



COLLEGE *of* OPTICIANS
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
a B.C. Health Regulator

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE POLICY:

Static Registration Policies for the
College of Opticians of British Columbia

Date approved by the Registration Committee: February 14, 2020

Date approved by the Board of Directors: March 30, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

DEFINITIONS.....	1
CHANGING REGISTRATION.....	3
PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)	4
APPLICATION TIMELINES.....	5
EXAMINATION POLICIES.....	6
EXTRAORDINARY NACOR EXAMINATION APPLICATION	6
CERTIFICATES	6

The registration committee is responsible for considering registration applications under the *Health Professions Act* s. 20. New registrants of the College of Opticians of British Columbia (the “College”) are required to meet the requirements for registration to the College under the College’s Bylaws for Registration. The committee has outlined options for registration applications in this policy. The policy set by the committee determines the types of applications that can be routinely processed by the Registrar of the College and administration. The policy specifies the types of application that will require committee review, prior to registration to the College.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy please the following are defined as:

Canadian Accredited Institute – An institute that offers an opticianry program accredited by the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR) AND the College of Opticians of British Columbia’s Board of Directors under schedule A of the College Bylaws.

Canadian Labour Mobility – Refers to the National Mutual Recognition agreement, and applicants from Quebec, the committee is satisfied that applicants registered in another Canadian jurisdiction are considered competent to practice in British Columbia.

Change of Status Application – An application submitted from a registrant of the College requesting to change or upgrade their registration status.

Continuing Competency Program – A requirement under the College Bylaws where all registrants of the College must complete, every 3 years, the continuing competency program requirements as outlined by the quality assurance committee and College Bylaws.

New Registration Application – An application for registration for a Dispensing Optician, Contact Lens Fitter, or Certification for Independent Automated Refracting, submitted to the College pursuant to the College Bylaws.

Non-Practicing Registrant – A registrant who is not currently practicing opticianry. Can refer to a registrant registered in the following categories: Dispensing Optician, Contact Lens Fitter, or Certification for Independent Automated Refracting.

Non- Routine Registration Application – An application submitted for registration must be reviewed by the registration committee prior to registration acceptance. The following applications are considered non-routine:

- Non-practicing applications where the registrant has been non-practicing for 3 or more consecutive years, OR the reason for the non-practicing application is not outlined under the routine reasons;
- Reinstatement applications where the former registrant has been suspended for 3 or more consecutive years;
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition applications where the applicant's competency scores require discussion and decision of required bridging by the committee;
- An application to waive late fees;
- Any application that is not outlined in this policy

Practicing Registrant – A registered optician and/or contact lens fitter who is currently practicing opticianry and is licensed to do so with the College in accordance with the *Health Professions Act, Opticians Regulations, and, College Bylaws*.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) – An application for registration as a Dispensing Optician or Contact Lens Fitter by an individual who has not graduated from an opticianry program administered by a Canadian accredited institute.

Reinstatement Application – An application for registration submitted by a former registrant of the College, whose certificate of registration has been suspended pursuant to the College Bylaws.

Routine Registration Application - An application submitted for registration that can be routinely processed by the Registrar of the college, or administration. The following applications are considered routine:

- New registration applications where the applicant has successfully completed a) an opticianry program administered by a Canadian accredited institute, and b) the National Optical Sciences Examination administered through the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR);
- New registration applications where the applicant has successfully completed a) the PLAR process and b) the National Optical Sciences Examination administered through the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR);
- Non- practicing applications where the registrant has been non-practicing for less than 3 consecutive years AND the reason for the application is one of the following:
 - o The registrant is not currently employed in the optical industry for any reason.
 - o The registrant is on a leave of absence from the optical industry for any reason.
- Reinstatement applications where the former registrant has been suspended for less than 3 consecutive years;
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition applications where the applicant's competency scores do not require discussion and decision of required bridging by the committee;
- Change of status applications where all the requirements and conditions pursuant to the college Bylaws have been met;
- Canadian labour mobility applicants under the Mutual Recognition Agreement;
- Canadian labour mobility applicants from the province of Quebec;
- Reasonable requests for payment extension if the extension does not exceed March 31 of the fiscal year it is requested

The policy on routine registrations creates an efficient internal process for approving applications for registration, while providing necessary oversight in order to ensure each professional practicing meets the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians. Each assessment program (Continuing Competency Program, or PLAR) the College conducts is built around assessing a registrant's competency in relation to the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians.

CHANGING REGISTRATION

Non-practicing to Practicing

A non-practicing registrant of the College may change their status to a practicing registrant if the following mandatory requirements are in good standing:

1. Valid Criminal Record Check – a criminal record check under the *Criminal Records Review Act* completed within the last 5 years
2. Continuing Competency Requirements – if they have maintained their continuing competency requirements in accordance with the College Bylaws Quality Assurance section.

If any registrant of the College does not complete their continuing competency requirements upon their 3-year cycle completion date they will not be eligible to renew their licensure as per the College Bylaws.

Reinstatement Applications

If a registrant who submits a reinstatement application has been suspended for less than 3 consecutive years, the registrant will complete the reinstatement process as per the College Bylaws.

If a registrant who submits a reinstatement application has been suspended for more than 3 consecutive years, the registrant must:

1. Submit sufficient proof to the College that they were practicing in another jurisdiction. A letter from the jurisdiction's regulatory body may be considered as sufficient proof;
or
2. Complete the competency gap analysis (CGA) for reinstatement as administered by NACOR.
 - a. In the instance that there are "below" areas of competency, the registrant will be assigned appropriate bridging courses. While an applicant is in the process of completing bridging courses, they will be issued a licence for registration on the condition that they complete their bridging courses. The condition will be identified on their profile as "upgrade in progress."
 - b. Bridging courses assigned must be completed within 1 year. Upon successful completion of bridging courses, the applicant will be eligible for annual renewal.
 - c. The bridging courses assigned may be used as a part of the applicant's continuing competency requirements. Bridging courses assigned may be built into the applicant's learning goals.
 - d. The applicant's bridging progress will be reviewed by the registration committee upon completion. Upon completion the applicant will be eligible to complete the reinstatement requirements pursuant to the college Bylaws.

Reinstating certification to conduct independent automated refractions

An applicant may reinstate a certification to conduct independent automated refractions if they successfully complete the continuing competency assessment and the jurisprudence examination.

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION (PLAR)

Canadian and international applicants who have not graduated from an accredited and recognized program or are not registered in good standing with another Canadian optician regulator may challenge the PLAR process when they have a combination of knowledge, skills, experience and abilities related to opticianry or a related eye care industry. After an applicant has successfully completed PLAR they may be required by the registration committee to complete additional, education, training, experience and other upgrading and/or assessments.

All applicants from non-accredited and recognized education will be required to complete the following:

1. Online Application for PLAR with COBC

Complete and submit a COBC online application and submit such documentation as may be reviewed.

2. Preliminary Assessment of Application / Initial Intake

The following documents submitted to the College aid in determining whether a candidate is eligible to complete the PLAR process:

- 2.1 Detail of work experience (Dispensing Experience & Fittings Form)
- 2.2 Transcripts of formal education
- 2.3 Examination
- 2.4 Letters of personal reference and professional competence
- 2.5 Letters of registration or licensure

3. Competency Gap Analysis (CGA) and Interview administered by NACOR and the College

The CGA is an online tool used to assess the competencies of an applicant. The CGA, along with the interview, will assist in identifying any gaps in learning. The CGA and Interview results are provided to the College by NACOR in the form of an Integrated Scorecard (ICS). The ICS outlines each specific competency outlined in the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians. The applicant is scored on each competency domain. The final score on the ICS is a combination of the CGA score and the Interview score. The final score produced on the ICS shows that the applicant is:

- Above level in the competency domain
- At level in the competency domain
- Borderline level in the competency domain
- Below level in the competency domain

4. Gaps in Learning

If the ICS shows that:

- a candidate is at or above level in any competency domains; or
- a candidate is below level in any competency domains

then the Registrar may process the application by either:

- deeming the candidate is eligible to proceed to the National Optical Sciences Examination; or
- assign the associated bridging course(s) for the competency domain(s) that the candidate scored below level in.

If the ICS shows that a candidate scored borderline in any competency domain, the application must be reviewed by the registration committee or the Registrar of the college to determine if the candidate is required to complete associated bridging course(s) for the competency domain(s) that the candidate scored borderline on.

5. Bridging Time Frame

If a candidate is assigned mandatory bridging course(s), then the candidate must complete all course(s) assigned within one year of receiving the decision.

In the event an extension is needed, the candidate will be required submit a written request to the registration committee for approval.

6. Examination

Upon receiving the Decisions and Reasons letter, and after completion of the mandatory bridging course(s) (if any), then the candidate may proceed to challenge the National Optical Sciences Examination(s) administered by NACOR.

If a candidate chooses to complete the PLAR process for only one designation they must complete the PLAR process for the appropriate designation that they would like to become licensed in. A candidate who has completed PLAR for Eyeglasses is therefore not eligible for the national examinations for another designation until they have completed PLAR for that designation.

7. Allow the Applicant to Proceed to Registration with the COBC pursuant to the College Bylaws

APPLICATION TIMELINES

Any application for registration received by the College will remain active until the end of the next fiscal year. An applicant may complete their application for registration by March 31 of the following year. If an application is not completed by this time the application will be archived for a period of three years. After three years the application will be discarded, and the applicant must re-apply for registration to the College.

Fees are paid to the College upon application submission. Any applications that are archived or discarded are not subject to refund.

EXAMINATION POLICIES

Extraordinary NACOR Examination Application

After a third failed national examination attempt, a candidate is required to submit a plan for successfully completing the NACOR exam to the College for approval before they can be eligible for further attempts. This plan must be reviewed and approved by the registration committee. It must identify the role of the supervisor and explain in detail the upgrading plan for each area where the applicant scored 50 percent or lower. The upgrading plan must include the list of materials or courses the applicant will take, if applicable.

After a third failed national examination attempt, a candidate can be eligible for further attempts by submitting a plan for successful completion of the NACOR exam to the College for approval. This plan must be reviewed and approved by the registration committee and identify the role of a supervisor. The plan will further identify each area where the candidate failed to show proficiency. Where applicable the plan must include materials or courses required to attempt to successfully pass the NACOR examination(s).

Once the approved plan for success has been completed, the supervisor must provide a written report that includes the following information:

1. A list of competencies developed, how the student was able to gain those competencies during the period
2. Successful completion of the upgrading program, and
3. Confirmation if the candidate is sufficiently prepared, in the supervisor's opinion, for another supplemental exam attempt.

The document assessment fee applies.

CERTIFICATES

Duplicate certificates will be issued in the following situations:

Change of Name: a registrant would return original certificate to the College and pay a printing fee(s) for new certificate(s).

Lost certificate: a registrant would sign a declaration to assure that the certificate was lost and pay printing fee for certificate.

Damaged certificate: a registrant would sign a declaration to declare that the certificate was lost and pay printing fee for certificate.

Duplicate certificate for multiple practice locations: a registrant must apply for multiple certificates and pay the printing fee for the certificate.

The certificate printing fee may apply.

Certificates distributed to registrants remain the property of the College. Effective July 8, 2013, when a registrant is suspended or changes status to non-practicing, he or she is required to return the certificates of registration to the College. Registrants are required to return certificates within four weeks of the date that a notice of suspension issued or a change of status to non-practicing is approved.

Certificates will be held on file by the College for three years only. If a registrant reinstates or changes status to practicing during that time, the College will redistribute certificates at no additional cost.