

REGISTRATION POLICY

PLAR Process

In this policy, an **Unaccredited Education Applicant** is an applicant to the College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) who completed their opticianry education at a program inside or outside Canada that has not been accredited by the COO's Registration Committee.

To be eligible for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician, Unaccredited Education Applicants must successfully complete a prior learning assessment approved by the Registration Committee. This is referred to as the **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)** process.

Eligibility for PLAR

1. To be eligible for PLAR in Ontario, applicants must have successfully completed and graduated from a program outside of Ontario that is similar but not equivalent to an opticianry program listed in the COO's [Approved Education Program Policy](#).
2. For a program to be considered "similar" for the purposes of this policy, it must be reasonably aligned with the core elements of the [National Competencies for Canadian Opticians](#).

Approved PLAR Process

3. The Registration Committee has approved the PLAR process administered by the **National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR)** for the purposes of assessing prior learning for Unaccredited Education Candidates.
4. The PLAR process consists of the following steps:
 - a. *Step 1 - Competency Gap Analysis (CGA)*: an online skills assessment, consisting of two sections:
 - i. Eyeglasses and low vision
 - ii. Contact lenses

All PLAR candidates must complete a CGA. The CGA may be completed inside or outside Canada.

- b. *Step 2 - Bridging Modules*: online self-study learning modules, including post-tests, on specific areas of competency. Bridging modules must only be completed where one or more knowledge gaps are identified through the CGA.

Applying for PLAR

5. Unaccredited Education Applicants must apply directly to NACOR to complete the PLAR process and pay all associated fees. For further details and to apply, please visit [NACOR's website](#).

6. NACOR will carry out an initial review of the application. If necessary, NACOR may request a determination from the Registration Committee on whether the applicant's education program is sufficiently similar to an Approved Education Program to qualify for PLAR.

Successful Completion of PLAR

7. Successful completion of PLAR, for the purposes of meeting the requirements for registration under the COO's Registration Regulation¹, means:
 - a. Obtaining a CGA result that shows no gaps in knowledge or skill; or
 - b. Obtaining a CGA result that identifies gaps in one or more areas of knowledge or skill, provided that:
 - i. The identified gaps do not result in the applicant being assigned more than 85% of the possible bridging modules; and
 - ii. The applicant obtains a passing mark on the post-tests for each bridging module that is assigned and identified as "mandatory" within the timeframe specified by NACOR.

Note: If the CGA results in the applicant being assigned more than 85% of the possible bridging modules, PLAR will not be considered successfully completed.

Accommodations, Extensions, Questions and Concerns

8. Requests for accommodations for any portion of the PLAR process should be made directly to NACOR.
9. Requests for extensions to complete bridging modules should be made to the Registration Committee by contacting registration@collegeofopticians.ca. A committee review fee of \$150 + HST will apply.
10. All other questions or concerns about the PLAR process or results should be directed to NACOR at plar@nacor.ca. Applicants who continue to have questions or concerns after communicating with NACOR may contact the COO at registration@collegeofopticians.ca.

Next Steps

11. Following successful completion of the PLAR process, Unaccredited Education Applicants must complete the following additional steps to become entitled to practice opticianry in Ontario:
 - a. Apply for registration as an Intern Optician. Please note that applicants will be required to submit all required [supporting documents](#), including proof of Practicum completion.
 - b. Challenge and pass the National Examinations (Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses).

¹ Registration Regulation, O. Reg. 32/24 under the *Opticianry Act, 1991*, section 7(1), para. 1(iii).

- c. Apply for registration as a Registered Optician. Please note that applicants will be required to submit all required [supporting documents](#), including a Vulnerable Sector Check.