Fair Registration Practices Report

Opticians (2018)

The answers seen below were submitted to the OFC by the regulated professions.

This Fair Registration Practices Report was produced as required by:

- the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act (FARPACTA) s. 20 and 23(1), for regulated professions named in Schedule 1 of FARPACTA
- the Health Professions Procedural Code set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) s. 22.7 (1) and 22.9(1), for health colleges.

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1. Qualitative Information

a) Requirements for registration, including acceptable alternatives

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

1. The College developed a new, single application form which can now be used by all classes of registration. The application became available on the College's website in early December. The College is working on an application guide to assist applicants in understanding each of the application requirements, which will be available on the website in spring of 2019.
2. The College has implemented a process by which opticianry schools can now send the graduation list directly to the College.
3. The College has done substantial work on the development of the member database portal, which allows members to update their personal and business addresses, practice status, immigration status, and professional liability insurance, The portal also gives members access to their receipts.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

1. By simplifying the form, the application process is clearer for applicants. The form provides drop-down menus with specific options and provides clearer instructions to applicants in terms of what documentation they are required to provide.
2. Applicants who are completing an accredited program can now rely on their school to communicate directly with the College regarding their program completion. This replaces the process where applicants had to contact the school to issue a graduation letter, which the applicant then had to forward to the College to meet the requirements.
3. Applicants who require their receipt in order to be reimbursed by their employer do not have to wait on the College to generate a receipt. All information is easily accessible to the applicants as soon as they become members of the College, and allows new members to update their profile with ease.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

1. The College has amore understandable form which allows the College to define expectations at the outset for applicants. This, in turn, provides applicants with sufficient notice ahead of time to work on any outstanding requirements as interns knowing that they will be asked for this information once they complete their exams.
2. As a result of the process, application processing times have significantly improved. The College reviews all applications in full prior to the applicant's graduation and, upon receiving the graduation list from the school, is able to approve the applications without delay. The College will be reviewing the Timeline Policy for possible updating in 2019.

3. The College is able to monitor the changes members make on their profile but does not have to enter the data into the system. This allows College staff to redirect the time spent on updating member information to processing applications, therefore decreasing processing times.

b) Assessment of qualifications

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

In 2018, the College reviewed new bridging modules developed by the College of Opticians of British Columbia, to provide to applicants should they require upgrading before writing their national exams. The new modules will be incorporated into an integrated scorecard which will allow for the differentiation between mandatory and optional modules. The new modules will be considered by the College's Council for approval in fall 2019.

The College also supported the development of new competencies on a national level. Ontario content experts were part of the panel assisting in the development of new competencies. The revised competencies will be considered by the College's Council for approval in spring 2019.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

The modules will be used to assist applicants who do not meet registration requirements to upgrade their knowledge prior to writing the national exams in order to meet the entry to practice requirements. The optional modules are a new option for applicants and would allow applicants with additional opportunities to bolster their knowledge and ensure success at the examination, while reducing barriers to becoming registered.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The College's continuous work to revise existing tools, and develop new tools, continues to reinforce the importance and validity of the measurement of competencies over credentials within the organization.

c) Provision of timely decisions, responses, and reasons

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.
1. In 2018, the College proceeded to using one general inbox for communication with applicants and members. The registration inbox is accessible to all registration staff and has significantly improved response times by ensuring that all inquiries are addressed in a timely manner. All applicants/members receive an automated message should there be a delay in response times.
2. The College has also developed a renewal video to assist members renewing their registration by walking them through the renewal process step-by-step.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.
1. Applicants were able to receive faster and more consistent responses from the College and were also informed of any potential delays in response times as soon as they contacted the College. This has increased applicants' confidence that their application/inquiry has been received, and when they can expect a response from the College.
2. The video was utilized by 1/3 of the membership and significantly increased the number of members who renewed before the deadline.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.
1. Ensuring that responses to applicants are consistent and have internal overview, and efficiently communicating response delays has significantly reduced the number of phone calls/emails the College received during our busiest times.
2. The College experienced a dramatic decrease in phone calls and email inquiries regarding technical aspects of the logging in and renewal processes.

d) Fees

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

Annual registration fees continue to be subject to a 2.5% increase per year as set out in the College's by-laws and approved by Council in 2015. Annual registration fee increases continue to be published in a fee schedule in section 5.2 of the College's by-laws, available on our website here: http://www.coptont.org/docs/Legislation/COO-By-laws.pdf.

In 2018, the annual registration fee for registered opticians increased from $899 (plus HST) in 2017 to $921 (plus HST). In 2018, the annual registration fee for student and intern opticians increased from $132 (plus HST) to $136 (plus HST).

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

The increase in fees assists the college to invest in continuous improvements to the registration process, such as continuing to automate registration processes, speeding up turn around time, and providing members with access to their information.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The College was able to launch the member portal and provide members with the ability to easily update and access their information throughout the year.

e) Timelines

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

The College endeavours to process all applications in a timely manner. Pursuant to the College's Registration Timelines policy, approximate timelines are provided to all applicants. The College continues to review registration processes and formally record current strategies to reduce timelines for applicants by updating our Registration Timelines policy periodically. In 2018 the College significantly improved the application processing time by providing clear, consistent instruction, communicating directly with the schools regarding graduation letters, and utilizing its new Customer Relationship Management (iMIS) system to ensure clear and concise communication with applicants.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Applicants were able to receive immediate confirmation upon their application being approved, and instructions as to how to access their receipt. Applicants aiming to become registered opticians saw a decrease in the time it took for them to receive their licensure.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The College developed a quick and easy system to communicate outstanding requirements or approval of application to applicants, which has increased productivity.

f) Policies, procedures and/or processes, including by-laws

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

Contact Lens Mentor Process

In 2017, the Contact Lens Mentor Policy was amended to ensure that members who take a leave of absence during their practice are able to become mentors based on their collective years of practice rather than consecutive years of practice.

Applicant Contact Lens Fittings process

In 2017, the Applicant Contact Lens Fittings Policy was amended to allow students to be able to gain practicum hours to meet their graduation requirements by using their peers as patients.

Public Register Improvements

In 2018, the College updated the information displayed on the public register to ensure compliance with the requirements under the RHPA and the transparency initiatives adopted by the College in its by-laws in 2017. Fields were developed in iMIS to allow for the display of additional conduct information (such as SCERPs) to ensure compliance with legislative requirements.

Elections

The College has developed and implemented an electronic elections process which allows members to quickly and efficiently vote for Council member candidates.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Updates to the College's processes ensures that all regulation, by-law and policy updates are implemented in practice, which ensures fair practices and consistency in the way applicants and members are treated by the College.

The amendment to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy was not only benefical to the member, but allowed greater access to mentors by students as it broadened the mentor base.

The amendment to the Applicant Contact Lens Fittings Policy eased the burden of students in fulfilling the necessary practicum requirements in order to meet the non-exemptible requirements to become registered opticians in Ontario.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The changes made in regulation, by-law and policy, have changed College processes and the College has ensured that the technology supports these changes.

g) Resources for applicants

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

In 2018, the College continued to work with its counterparts throughout the country in developing additional options for assisting Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) applicants to better understand the PLAR process. One such resource was the development of a "Become an Optician" website by the College of Opticians of BC that became available in 2018 to any applicant to the PLAR in any province. The website provides videos and resources to assist international applicants to self-evaluate whether they could proceed with the PLAR process. The site includes information about what a Canadian optician does, information on immigrating successfully, living in Canada, and language proficiency requirements.

https://becomeanoptician.com/how-to-become-an-optician/become-a-canadian-optician/international-applicants/

The College has worked internally to ensure the information is accurate, clear, concise and consistent. It is anticipated that the new website with the updated content, will become available to the public and membership in Spring of 2019.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Providing applicants, both international and from accredited programs, with a clearer understanding of registration requirements assists applicants in having a more fulsome view of what to anticipate when they apply to the College. Applicants gain more confidence in the process and are provided with greater transparency.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

Providing clearer documentation and visual resources reduces general inquiries and allows the College to create more targeted responses. It further allows the College to act on applicant feedback in a timely way.

h) Review or appeal processes

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

i) Access to applicant records

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

j) Training and resources for registration staff, Council, and committee members

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

In 2018, the College continued to provide annual training to Council and Committee members on the Regulations, by-laws, policies and processes of the College. A number of training initiatives for registration staff, Council and Committee members was also conducted:

1. Council underwent a comprehensive two-day governance training session.
2. Committee Chairs and staff underwent meeting facilitation training.

The COO provides its staff, council and committee members with standardized training to safeguard objective and impartial decision-making in the registration process.Training and orientation for Registration Committee and Registration Appeal Panel (RAP) members includes information on the College's registration regulation and policies,

and their duties and obligations under fair-access legislation for the health professions.Additional training for staff and committee members focuses on cultural differences and accessibility.The COO also engages its staff and committee members in ongoing informal training opportunities, such as regular staff meetings to discuss common issues and promote consistency in their decision-making.

Further, the College's Registration Committee underwent additional training in the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process. Each committee member completed the Competency Gap Analysis (CGA) and experienced an in-person interview in order to give the Committee a fuller understanding of what a candidate experiences.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Standardized training for staff, Council and Committee members leads to more consistent decision making. Specifically, the College is able to ensure that registration assessment processes are objective and consistent from candidate to candidate which ensures fairer outcomes.

Council and Committee engagement in ongoing training may lead to more informed and thoughtful decision making.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The College recognizes the importance of addressing strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for improvement for all staff, Council and Committee members. Continuously updating training and resource material ensures that staff, Council and Committee members are well informed. The College is committed to updating training material and reviewing resources regularly.

k) Mutual recognition agreements

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

l) Other (include as many items as applicable)

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

Describe any registration-related improvements/changes to your enabling legislation and/or regulations in the last year

The College's Registration Regulation sets out all requirements for obtaining and maintaining a certificate of registration for all classes of licensure with the College. In 2017, the Registration Committee completed its work on a comprehensive review and revision of the College's Registration Regulation and Council approved the final draft regulation at its meeting on January 30, 2017. The College submitted its proposed amendments to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in June, 2017. Some of the highlights of the new regulation include:

- Introduction of a new inactive class of certificate of registration intended for existing registered opticians who do not intend to practise the profession (either temporarily or long-term);
- Elimination of the registered student class of certificate. Pursuant to Section 29(1)(b) of the *Regulated Health Professions Act* (RHPA), students are able to practise under supervision. Removing student registration would bring the COO in line with most other health profession regulators in Ontario;
- Changes to registration requirements (some of which include provisions relating to applicants also registered with another regulatory body and a provision to deal with applicants who make false or misleading statements on their applications); and,
- A new currency requirement for registered optician members and applicants to ensure that they have up-to-date knowledge, skills and/or judgment in the profession.

A complete summary of the changes is available on the College's website: http://coptont.org/docs/Legislation/Proposed-Reg-Reg-App-Jan2017.pdf.

A summary which includes a side by side comparison between the proposed changes, the current regulation and the rationale for any changes can also be found on the website: http://coptont.org/docs/Legislation/Registration-Reg-Chart-Changes-Tracked-Jan2017.pdf.

On November 9, 2018, the College received initial feedback from the Ministry on the draft Registration Regulation. The College considered the Ministry's recommendations and answered the Ministry's inquiries. The College will undertake the development of two policies in 2019 to satisfy the changes being proposed under the new Regulation, namely a policy addressing currency requirements and a practicum requirements policy.

2. Quantitative Information

a) Languages

Indicate the languages in which application information materials were available in the reporting year.

Language	Yes/No
English	Yes
French	Yes

Other (please specify)

Additional comments:

b) Gender of applicants

Indicate the number of applicants in each category as applicable.

Gender	Number of Applicants
Male	102
Female	224

None of the above   0

Additional comments:

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c) Gender of members

Indicate the number of members in each category as applicable. Select the option that best corresponds to the terminology used by your organization.

Gender	Number of Members
Male	1280
Female	1671
None of the above	0

Additional comments:

Registered Optician Members as of December 31, 2018

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d) Jurisdiction where applicants obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education[1] in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
260	55	1	Korea 1 Iran 1 India 3 Syrian Arab Republic 1 S. Africa 1 France 1 Hungary 1 Italy 1 Total 10	0	**326**

[1] Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

The above numbers exlcude individuals who already held a certificate of registration as a student optician with the College and were automatically updated to an intern optician certificate by the College.

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e) Jurisdiction where applicants who became registered members obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants who became registered members in the reporting year by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education[1] in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total

	Provinces				
284	56	0	Iran 2 Iraq 1 India 2 France 1 Total 6	0	**346**

[1] Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

f) Jurisdiction where members were initially trained

Indicate the total number of registered members by jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education[1] in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
2574	341	6	India 8 Philippines 1 Germany 1 Hong Kong 3 China 3 Philippines 3 Iran 5 U.K. 2 Israel 1 Sweden 1 Iraq 1 Austria 1 Total 30	0	**2951**

[1] Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

Members as of December 31, 2018

g) Applications processed

Indicate the number of applications your organization processed in the reporting year:

Jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

from January 1st to December 31st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
New applications received	260	55	1	10	0	326
Applicants actively pursuing licensing (applicants who had some contact with your organization in the reporting year)	260	55	1	11	0	327
Inactive applicants (applicants who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year)	0	1	0	1	0	2
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	3	0	0	0	0	3
Applicants who became FULLY registered members	157	30	0	0	0	187
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence[3] but were not issued a licence	0	1	0	0	0	1
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence[3]	0	1	0	4	0	5

[1] An alternative class of licence enables its holder to practice with limitations, but additional requirements must be met in order for the member to be fully licensed.

Additional comments:

h) Classes of certificate/license

Inidcate and provide a description of the classes of certificate/license offered by your organization.

You must specify and describe at least one class of certificate/license (on line a) in order for this step to be complete.

#	Certification	Description
		Description (a)
a)	Registered Student Optician	Students enrolled in an Opticianry program by the

		MTCU, or applicants who have applied to become registered as a registered optician or a registered intern optician and who are in the process of completing additional training as ordered by the Registration Committee may apply for a certificate of registration as a student optician. As noted, the class of student optician is considered to be an optional class of registration.
b)	Registered Intern Optician	**Description (b)** In order to apply for a certificate of registration as an intern optician, applicants must have successfully completed and graduated from a MTCU approved opticianry program, or one deemed equivalent, or if the applicant was ordered by the Registration Committee to complete additional training must have done so. Intern opticians are eligible to sit the national opticianry examinations.
c)	Registered Optician	**Description (c)** Full, independent licensures. A Registered Optician is authorized to perform the controlled act of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses and/or subnormal vision devices. The holder of the license can use the protected title of "Registered Optician" (RO).

Additional comments:

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i) Reviews and appeals processed

State the number of reviews and appeals your organization processed in the reporting year (use only whole numbers; do not enter commas or decimals).

Jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

from January 1st to December 31st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
Applications that were subject to an internal review or that were referred to a statutory committee of your governing council, such as a Registration Committee	5	11	0	7	0	**23**
Applicants who initiated an appeal of a registration decision	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Appeals heard	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Registration decisions changed following an appeal	0	0	0	0	0	**0**

from January 1st to December 31st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total

Additional comments:

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j) Paid staff

In the table below, enter the number of paid staff employed by your organization in the categories shown, on December 31 of the reporting year.

When providing information for each of the categories in this section, you may want to use decimals if you count your staff using half units. For example, one full-time employee and one part-time employee might be equivalent to 1.5 employees.

You can enter decimals to the tenths position only. For example, you can enter 1.5 or 7.5 but not 1.55 or 7.52.

Category	Staff
Total staff employed by the regulatory body	13
Staff involved in appeals process	2
Staff involved in registration process	5

Additional comments:

3. Submission

I hereby certify that:

Name of individual with authority to sign on behalf of the organization:
Melanie Woodbeck

Title:
Deputy Registrar

Date:
2019/03/01