

REGISTRATION POLICY

Examination and Upgrading

Examination Requirement

It is a non-exemptible requirement under section 7(1)3 of [Ontario Regulation 32/24](#), that an applicant for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician must have,

“achieved a passing mark in each section of the College’s examinations, including examinations about contact lenses, or must have successfully completed examinations which are determined by the Registration Committee to be equivalent to the College’s examinations.”

The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) recognizes the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators’ (NACOR) National Examinations as the entry-to-practice examinations. Individuals must complete both the contact lens and eyeglass examinations in order to qualify for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician in Ontario.

Examination Eligibility

The COO determines the eligibility of examination candidates in Ontario. Candidates are deemed to be eligible for the examination in the following circumstances:

1. **Accredited Education Candidates:** Candidates who complete their education at an opticianry program accredited by the College will be eligible for the examinations upon:
 - a. Successful completion and graduation from an accredited opticianry program;
 - b. Successful completion of the practicum/practical experience requirement; and
 - c. Successful registration with the COO as an Intern Optician.
2. **Unaccredited Education Candidates:** Candidates who complete their opticianry education at an unaccredited program, including education programs completed outside Canada, will be eligible for the examinations upon:
 - a. Successful completion of a prior learning assessment approved by the Registration Committee;
 - b. Successful completion of any additional training required by the Registration Committee; and
 - c. Successful registration with the COO as an Intern Optician.
3. **Candidates Seeking Registration in Other Provinces:** Candidates seeking registration in other provinces will be eligible for the examinations upon confirmation of eligibility by their home province. Examination results will be provided by NACOR to the home province.

Limits on Eligibility

Candidates are eligible to attempt the National Examinations 3 times within the 3-year period from the time they first become eligible. A candidate who fails the registration examinations a fourth time will be required to complete a fresh opticianry program before attempting the examinations again.

The following steps must be taken by the candidate to extend their examination eligibility, as follows:

Candidates who have not attempted the National Examinations

If you have never attempted the National Examinations, please complete the following steps:

1. Submit a **written request** to the College to be reissued a certificate of registration as an Intern Optician for the purpose of re-attempting the National Examinations. This request should be submitted to registration@collegeofopticians.ca. The following information must be included with the written request:
 - a. Details of any additional opticianry-related education or work experience that you engaged in since you first became eligible for the examinations (i.e. since you completed your program);
 - b. Proof of completion of the College's [Refresher Program](#). Please review the Refresher Program information carefully and complete the Refresher Level that corresponds to the amount of time that has passed since you completed your opticianry program. If you're unsure which Refresher Level to complete, please contact the College.
 - c. Payment of the review fee.
2. The Registration Committee will review the candidate's request and issue a decision.

Candidates who have attempted the National Examinations one or more times

If you have attempted the National Examinations on at least one previous occasion (and were unsuccessful), please complete the following steps:

1. Submit a **written request** to the College to be reissued a certificate of registration as an Intern Optician for the purpose of re-attempting the National Examinations. This request should be submitted to registration@collegeofopticians.ca. The following information must be included with the written request:
 - a. Details of any additional opticianry-related education or work experience that you engaged in since you first became eligible for the examinations (i.e. since you completed your program);
 - b. An **upgrading proposal**, which outlines the steps you propose to take to address any gaps in knowledge; and
 - c. Payment of the review fee.

3. The Registration Committee will review the candidate's request and issue a decision specifying the upgrading measures that the candidate must complete to extend their eligibility.
4. Complete the upgrading measures specified by the Registration Committee and submit proof of completion to the College. The upgrading requirements must be completed to the satisfaction of the Registration Committee.

Upgrading Proposal Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to candidates who are required to submit an upgrading proposal in order to reattempt the National Examinations.

1. **Upgrading Proposal:** An upgrading proposal is a proposal that outlines the steps a candidate will undertake to improve their knowledge. The proposal should focus on areas of the examinations where the candidate was unsuccessful or performed poorly. Upgrading steps may include mentoring, tutoring and/or upgrading courses offered by an accredited educational institution. Candidates should identify the steps they propose to take in their proposal and explain how these steps will address gaps in their knowledge.
2. **Upgrading Mentors/Tutors:** If a candidate wishes to pursue a tutoring or mentoring arrangement, the upgrading proposal should be developed by a mentor/tutor selected by the candidate. An acceptable mentor would be a Registered Optician or an optometrist in good standing, with appropriate knowledge, skill, and judgement in the subject matter. All contact lens fittings must be supervised by a person authorized to dispense contact lenses in the jurisdiction where the dispensing takes place (e.g. optician, optometrist, ophthalmologist). Contact lens fittings that take place in Ontario must be supervised by an individual who has been approved as a Contact Lens Mentor under the College's Contact Lens Policy.
3. **Upgrading Hours:** Regardless of the type of proposal submitted, the Registration Committee usually expect the candidate to complete a minimum of 100 upgrading hours for each examination for which the candidate is seeking a supplemental attempt.
4. **Contents of Proposal:** A suitable upgrading proposal must demonstrate how the proposed mentoring/tutoring or upgrading courses relate to the examination areas where the candidate was previously unsuccessful or where they performed poorly. The proposal should be sufficiently detailed so that the Registration Committee can determine whether the upgrading will satisfactorily address the individual's areas of weakness.

Completion of Upgrading/Refresher

The candidate is responsible for submitting acceptable evidence of completion of the applicable refresher program or upgrading plan for the Registration Committee's consideration.

Satisfactory completion of the refresher program or approved upgrading plan will result in eligibility for one supplemental examination attempt only. For the purposes of writing the examination, the Registration Committee may extend a certificate of registration as an Intern Optician for a specified period of time.