

College of OPTICIANS of Ontario

2025 Fair Registration Practices Report

Prepared for the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC)



FAIRNESS COMMISSIONER
COMMISSAIRE À L'ÉQUITÉ

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1. Background

Under section 22.7(1) of Schedule 2 of the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA), which is substantially similar to section 20 of the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006 (FARPACTA).

“A regulated profession shall prepare a fair registration practices report annually or at such other times as the Fairness Commissioner may specify or at such times as may be specified in the regulations”.

Section 22.9 of Schedule 2 of the RHPA and Section 23 of FARPACTA then go on to indicate that the Fairness Commissioner shall specify the form in which these reports shall be prepared, along with the required filing dates. This section also stipulates that a regulator must make these reports public.

It is pursuant to these authorities that the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) has required that each regulator complete its annual Fair Registration Practices Report (FRP).

Please note that this report covers the time-period from January 1 to December 31, 2025.

The FRP:

- Collects information about the organization, applicants to the profession and current membership.
- Provides information to the public about how the organization has implemented fair registration practices during the reporting period.
- Helps the OFC to successfully undertake the education and compliance activities which include monitoring, applying a risk-informed compliance framework, assessing performance, and sharing best practices.
- Determines whether the regulator is complying with recently enacted legislative and regulatory provisions designed to reduce barriers for domestic labour mobility and internationally trained applicants.
- Identifies trends across regulated professions and regulated health colleges.

2. Organization information

Organization name	College of OPTICIANS of Ontario
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3. Registration requirements

Applicants to the regulated professions and compulsory trades must fulfil registration requirements to practice their profession or use a professional title. This section summarizes registration requirements for each profession or trade regulated by College of OPTICIANS of Ontario

Licensing requirements (brief description for each requirement listed):

Profession/ Trade Name	Optician
Academic requirement	The academic requirements for registration are set out in the College's Registration Regulation. To meet the academic requirements for registration as a registered optician, applicants must have successfully completed and graduated from a Canadian opticianry program that is approved by the

	<p>Registration Committee or an accrediting body recognized by the Committee; or have graduated from a Canadian opticianry program that the Registration Committee has determined to be equivalent to an approved program. Applicants who have completed an opticianry program outside Ontario, which is similar but not equivalent to the programs noted above, must successfully complete a prior learning assessment approved by the Registration Committee demonstrating that the applicant possesses the entry-to-practice competencies equivalent to those of a graduate from an opticianry program noted above. To meet the academic requirement for registration as an intern optician, applicants must have successfully completed and graduated from a Canadian opticianry program that is approved by the Registration Committee or an accrediting body recognized by the Committee; or have graduated from a Canadian opticianry program that the Registration Committee has determined to be equivalent to an approved program; or have applied for a certificate of registration as a registered optician and has been ordered by the Registration Committee to complete additional training and/or specified examinations and have completed the training but not the examinations. The latter applies to applicants undergoing an</p>
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	assessment of their prior learning and skills.
Experience requirement	To qualify for registration as a Registered Optician, applicants must demonstrate successful completion of a practicum approved by the Registration Committee or practical experience deemed by the Registration Committee to be equivalent to the practicum noted above. Applicants may rely on practical experience gained in any jurisdiction inside or outside Canada. The College’s Practicum Policy sets out practical experience requirements for entry to practice as follows: 1000 verified dispensing hours, 250 eyeglass fittings, and 20 contact lens fittings. Completion of these requirements must be supervised by an authorized dispenser in the jurisdiction where the dispensing/fittings occur and may be completed in any jurisdiction.
Language requirement	As set out in the Registration Regulation, it is a requirement for any class of certificate of registration that the applicant must be able to speak and write either English or French with reasonable fluency. The criteria for language proficiency are further set out in the Language Proficiency Policy. The policy confirms that the College accepts all language tests approved by the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) as proof of meeting the language proficiency requirement.
Additional information on licensing requirements (may include links to	The applicant's past conduct must not raise any reasonable doubts about

appropriate page on regulator website):	their knowledge, skills, or judgment to practice opticianry safely and professionally. The Mandatory Disclosures, Vulnerable Sector Check and Applicants with Charges or Findings Policy outlines these requirements.

4. Third party assessments

Third party organizations that assess qualifications on behalf of the regulator.

Organization name	Function
National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR)	Knowledge based exam
World Education Services (WES)	Academic credential evaluation
National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR)	OSCE / Skill based exam
National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR)	Prior learning and recognition

Fair access legislation requires regulators to take reasonable measures to ensure that any third parties undertake assessment of qualifications in a way that is transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

College of OPTICIANS of Ontario takes the following measure(s) to ensure fair and timely assessments:

The College regularly evaluates and monitors WES assessment practices with respect to applicants who use WES evaluation services. All reports received from WES are reviewed by College staff for consistency and to identify any gaps or anomalies. The College has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with

NACOR for the administration of the national exams. The MOU addresses requirements such as the training and qualification of examiners, accessibility issues, such as examination venue location, and factors that address diversity, equity, and inclusion. The MOU with NACOR also stipulates that at least two examination sessions must be held in Ontario each year. The College continues to maintain a central role in examination oversight through its participation in NACOR's National Examination Committee and by having an Examination Observer attend all examination sessions to observe and provide feedback. In 2025, the College delegated administration of the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process to NACOR. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed between the College & NACOR. The MOU addresses requirements such as training of assessors, language availability (in English & French), assessment criteria, and factors that address diversity, equity, and inclusion. The College continues to participate with the development and review of the PLAR process via working groups that will monitor PLAR to ensure it remains in line with the College's legislative requirements.

5. Accomplishments, risks and mitigations

Key accomplishments and risks pertaining to fair registration practices during the reporting period are summarized below.

A. Accomplishments

1	Update to the online application portal. The application portal was launched in 2024 and the College used the feedback from applicants and staff to create automations where appropriate, create efficiencies, and fix any issues. The updated online version of the online application was deployed in August 2025.
2	Communication to affected suspended registrants was increased in methods and volume in 2025 in advance of the July 1, 2025 revocation deadline in relation to a registration regulation change. Suspended registrants were notified that if they did not want to be revoked, they had the option of moving to the newly created Inactive class or to reinstate to the Registered Optician class or to resign. Registrants suspended three years or more were revoked on July 1, 2025. Methods of communication included e-blasts, mailed letters,

	social media, webinars (recorded for those who were unable to attend live), and pamphlets at trade shows.
3	A new Refresher Program was launched in Fall 2025. The updated program provides a streamlined pathway for applicants and registrants to meet currency requirements for the purposes of initial applications, ongoing currency, or returning to active practice following a period of inactivity. Applicants and registrants who are required to complete a refresher under the regulation may now refer to the Refresher Program details to identify the level they must complete in order to regain or maintain currency, without the need for individual review/assessment by the Registration Committee. All Refresher Program components may also be completed online and at the applicant/registrant's convenience.

B. Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation Measure
Practicum Requirements	The College met with several stakeholders in 2025 to explore whether any changes should be made to the Practicum requirements for entry-to-practice in order to better reflect current practice environments. Draft policy updates are expected to be presented to the Registration Committee in 2026 for review.
Employment Eligibility Documents	In the latter half of 2025, the College implemented enhanced support to applicants who were experiencing challenges securing the necessary documents from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to confirm proof of employment eligibility as per our registration regulation. College staff worked with applicants on a one-on-one basis to provide support so that the appropriate documents could be obtained from IRCC.

6. Changes to registration practices

During the January 1 to December 31, 2025 reporting period, College of OPTICIANS of Ontario has introduced the following changes impacting its registration processes. Changes, anticipated impacts, and risk mitigation are summarized below.

A. Registration requirements and practices

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Timelines for registration, decisions and/or responses	No	
Changes to internal review or appeal process	No	
Assessment of qualifications, including competency-based assessments and examinations	No	
Registration requirements either through regulation, by-law or policy	No	
Documentation requirements for registration	No	

B. Training, policy and applicant supports

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Anti-racism and inclusion-based policies and practices	No	

C. System partners

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Steps to increase accountability of third parties	Yes	The prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) process was delegated by the College to the National Alliance of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed between the College & NACOR to formalize the responsibilities of each. The MOU addresses requirements such as training of assessors, language availability (in English & French), assessment criteria, and factors that address diversity, equity, and inclusion. The College continues to participate with the development and review of the PLAR process via working groups that will monitor the PLAR process to ensure it remains in line with the College's legislative requirements.
Mutual recognition agreements	No	
Accreditation of educational programs	No	

D. Responsiveness to changes in the regulatory environment

Registration process	Changes Made (Yes / No)	Description
Steps to address labour issues (minister/stakeholders consultations, check demand-supply gap, etc)	Yes	The College participated in consultations with Ontario's Ministry of Health on the expansion of As of Right regulations to additional regulated health professions in Ontario.
Other	No	

7. Membership and application data

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner collects membership and application data from regulators through annual Fair Registration Practices Reports, which are also made available to the public. Information is collected for the purpose of discerning statistical changes and trends related to a regulator's membership, application volumes, licensure/certification results, and appeals year over year.

A. Race-based data collected

	Race-based data collected? (Yes or No)
Members	No
Applicants	No

Additional description:

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B. Other identity-based or demographic data collected

	Other identity-based or demographic data collected? (Yes or No)
Members	Yes
Applicants	Yes

Additional description:

We collect data on gender identity and languages spoken. This information helps us see how the profession is developing.

C. Languages of service provision

College of OPTICIANS of Ontario makes application materials and information available to applicants in the following languages.

Language	Yes / No
English	Yes
French	Yes
Other (please specify)	

D. Membership Profile

Profession Name	Total Number of Members
Optician	3885

Class of License	Total Number of Members	Number of Internationally Educated Members
Full / General/ Independent Practice	3473	96
Inactive Opticians (Non-Practising)	241	10
Intern Opticians	171	32

Gender	Number of Members
Male	1464
Female	2418
X (includes trans, non-binary, and two-spirit people)	3
Other / not collected	0

Jurisdiction of Initial Training	Number of Members
Ontario	2976
Other provinces and territories	653
United States	10
Other International	128
Multiple Jurisdictions	0
Other/not collected	118

Country of Initial Training	Number of Members
Canada	3629
India	57
Iran	11
Nigeria	11
United States of America	10
Philippines	9
France	5
United Kingdom	5
China	4
Hong Kong	3
Colombia	2
Iraq	2
Poland	2
Tunisia	2
Algeria	1

Australia	1
Belgium	1
Brazil	1
Costa Rica	1
Egypt	1
Germany	1
Ghana	1
Israel	1
Jordan	1
Morocco	1
Romania	1
Russia	1
Ukraine	1
Vietnam	1
Other Countries	118

Official language of preference	Number of Members
English	3829
French	56

Racial identity (optional)	Number of Members
Not collected	3885

E. Data Notes

Gaps in jurisdiction of initial training are due to registrants joining the new Inactive Class after extended suspension. Some information is in offsite storage and was not migrated to the online database. This group of 118 registrants were placed in the "Other Countries" category.

F. Applicant Profile

Profession Name	Total Number of Applicants
Optician	416

Gender	Number of Applicants
Male	111
Female	305
X (includes trans, non-binary, and two-spirit people)	0
Other / not collected	0

Jurisdiction of Initial Training	Number of Applicants
Ontario	226
Other provinces and territories	121
United States	0
Other International	69
Multiple Jurisdictions	0
Other/not collected	0

Country of Initial Training	Number of Applicants
Canada	347
India	36
Nigeria	15
Philippines	7
Colombia	2
United Kingdom	2
Belgium	1

Brazil	1
France	1
Ghana	1
Iran	1
Morocco	1
Tunisia	1

Official language of preference	Number of Applicants
English	390
French	26

Racial identity (optional)	Number of Applicants
Not collected	416

G. Data Notes

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H. Application Decisions

The table below summarizes the outcome of registration decisions finalized in 2025. Some applications may have been received in the previous year.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Successful	Unsuccessful	Withdrawn
Ontario	261	0	1
Other provinces and territories	126	0	3
United States	0	0	0
Other International	63	0	0

Multiple Jurisdictions	0	0	0
Other/not collected	0	0	0

Applications with decisions pending

The table below summarizes the inventory of applications in progress as of December 31, 2025. Again, some of these applications may have been received in the previous year.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Incomplete	Complete	Total
Ontario	23	2	25
Other provinces and territories	8	2	10
United States	0	0	0
Other International	9	3	12
Multiple Jurisdictions	0	0	0
Other/not collected	0	0	0
	23	2	25

I. New Registrants

For the 2025 reporting year, the breakdown of new registrants by class of registration is provided below:

Class of registration	Total new registrants	Number of internationally educated registrants
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Full / General/ Independent Practice	226	25
Intern Opticians	224	38

J. Data Notes

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K. Reviews and Appeals

Applicants for registration may appeal a registration decision. An **internal review or appeal** involves formal reconsideration of a registration decision further to an application and submissions by the applicant.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Number of internal reviews and appeals processed	Number of decisions changed following internal review or appeal
Ontario	0	0
Other provinces and territories	0	0
United States	0	0
Other International	0	0
Multiple Jurisdictions	0	0
Other/not collected	0	0

An **external review or appeal** involves review of a registration decision by an external appeal tribunal or court, such as the Health Professions Review and Appeal Board or Divisional Court.

Jurisdiction of initial training	Number of applicants who sought external review or appeal	Number of decisions changed following external review or appeal
Ontario	0	0
Other provinces and territories	0	0
United States	0	0
Other International	0	0
Multiple Jurisdictions	0	0
Other/not collected	0	0

Issues raised in reviews and appeals can point to challenges in the registration process. The table below summarizes top issues or reasons that applicants raised during these appeal proceedings.

Issue or reason raised	Number of appeals

Internationally trained applicants face additional challenges in the registration process. The table below summarizes top reasons for not registering internationally trained individuals.

Reason for not registering	Number of internationally trained applicants

L. Data Notes



Glossary of terms

Applicant: An individual who has applied for membership in a regulated profession or compulsory trade, with the associated rights to practice their profession / trade or use a professional title.

Domestic labour mobility: Applications subject to the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, which stipulates that a certificate issued by one province or territory should be recognized by all others unless there is an exception due to public health, safety and security reasons.

Internationally educated / trained: An individual whose initial professional education was not from a Canadian educational institution, or who is applying for trade certification based on experience gained outside Canada. This category includes individuals with education / training in the US and other countries. It also includes individuals who completed their initial professional education outside Canada and later addressed gaps with courses or a bridging program based in Canada.

Jurisdiction of initial training: For professions, the jurisdiction in which an applicant obtained their initial professional education used in full or partial fulfilment of registration requirements. For trades, the jurisdiction of initial trade experience listed on a Trades Equivalency Assessment (TEA) application.

Member: An individual who has satisfied the conditions for registration in their profession / trade and has been granted the right to practice and/or the right to use a professional designation or title. Members may hold a full license to engage in independent practice, or they may hold an alternate class of registration.

Racial identity: Voluntary self-report data of racial identity as a social description. Follows categories identified in the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate Data <<https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism>> .

Registration requirements: the entry-to-practice requirements that that an applicant must meet to be granted full membership in a regulated profession or trade, with the associated right to practice or right to use a professional title.

- **Academic requirement:** The formal education, or equivalent, that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade.
- **Experience requirement:** The experiential training or work experience that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade.
- **Language requirement:** The level of language proficiency that is required for licensing or certification in a particular regulated profession or trade, and the language proficiency tests accepted in fulfillment of this requirement.

Third party service provider: An external organization that assesses applicant qualifications on behalf of the regulator.