



# **Registrant Guide – Peer and Practice Assessments**

# Peer and Practice Assessment Guide

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## Introduction

A Peer and Practice Assessment is an in-depth, focused, assessment which is an educational process designed to assist you in gaining insight into your practice and to encourage practice improvements if needed. It is an objective review of your knowledge and performance to ensure you have maintained the level of knowledge, skill, and judgment required to provide safe, ethical, and competent patient care.

The College's Quality Assurance (QA) regulation provides that a registrant will be referred for a Peer and Practice Assessment if:

1. They are randomly selected. Each year a percentage of opticians will be randomly selected to undergo a Peer and Practice Assessment.
2. A request is made to review the registrant's QA records (Professional Portfolio) and the records are incomplete or fail to demonstrate that the registrant has engaged in adequate QA activities.
3. They are selected based on other criteria specified by the QA Committee and published on the College's website for at least 3 months before the registrant is selected based on those criteria.

All information collected is kept confidential between the Quality Assurance Committee and the optician. You are not required to share the results or the outcome of your assessment with your employer.

## What is Involved

There are two (2) steps involved in a PPA. Whether you move on to Step 2 depends on several factors such as your overall performance at step 1 or random selection.

### Step One – Professional Practice Profile and Patient Chart Review

#### **Professional Practice Profile**

The objective of the Professional Practice Profile is to gather information about your practice such as:

- Areas of practice
- Supervision of students and/or interns
- Working with vulnerable populations
- Working conditions (e.g., working hours, multiple employers, and/or locations)
- Workplace dynamics (working solo or with a team)

Once completed, this form establishes your practice profile and is instrumental in guiding the interview process in Step 2 of the Peer and Practice Assessment.

The Professional Practice Profile is completed online via a link provided to you in your notice of assessment and must be completed within 30 days of the date of notice.

#### **Patient Chart Review**

You are required to submit five (5) patient charts via the secure link provided in your notice.

These files must be:

- Dated within the last 3 month
- Be a mix of both eyeglass and contact lens if you dispense both
- Prepared in a format suitable for printing and include the patient's prescription

The chart review is structured into nine (9) sections, designed to evaluate various aspects of practice.

Your patient files are to be uploaded via a secure link provided to you in your notice of assessment and must be uploaded within 30 days of the date of notice.

## Step Two - Professional Practice Interview

The objective of Step 2 is to probe into the critical aspects of an optician’s practice, including your decision-making processes and compliance with professional standards. It is a structured interview conducted by a qualified assessor that is experienced in your area of practice.

The Peer and Practice Interview is conducted by a qualified Peer Assessor. The objective is to probe into critical aspects of your practice, including decision making processes and compliance with professional standards. It provides a deeper understanding of individual practice nuances and contributes to promoting professional development and maintaining the highest standards in opticianry.

The interview is comprised of three (3) sections and will take 1.5 – 2 hours:

Interview Section	Areas Covered	Applies To
Professional Practice	Ethics, infection control, infection control, patient & workplace safety	All optician
Eyeglasses	Needs assessment, prescriptions, lens and frame selection, industry standards, patient communications	Opticians who dispense eyeglasses
Contact Lenses	Needs assessment, prescriptions, lens selection, patient-centered training, follow-up care	Opticians who dispense contact lenses

## The Process

Registrants will be provided with notification that they are required to participate in a Peer and Practice Assessment by email.

For Step 1 of the process, complete and return the following within 30 days:

1. **Conflict of Interest Declaration** - The purpose of this is to identify any potential conflict of interest with any Peer Assessor – if you have personal or professional relationship with an optician who the College has contracted as a Peer Assessor, you are required to indicate this.
2. **Confidentiality Declaration**
3. **Practice Profile** – The purpose of this is to gather information about your practice. It is completed online.
4. **Patient Charts/Files** –Select and upload 5 patient records including the prescription and all notes. The files should be a mix of eyeglasses and contact lens and must be from the last 3 months. If you only dispense eyeglasses, you should upload 5 eyeglass files; if you only dispense contact lenses, you should upload 5 contact lens files.

**Please note:** files must be submitted in PDF format and named in the following format: YourLastName\_Chart\_1 etc. This naming convention will help us organize and review your submissions efficiently while maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

For Step 2 of the process complete and return the following:

1. **Interview scheduling form** – provide general availability information including the best day/time for the interview, and
2. Ensure you have access to a computer with a camera, microphone, and speakers.
3. Download Zoom

## Access to Patient Records

Both registrants and dispensary managers/operators are legally required to cooperate with peer assessors and the practice assessment process. This includes:

- providing access to records, including patient records, and information from those records (electronically, via a secure upload or in person) The patient's consent is not required for the College to obtain this access and information.
- allowing access to the practice premises/dispensary to the peer assessor.

For a registrant, the duty of cooperation also includes answering questions posed by a peer assessor to evaluate the registrant's knowledge, skill, and judgment.

Additional information and Relevant Legislative Excerpts can be found [here](#) on the website.

## Scheduling the Interview

The Assessor assigned to complete your assessment will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable date and time to conduct the assessment. You have 30 days from the original date of notification to engage in the Professional Practice Interview.

Once the details have been determined, you will receive an email from the College confirming the date, time, and location of your assessment. If the assessment is occurring virtually, the Zoom link will also be included.

## Preparing for the Interview

If your assessment is being held remotely, ensure you have:

- An uninterrupted period of time to complete the interview
- An area/room where you have privacy
- Access to a computer with a webcam, a microphone, and speakers
- A stable internet connection
- Downloaded Zoom

If your assessment is being conducted on-site, ensure you have:

- An uninterrupted period of time to complete the assessment
- An area/room where you have privacy away from patients and colleagues

## What to Expect on Interview Day

You will be required to draw on experiences in your optical practice to demonstrate how your knowledge, skill, and judgement align with the competencies. You will be asked questions based on your current scope of practice.

Keep in mind the categories of questions you will be asked, before the session you may want to think about situations with patients that you have encountered in the past, and the steps you went through in those situations. Think about your patient interactions as a story, with a beginning, middle, and end. You may find it helpful to use the STAR method to organize your thoughts.

The STAR method is a structured manner of responding to a behavioural-based interview question by discussing the:

- **Specific situation**
- **Task** you were faced with and the options you had
- **Action** you took
- **Results** of the situation you are describing

There are many resources available online about how to use the STAR method; you are encouraged to seek these out.

## Your Role in the Assessment

Participation in the PPA is mandatory. If, however, you believe that there is a need to delay or defer the PPA for any reason (e.g., illness or personal circumstance), please contact the College immediately by email [qa@collegeofopticians.ca](mailto:qa@collegeofopticians.ca)

Complete and return the required materials and upload patient files before the due date outlined in your notice.

Relax, the assessment is an educational process; the College will work together with you to improve your practice and protect the public.

## Role of the Peer Assessor

The College's Peer Assessors are registered opticians (RO) have gone through an interview process and been selected and trained to conduct the assessment. Assessors are

The role of the Peer Assessor is to:

1. Review patient files to verify essential documentation and provide comments where necessary.
2. Conduct an interview which probes into critical aspects of your practice, including decision making processes and compliance with professional standards.

## Role of the Quality Assurance Committee

The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for appointing Peer Assessors, directing assessments, reviewing Peer and Practice Assessment Reports, and determining the outcomes of assessments.

The Committee has several options it can take when it reviews the assessment. They may do any of the following:

1. Make no recommendations. In this case, you have finished the assessment process.
2. Make recommendations that you pursue your own learning needs.
3. Direct specific learning activities if the Committee identifies insufficient, knowledge, skill, or judgement in a specific area
4. Direct the Registrar to put terms, limits, or conditions on your certificate of registration if they identify an immediate risk to the public.
5. Disclose your name and allegations of professional misconduct to the Inquiries, Complaints, and Reports Committee (ICRC) if the committee identifies concerns that you may have committed an act of professional misconduct (e.g., failing to cooperate with the peer assessor) or are incompetent or incapacitated.

## Am I required to pay for the assessment?

A registrant who is randomly selected to participate in a Peer and Practice Assessment as part of the Competency Review and Evaluation process is not required to pay the PPA fee.

A registrant who has been referred for a Peer and Practice Assessment due to a deficiency in their professional portfolio or non-compliance with the Competency Review and Evaluation process is required to pay the relevant PPA fees.

This fee is charged in accordance with section 5.5.1(a) of the College's by-laws, which states that this fee applies to registrants who are ordered by the QA Committee to undergo a PPA because they have not



completed their Professional Portfolio or have not fully engaged in the Competency Review and Evaluation process.

Please be advised in accordance with section 11(1)(b) of the College's *Registration Regulation O. Reg. 869/93*, the failure to pay a fee required by the College will result in notice of suspension of your certificate of registration.

## Resources

[Standards of Practice and Practice Guidelines](#)

[The Code of Ethics](#)

[Legislation](#) The Opticianry Act, 1991 and the regulations under the Act, such as Registration and Professional Conduct

[National Competencies for Canadian Opticians](#)

## Questions

Contact the Quality Assurance Department

[qa@collegeofopticians.ca](mailto:qa@collegeofopticians.ca)

416-368-3616 or 1-800-990-9793 extension 204 | 205