

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Amy Stein, Deputy Registrar

DATE: December 1, 2025

SUBJECT: National Examination Committee (NEC) Representative

☒ For Decision ☐ For Information ☐ Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To elect the National Examination Committee (NEC) Representative for 2025.

Background:

The Board appoints a National Examination Committee (NEC) Representative each year in December for the following year.

The NEC is a sub-committee/working group of NACOR and is charged with reviewing and making recommendations on the national examinations during the year as needed. Each NACOR member may send a representative to participate in the NEC. Typically, the NEC meets in Ottawa in January.

There have been some occasions where the NEC has required specialized subject matter expertise on a working group and has brought on external experts in place of the NEC representative appointed by the Board. This has been the situation for 2025 and likely will be the case for 2026 as the NEC and NACOR complete an update of the eyeglass and contact lens sections of the National Exam.

In June 2024, the Board approved the [National Examinations Policy](#) that outlines the responsibilities and required competencies for the NEC Representative.

For Consideration:

The Board is asked to elect an NEC representative for the 2026 calendar year. Expressions of interest that were received in advance of the meeting have been posted to the virtual boardroom (General Information section). However, the board may also accept nominations from the floor during the meeting.

Pursuant to the National Examinations Policy, the NEC Representative must meet the following qualifications:

- a) Registered Optician in good standing with the COO.

- b) Prior experience with the NACOR examinations (such as previous experience as an examiner) and an appropriate amount of subject matter expertise relating to the work the NEC expects to carry out during the upcoming calendar year.
- c) Familiarity with the entry-to-practice competencies for opticians.

The NEC Representative does not necessarily need to be a Board member. In addition, the National Examinations Policy outlines that the NEC Representative may make a request to the Registrar to appoint additional resources including, where appropriate an additional/alternate representative with subject matter expertise in the required area.

Public Interest Considerations:

An important part of the COO's mandate is to register applicants who demonstrate the required entry to practice competencies. To achieve this mandate, it is important that the COO have representation on the committee that reviews and approves the content of the national registration examinations.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Considerations

When selecting a candidate to serve as NEC Representative, the board should seek to balance prior relevant experience with other forms of knowledge, skill and competency.

Risk Management Considerations

The NEC Representative serves as the board's primary delegate for decisions that are being made with respect to the national licensing examinations. It is therefore important to ensure that the individual selected demonstrates the appropriate qualifications and competencies.

Action Required:

That the Board elect a National Examination Committee Representative for 2026.

REGISTRATION POLICY

National Examinations

The following policy sets out the College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) criteria for eligibility for the following positions related to the administration of the National Examinations for opticians by the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR):

1. National Examination Committee Representative
2. Examination Observer
3. Examiner

Additional qualifications or responsibilities for these positions may be set out in the NACOR Policy and Procedure Manual (NACOR Manual). In the event of any inconsistency between the NACOR Manual and this policy, this policy shall prevail.

National Examination Committee Representative

The National Examination Committee (NEC) is a working group established by NACOR to deal with examination policy and content.

Each year, the COO will select an individual to represent Ontario at NEC meetings (NEC Representative).

1. The NEC Representative's responsibilities include:
 - a. Attending and representing the COO at NEC meetings. Meetings may be in person or virtual, and business may also be conducted via email or teleconference.
 - b. Making decisions related to examination policy and content, where directed to do so by the Board of Directors.
 - c. Reporting out to the Board of Directors on examination policy and content on an as-needed basis.
2. The NEC Representative shall be elected by the Board of Directors on an annual basis, and must meet the following criteria/qualifications:
 - a. Registered Optician in good standing with the COO.
 - b. Prior experience with the NACOR examinations (such as previous experience as an examiner) and an appropriate amount of subject matter expertise relating to the work the NEC expects to carry out during the upcoming calendar year.
 - c. Familiarity with the entry-to-practice competencies for opticians.

National Examinations

Date Approved: June 3, 2024

Date Last Revised: N/A

- d. The NEC Representative may include:
 - i. Current and/or former Board members
 - ii. Current and/or former Appointed Committee Members
 - iii. A non-board/committee member
- 3. The NEC Representative is accountable to the Board of Directors. In carrying out their duties, the NEC Representative shall:
 - a. Ensure their actions, including votes cast on any decision being made by the NEC, are in line with the COO's statutory mandate to regulate the profession of opticianry in the public interest.
 - b. Act only within the scope of their own knowledge and expertise. Where a need has been identified for additional resources or subject matter expertise, the NEC Representative shall make a request to the Registrar to approve additional resources, including, where appropriate, an additional representative with subject matter expertise in the required area.

Examination Observer

The Examination Observer serves as the COO's administrative representative at NACOR examination sessions.

- 1. The Examination Observer's responsibilities include:
 - a. Attending all NACOR examination sessions.
 - b. Monitoring the examination sessions to ensure they are administered in a manner that is consistent with the COO's obligations under any applicable legislation, regulations, policies and/or requirements identified by the Office of the Fairness Commissioner.
 - c. Taking steps prior to examination sessions to ensure they are carried out in a manner that is fair, accessible and that minimizes disruptions to candidates.
 - d. Acting as a liaison between the COO and NACOR between examination sessions with respect to any concerns about how the examinations are being conducted.
- 2. The Examination Observer has no authority to determine examination policy and content; that responsibility lies with the Board of Directors, including via the NEC Representative.
- 3. The Examination Observer:
 - a. Will be selected by the Registrar and may be a member of staff.

- b. Shall have knowledge of and/or experience with the NACOR examinations and be able to identify concerns or omissions relating to how the examinations are conducted.

Examiner Eligibility Criteria

Registered opticians may apply to become an examiner for the National Examinations, and must meet the eligibility/qualifications criteria set out below.

1. The examiner must:
 - a. Be a currently registered optician and in good standing with their provincial regulatory board.
 - b. Be registered as an optician for a minimum of three years.
 - c. Be current and fluent in the subject they are examining.
2. The examiner must not:
 - a. have been teaching full or part-time in an opticianry program within one year preceding the date of the examination. This does not include acting as a practicum or co-op supervisor.
 - b. Be a current member of the COO's board of director or be currently appointed to a COO committee.
 - c. have been found to have committed an act of professional misconduct by a body that governs a profession inside or outside Ontario.
 - d. must not be subject to a term, condition, or limitation other than one prescribed by regulation.
3. An examiner's certificate of registration must not have been revoked preceding the date of the exam.
4. Examiners of the Optical Sciences 2 – Advanced Practice Contact Lens examination must be registered as Contact Lens Mentor with the COO. Out-of-province examiners must meet the qualifications of contact lens fitter in their province of registration.

Examiner responsibilities are set out in the NACOR Manual.