

COLLEGE OF OPTICIANS OF ALBERTA

Member Registration and Renewal Policies

DRAFT July 2008

Introduction

REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY

As is the case for other health professionals, Opticians must register with the provincial regulatory body in order to practice. The provincially mandated Opticianry regulatory bodies exist for public safety. This role differs from that of the national association, Opticians Association of Canada, which has a mandate to support members. The roles of these regulatory bodies (i.e. colleges, associations or registration boards) includes:

- monitor the competence of members, e.g. mandatory continuing education
- protect the public from unsafe or unethical Opticianry practice
- protect the use of regulated title designation and initials, e.g. RO, RCLP
- review the professional conduct of members based on complaints, and discipline members where appropriate.

Member Registration and Renewal Policies

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SUBJECT: Register Categories

POLICY: College of Opticians of Alberta (COA) shall maintain a Register for regulated members.

PROCEDURES:

1. The register categories include:
 - a) General register
 - i) practicing member
 - ii) non-practicing member
 - b) Provisional register
 - c) Courtesy register
 - d) Student Register

Practicing Member

2. A regulated member of the College shall be an applicant who is eligible for registration as a practicing member under the eyeglass dispensing register or the contact lens dispenser register or both if the applicant:
 - a) meets the requirements of section 31.1 (1) of the *Opticians Act*
 - b) provides evidence satisfactory to the Registrar that the applicant carries professional liability insurance as required;
 - c) pays the registration fee prescribed in the bylaws
3. Registration on the general register may be valid for up to one year.

Non-Practicing Member

4. A regulated non-practicing member of the College shall be an applicant who is eligible for a transfer of registration to the non-practicing category under the eyeglass dispensing register or under both the eyeglass dispensing register and the non-practicing contact lens dispensing register if the applicant:

- a) meets the requirements of section 31.1 (1) of the Opticians Act
- b) is not in breach of continuing education requirements;
- c) provides to the Registrar a written and signed Undertaking that the member will not engage in the practice of Opticianry in Alberta while registered as a non-practicing member, and
- d) pays the non-practicing fee as prescribed in the bylaws

Provisional Optician

- 5. A regulated provisional member shall be an applicant who is eligible for registration on the provisional register if the applicant:
 - a) has met the requirements for registration under *Health Professions Act* but has not successfully challenged the required practical examinations for licensure
 - b) is enrolled in upgrading as directed by the Registrar or Registration Committee
 - c) pays the Provisional Optician fees as prescribed by the College.
- 6. An applicant registered on the provisional register may practice only while under supervision of:
 - a) a regulated member registered on the general register or courtesy register (RO, RCLP)
 - b) an Ophthalmologist, or
 - c) an Optometrist
- 7. Registration on the provisional register may be valid for up to one year.
- 8. The Registrar may extend a registration on the provisional register if the Registrar is of the opinion that extenuating circumstances exist.

Courtesy Register

- 9. Opticians who normally resides outside of Alberta and wish to teach or provide Opticianry services temporarily in Alberta must

register with the Alberta Opticians Association on the Courtesy Register.

10. An Optician on the courtesy register shall be an applicant who is eligible for registration on the courtesy register if the applicant:
 - a) has met the requirements for registration to the courtesy register under Schedule 16 (7)(1) of the Health Professions Act
11. Courtesy register applicants will have an unrestricted practice permit with another licensing/registering College in another jurisdiction and have a time limitation attached to their tenure in Alberta.
12. Registration on the Courtesy Register must be completed prior to the start of temporary employment in Alberta.

SUBJECT: COA Roster Database

POLICY: College of Opticians of Alberta (COA) maintains a Register in which the name of those persons who qualify for registration under the Health Professions Act and Regulations are entered. The register may also contain information resulting from the professional conduct process as directed by the Discipline Committee.

PROCEDURES:

1. When the criteria have been met, the member's name is entered in the Register together with the following information:
 - a) license number
 - b) contact information
 - c) date of entry
 - d) designation (RO, RCLP)
 - e) payment of dues information
 - f) liability insurance

2. Changes to a member's status will be listed in the register as any of the following:
 - a) Active
 - i. Associate
 - ii. Honourary
 - iii. Practicing
 - iv. Temporary Permit
 - b) Nullified
 - i. Unkown
 - c) Suspended
 - i. Left the Province
 - ii. Non Payment of Fee
 - iii. Non-Practicing
 - iv. Retired
 - v. Temporary Inactive
 - vi. Unknown
 - vii. Voluntary Withdrawal
 - viii. Honourary
 - d) Terminated
 - i. Deceased

- ii. Resigned Disciplinary Action
 - iii. Unknown
 - iv. Voluntary Withdrawal
- 3. Changes in a member's name are entered in the register following receipt of appropriate documentation including:
 - a) birth certificate
 - b) marriage certificate
 - c) change of name certificates
- 4. On notification of the death of a member, "Deceased" are entered into the Register.
- 5. All information entered in the Register is done so under the direction of the Registrar by College staff
- 6. Member business information from the Register is available to the public.

SUBJECT: **Mandatory Registration**

POLICY: In order to practice Opticianry in Alberta, all members are required by law in accordance with the *Health Professions Act* to be registered and hold a valid Practice Permit with the College of Opticians of Alberta (COA).

- PROCEDURES:**
1. Members must hold a valid Practice Permit whether they intend to practice Opticianry as an independent practitioner, employee, contractor or volunteer-for any portion of the year-even if it is for one day.
 2. Members shall not participate in a working interview unless they are registered to hold a Practice Permit. A Practice Permit must be renewed annually (December 1).
 3. Licensure is transferable to other jurisdictions with a request to the Registrar and must follow standards in the jurisdiction that members are transferring to.
 4. To practice in Alberta, regardless of license status in any other province, state or country, members must comply with the College registration process and standard set forth in Alberta.
 5. If members are currently residing out of province, it is recommended that application for registration be initiated and, when possible, completed prior to moving to Alberta.

SUBJECT: Out of Province Applicants (Canadian Applicants)

POLICY: In order to become a member of the College the applicant must have successfully completed a recognized training program and/or successfully passed the National Practical Licensing Exam (NACOR).

PROCEDURE:

1. There are three routes to becoming a Registered Optician in Alberta.
2. Successfully completed a recognized education training and examination for applicants in Alberta. The applicant must:
 - i) have successfully completed and graduated from an Alberta Opticianry program approved by the College.
3. Recognition of credentials from another province through the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). The applicant must:
 - i) have successfully completed and graduated from a program which is deemed equivalent to a program referred to in subsection 1 (a) (i) in accordance with the policy guidelines of the College or;
 - ii) in case of an applicant who does not meet the requirements of subsection 1 (a) (i) or 1(b) (i) or who cannot provide documentary evidence of meeting those requirements, satisfy the Registrar that he/she has a level of knowledge and skill in the practice of Opticianry that is equivalent to that acquired by graduates of the programs referred to in subsections (i) and (ii). This shall be done via the Registration Committee or PLAR which determines the competency level of the applicant.
4. Applicants within or outside of Canada that do not have recognized training, education, or experience as set out by the standards in Alberta. The applicant must:

- i) be licensed or registered to dispense eyeglasses, contact lenses and subnormal vision devices in a jurisdiction outside Canada and be in good standing with the licensing or registering body of that jurisdiction, or;
 - ii) be engaged in the practice of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses or subnormal vision devices in a jurisdiction outside of Canada in which no license or practice permit is required to do so and be in good standing with the professional association in that jurisdiction which required compliance with professional standards.
 - iii) at the discretion of the Registrar, the applicant shall be assessed by the PLAR to determine the competency level of the applicant.
5. In accordance with the Health Professions Act, an application for registration must be made on the required form. All applicants will be reviewed.
 6. All supporting documentation must be received with the application form by the College or the application will be returned.
 7. Upon receipt of all required documentation and fees, application will be reviewed by the Registrar. If additional information is required the application will be returned to the applicant.
 8. An application for registration will not be approved until all registration requirements are met.

SUBJECT: Out of Country Applicants (International Applicants)

POLICY: In order to become a member of the College the applicant must have successfully completed a recognized training program and/or successfully passed the National Practical Licensing Exam (NACOR).

PROCEDURE:

1. There are three routes to becoming a Registered Optician in Alberta.
2. Successfully completed a recognized education training and examination for applicants in Alberta. The applicant must:
 - iii) have successfully completed and graduated from an Alberta Opticianry program approved by the College.
3. Recognition of credentials from another province through the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA). The applicant must:
 - i) have successfully completed and graduated from a program which is deemed equivalent to a program referred to in subsection 1 (a) (i) in accordance with the policy guidelines of the College or;
 - iv) in case of an applicant who does not meet the requirements of subsection 1 (a) (i) or 1(b) (i) or who cannot provide documentary evidence of meeting those requirements, satisfy the Registrar that he/she has a level of knowledge and skill in the practice of Opticianry that is equivalent to that acquired by graduates of the programs referred to in subsections (i) and (ii). This shall be done via the PLAR which determines the competency level of the applicant.
10. Applicants within or outside of Canada that do not have recognized training, education, or experience as set out by the standards in Alberta. The applicant must:

- a. be licensed or registered to dispense eyeglasses, contact lenses and subnormal vision devices in a jurisdiction outside Canada and be in good standing with the licensing or registering body of that jurisdiction, or;
 - b. be engaged in the practice of dispensing eyeglasses, contact lenses or subnormal vision devices in a jurisdiction outside of Canada in which no license or practice permit is required to do so and be in good standing with the professional association in that jurisdiction which required compliance with professional standards.
 - c. at the discretion of the Registrar, the applicant shall be assessed by the PLAR to determine the competency level of the applicant.
11. In accordance with the Health Professions Act, an application for registration must be made on the required form. All applicants will be reviewed.
 12. All supporting documentation must be received with the application form by the College or the application will be returned.
 13. Upon receipt of all required documentation and fees, application will be reviewed by the Registrar. If additional information is required the application will be returned to the applicant.
 14. An application for registration will not be approved until all registration requirements are met.

Seven Steps to Registration

1. Applicant Applies for Registration with COA
2. Preliminary Assessment of Application
 - 2.1 Resume of work experience
 - 2.2 Transcripts of formal education
 - 2.3 Letter of personal reference
 - 2.4 Letters of professional competence
 - 2.5 Letters of good standing
 - 2.6 ICES or IQAS
 - 2.7 Language proficiency
 - 2.8 Interview
3. Competency Gap Analysis
4. Registration Committee Assess Information
5. Bridging

6. Examination
7. Proceed to COA Registration
 - 7.1 Proof of insurance
 - 7.2 Solemn declaration
 - 7.3 Criminal records check
 - 7.4 Payment of fees

Policy Number: 3.1

Effective Date: Dec 10, 2007

Category: Renewal

Date of Last Amendment:

SUBJECT: Annual Renewal

POLICY: Regulated members of the College shall submit a completed Registration Renewal form with payment on or before December 15 of each year to obtain a practice permit.

PROCEDURE:

1. The College registration year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year.
2. Registration renewal forms are mailed to all regulated members in mid-September of each year.
3. The Registrar shall supply and send by mail to each member, at the member's last address as shown on the register, an application for renewal of the practice permit in a form to be supplied by the Registrar, on or before December 15 of each year.
4. The annual renewal package must contain the following documentation:
 - a) letter to member
 - b) renewal form
 - c) pricing
 - d) checklist
 - e) self-assessment
 - f) undertaking
 - g) proof of errors and omissions
6. A member may apply for renewal of a practice permit by returning to the Registrar:
 - a) renewal form
 - b) fee
 - c) proof of insurance
 - d) checklist
 - e) self-assessment

- f) undertaking
- g) passport photo (every 5 years)

7. If a member fails to apply to renew his/her license or to pay the required annual fee prior to the deadline for so doing, the member shall pay the required fee for late renewal in addition to the annual fee.

Policy Number: 3.2

Effective Date: Dec 10, 2007

Category: Framework Governance

Date of Last Amendment:

SUBJECT: Late Renewal

POLICY: Regulated members of the College shall submit a completed Registration Renewal form with payment on or before December 1 of each year to obtain a practice permit.

PROCEDURE:

1. The College registration year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year.
2. 10% late fee will be levied after December 1, 2010.

Policy Number: 3.3

Effective Date: Dec 10, 2007

Category: Renewal

Date of Last Amendment:

SUBJECT: Suspensions

POLICY: Suspension of a member shall be defined as failure to pay full membership fees by December 31st of each year for the next renewal year and shall be subject to a reinstatement fee.

PROCEDURE:

1. Failure to pay required membership fees by December 31st of each year shall result in suspension of the members' practice permit pursuant to *Health Professions Act*.
2. Members that do not renew a practice permit by January 1st with all applicable fees will have their practice permit suspended as per *The Health Professions Act*.
3. The Registrar shall give a member notice of default and of intention to suspend a member's practice permit upon:
 - a) failure to apply to renew a practice permit
 - b) failure to pay the required annual fee or any other required fee; or
 - c) failure to meet the requirements for renewal of the practice permit of registration set out in policy 1.2.
4. The Registrar shall suspend a member's practice permit on January 1st of the next renewal year.
5. Notice to suspend shall be sent to the member by no later than January 15th of the current year for the next renewal year by registered mail.
6. If a member is suspended or out of practice for less than three years competency requirements must be met and reinstatement fees paid.
7. If a member has been suspended and/or out of practice for a period of 3-5 years the Registrar shall make an assessment with relation to competency requirements. as determined by the

Registrar and must be completed in the specified timeframe determined by the Registrar

8. If a member has been suspended and/or out of practiced for a period of 3-5 years and has met all competency requirements as determined by the Registrar a temporary certificate may be issued until all competency requirements are complete.
9. Failure to complete the competency requirements and consequential suspension does not entitle the applicant to a refund of paid fees.
10. If a member has been suspended and/or out of practice for a duration of more than 5 years the Registrar may direct that the member challenge the Prior Learning Assessment or GAP Analysis to determine competency.
11. Upon completing Prior Learning Assessment and meeting all requirements all fees associated with registering for a practice permit including reinstatement fees, where required, will apply.
12. Does not have enough continuing education credits or does not meet continuing education requirements.

SUBJECT: Reinstatement

POLICY: Members previously entered in the College register whose license has been suspended or cancelled may be restored to practicing and issued a practice permit if the requirements of Registration are met as per Policy 2.1.

PROCEDURE:

1. A member whose practice permit has been suspended by the Registrar under Policy 2.4, may apply to the Registrar for reinstatement by:
 - a) submitting an application for reinstatement in a form supplied by the Registrar;
 - b) submitting a passport sized colour photo of the applicant, signed on the reverse;
 - c) submitting proof of insurance
 - d) submitting evidence of completion of the requirements of the College's Continuing Competency program, PLAR and GAP analysis, and
 - e) paying
 - i. the fee the member failed to pay, if any, and
 - ii. the required reinstatement fee or, if application for reinstatement is made within 30 days from date of suspension, the required late renewal fee.
2. For the purposes of subclause 1 (d)(i), if the member was suspended for failure to pay the annual fee, the member shall be reinstated if he/she pays the annual fee payable for the year in which the member is reinstated.
3. To be eligible for reinstatement, the applicant must meet the requirements for renewal of the practice permit set out in Policy 3.0 Annual Renewal.
4. If the application for reinstatement is made within three years from the date of suspension of the member's practice permit, and the applicant has met the requirements of this section, the

Registrar shall lift the suspension. The reinstatement application must be accompanied by:

- a) Proof of completion of Continuing Competency requirements or proof of practicing Opticianry in good standing in another jurisdiction or proof of successfully completing the Practical Licensing examination
- b) Payment of reinstatement fee and applicable fees
- c) Payment of current year's annual renewal for practice permit fee.

Upon approval by the Registrar, the suspended or cancelled applicant would be reinstated and his/her registration would be active for the current year, until the upcoming renewal year.

5. An application for reinstatement made more than three years from the date of suspension shall be referred to the Registrar, who shall evaluate the applicant's qualifications and determine if the applicant must meet any examination and Continuing Competency requirements in order to be reinstated. Suspended or cancelled applicants who wish to reinstate after three years must submit a written request to the Registrar. If applicable, they must also submit the following:
 - b. Proof of practicing Opticianry in good standing in another jurisdiction
 - c. Proof of completion of an Opticianry education program and
 - d. Proof of completion of an Opticianry licensing examination.
6. The Registrar shall issue a new practice permit for the current renewal year to a member who is reinstated under this section.
7. Each member shall display their practice permit as per Policy 3.3 Practice Permits.
8. A member whose certificate of registration has been suspended for professional misconduct or incapacity shall pay all outstanding fees and fines prior to resuming the practice of Opticianry.

Policy Number: 3.5

Effective Date:

Category: Renewal

Date of Last Amendment:

SUBJECT: Practice Permits

POLICY: In order to practice in Alberta a member must hold a valid annual practice certificate and display the certificate at their place of practice.

PROCEDURE:

1. A person may apply for the issue of practice permit by submitting an application to the registrar together with an application fee and a passport size colour photograph of the applicant, signed by the applicant on the back.
2. An applicant for the issue of a certificate of registration as a registered Optician must submit evidence of professional liability insurance.
3. A certificate of registration shall be surrendered to the Registrar upon revocation.
4. Duplicate copies of practice permits shall be issued by the Registrar only upon request, or if the original has been stolen or destroyed.
5. If a member practices in more than one location, duplicate certificates will be supplied upon request to the Registrar at no extra cost to the member, up to a maximum of three certificates. This facilitates that requirement of displaying the certificate in each location. Extra copies above and beyond three certificates will be provided at a cost of \$25 per certificate.
6. The following are registration requirements for a practice permit of any designation:
 - a) An applicant must provide details of any of the following that relate to the applicant:
 - I. a conviction for a criminal offence or an offence related to the regulation of the practice of Opticianry;

- II. a finding of professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity, in Alberta in relation to another health profession or in another jurisdiction in relation to Opticianry or another health profession.
 - III. a current proceeding for professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity, in Alberta in relation to another health profession or in another jurisdiction in relation to Opticianry or another health profession.
7. The application must be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada or authorized under the Immigration Act (Canada) to engage in the practice of the Opticianry.
 8. The applicant must be able to speak and write either English or French with reasonable fluency.
 9. The applicant must pay the required fee for the issue of a practice permit.
 10. The member shall prominently display his/her practice permit, affixed with the current College renewal validation decal, at all locations where he/she practices Opticianry or, in the case of a Courtesy Registered Optician, shall carry on his/her person at all times when engaged in the practice of Opticianry, his/her proof of registration supplied by the Registrar.
 11. The practice permit of a member is revoked if the member ceases to be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada or ceases to be authorized under the Immigration Act (Canada) to engage in the practice of Opticianry.
 12. No member other than a member who holds a practice permit as a registered optician may use the title "Registered Optician" or the abbreviation RO.
 13. No member other than a member who holds a practice permit as a registered optician may use the title "Registered Contact Lens Practitioner" or the abbreviation RCLP.

Policy Number: 3.6

Effective Date: Dec 10, 2007

Category: Fees

Date of Last Amendment:

SUBJECT: Fees

POLICY: The College of Opticians of Alberta (COA) shall establish a schedule of fees for administrative costs relative to registration services.

PROCEDURE:

1. Fees for registration, reinstatement, or entry into a particular designation or category are established in accordance with the College.
2. Fees are required for the following services:
 - e. annual renewal
 - f. reinstatement
 - g. evaluation of documentation
 - h. non-practicing applications
 - i. transfer fee (returning to Alberta)
 - j. PLAR
 - k. new member application
 - l. documentation fee