelli	Reg. # 9008
Faye Crerar	Reg. # 9240
Allen Fruman	Reg. # 73010
Gina Gincauskas	Reg. # 8616
Kennth Hadley	Reg. # 7923
Timothy Hennig	Reg. # 8209
Millard Hoover	Reg. # 8210
Wayne King	Reg. # 7510
Susan Leat	Reg. # 9103
David Lennox	Reg. # 12025
Alice Lennox	Reg. # 12026
Mark Long	Reg. # 72724
George Mousa	Reg. # 8333
David Neff	Reg. # 7624
Steven Pilecki	Reg. # 8021
Ann Plotkin	Reg. # 8444
James Stoyan	Reg. # 7524
Richard Traczuk	Reg. # 7721
Nellie Van Ymeren	Reg. # 7619
Rick Wilson	Reg. # 7733

Revocations

Kyle Pae	Reg. # 9126
John Varga	Reg. # 0568

Suspensions

Corinne Bacher	Reg. # 17102
Sarah Cherian	Reg. # 20052
Bruce Dornn	Reg. # 18017
Saly Elias	Reg. # 20002
Murad Mohamed El-serafi	Reg. # 14002
Gregory Miller	Reg. # 68670
Michelle Jacqueline Nadeau	Reg. # 12037
Caroline Poirier	Reg. # 12028
Estelle Saunders	Reg. # 8653

Resignations

Zaynab Abdulhussain	Reg. # 0889
Mariam Al Kawally	Reg. # 21093
Mohammad Awad	Reg. # 20122
Cassandra Biro	Reg. # 19063
Ahlam Chaudhry	Reg. # 13001
Heather Chin	Reg. # 16076
Marianne Chow	Reg. # 7642
Nicolas Continisio	Reg. # 20072
Courtney Fan	Reg. # 18044
Christina Lee	Reg. # 7738
Adrian Mah	Reg. # 0436
Aqeela Naqvi	Reg. # 18141
Kimberly Rayner	Reg. # 0042
Simone Sitar	Reg. # 19082
Zoe Stein	Reg. # 20082
Nicole Stout	Reg. # 16037
Pavanjeet Ubhi	Reg. # 16064

Deaths

Harvey Warbucks	Reg. # 67663
Carolyn Jarrett	Reg. # 8134

*Based on Registrar's Report Dec. 31, 2021