

Board Elections 2026

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can I contact for more information about COO elections?

For more information regarding the elections, eligibility to run/vote, nominations, and terms of office, please contact the College at (416) 368-3616 ext 201 or by email at elections@collegeofopticians.ca

What is the Board of Directors of the College of Opticians?

The Board is the governing body of the College and is composed of at least 7 elected members and 5 public members. Elected Board members are Registered Opticians elected by their peers in accordance with the by-laws. Public members are non-opticians appointed to the Board by the Ontario Government.

Registrants elected to the Board of Directors do not represent the interests of the opticians who voted for them, but rather make decisions that further the College's mandate to regulate and improve the practice of opticianry in the public interest.

What is the length of the term if I am elected?

Anyone elected to the College of Opticians of Ontario Board of Directors in 2026 will serve a three-year term beginning on January 1, 2027, and ending on December 31, 2029.

How do I know if I'm eligible to run for a position on the Board?

To be eligible to run for a position on the Board, you must be a Registered Optician in good standing with the College (e.g. your license is active) and meet a number of other eligibility requirements. Detailed information regarding eligibility for election is available in the College's [By-laws](#) and in the nomination package.

Do I need to live in a specific region of the Province to run for election?

No. As of 2026, elections are no longer based on geographic districts. Instead, eligible ROs can be nominated by, run and vote from anywhere in Ontario.

Why is it important to be involved in self-regulation?

Self-regulation means that opticians in Ontario are involved in determining and overseeing the rules that govern the profession. The Board governs the College and is responsible for establishing the policies, programs, and standards that regulate the profession of opticianry. Registrant participation is at the heart of being a self-governed profession and essential in ensuring that professional standards and all related

activities respond to practicing as an optician today. The optician members of the Board and Committees bring expertise and an understanding of today's practice realities to their decision-making. They reflect each optician's commitment to the public's right to safe, ethical and competent care.

What kind of work is involved?

As an elected member of the Board of Directors, you will contribute to the self-regulation of opticianry in Ontario in a host of meaningful ways. Elected Board members participate in decision-making about:

- Standards of Practice and professional conduct
- Competencies for entry-to-practice and ongoing practice
- The development of new programs and policies to guide the profession as well as relevant regulations and by-laws required under legislation.

Members of the Board fulfill a critical role by participating in statutory committees including:

- Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee
- Discipline Committee
- Registration Committee
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Executive Committee
- Fitness to Practice Committee
- Patient Relations Committee

In addition, there are other specific expectations that potential candidates should be prepared to fulfill, which include:

- arranging schedules to meet time commitments
- reviewing preparatory materials in advance of meetings
- participating in discussions and decision-making
- maintaining confidentiality
- implementing and supporting Board and Committee decisions and directives
- demonstrating accountability to the public through decision-making in the public interest

What do I need to know to serve on the Board of Directors or a Committee?

Opticians do not require prior experience to serve as Board members but should make themselves familiar with all the relevant [legislation](#), [policies](#) and [Standards of Practice](#). The [Pre-Election Training Module](#) will assist opticians interested in running for election to familiarize themselves with the College's mandate and governing legislation. Board members will receive a comprehensive orientation, including all aspects of governance and related expectations, and a resource manual containing all relevant governance documents. Board directors also receive training based on the objectives of the board.

What attributes and competencies will help me serve on the Board or a Committee?

Anyone seeking election to the board will be required to demonstrate the following core competencies:

- **Passion – Public Service Oriented:** Demonstrates outstanding initiative and commitment towards the practice of opticianry. Committed to service the College’s mandate to regulate the profession of opticianry in the public interest.
- **Exemplified Integrity:** Demonstrates a conviction to do what’s right and to reject what’s wrong, regardless of the consequences.
- **Unbiased and Open Minded:** Demonstrates the ability to self-identify and set aside conscious biases. Proactively reflects on the impact of unconscious biases in all situations. Actively listens and absorbs all information to make an informed and open-minded decision.
- **Critical Judgment and Decision Making:** Makes good decisions based upon a combination of analysis, wisdom, experience, and sound judgment. Comfortably deals with concepts and complexity and looks beyond the obvious to avoid ‘group think’ and/or the status quo.
- **Collaboration and Inclusion:** Demonstrates an open mindset, listens without judgment, and embraces diversity of others and of thought. Seeks to understand and build on the strengths of others.

In order to be eligible for election, each candidate will also need to complete the [Pre-Election Training Module](#). Completion of this module ensures that candidates possess a base-level of knowledge necessary to carry out their fiduciary duties as a director if elected. The module is accredited for 1 PG hour.

Is there an interview process?

Yes. A panel interview will be conducted to assess whether you demonstrate the five core competencies required by the Board. Once you have submitted your nomination form and your eligibility has been confirmed you will be contacted to arrange an interview.

Is this a volunteer position?

No. Being an elected Board member requires dedication and commitment; it is not a volunteer position. Board members are compensated for their time and reasonable expenses.

What are the benefits of participation?

By participating in the election, either as a candidate or through voting, every optician can help shape the future of opticianry practice and self-regulation. Serving as an elected Board member broadens your professional scope by offering you:

- an opportunity to shape policy and decisions made by the College in the public interest
- an opportunity to be directly involved in self-regulation
- a greater understanding of governance
- an insight into the trends that influence professional practice

What is the time commitment?

While members find serving on the Board personally and professionally rewarding, it requires a significant time commitment. Board members must attend four to six full-day meetings per year. Dates are set well in advance to facilitate planning for members. Preparation time associated with Board meetings averages two to four hours for each meeting. This involves reviewing material before meetings to contribute constructively to Board discussions and decision-making.

In addition to attending Board meetings, Board members also serve on one or more statutory or non-statutory Committees. The time commitment varies significantly depending on which Committees you serve on. Some Committees may meet quarterly for one day while others meet more frequently. Information about the terms of reference and mandate for each statutory Committee is available [here](#).

Finally, Board members are typically expected to attend 2-6 training sessions per year. Registrants who are interested in running for election must consider whether they can commit the time to serve and may also wish to discuss the commitment with their employer.

How long can I serve as a Board member?

Board terms are governed by the Regulated Health Professions Act and the College's by-laws. Currently, members of the Board serve a three-year term of office and are limited to three consecutive terms.

Do I have to resign from a professional association before I can be nominated?

No, you do not need to resign your membership with any professional associations related to opticianry in order to sit on the board.

If, however, you hold a position of authority with a professional association relating to opticianry, such as **director, owner, board member, or officer** or you are an **employee** of the professional association, you will have to resign this position **at least three years** before seeking election to the board. This "cooling off period" exists to mitigate the risk that there will be a conflict of interest between your prior position and your duties as a board member.

How do I know if a registrant can nominate me, or if I can nominate a candidate?

A registrant of the College can nominate a candidate if they:

- support the candidate's nomination
- hold a current (i.e. not suspended) certificate of registration as a Registered Optician or Inactive Optician (the registrant also cannot be in default of any fee or other amount owed to the College, or of returning any required form or information to the College)

To ensure that a registrant is eligible to nominate a candidate, please check the [public register](#) or contact the College at (416) 368-3616 x 201.

How will I know if my nomination is approved?

Once the College receives your completed nomination form and supporting documentation, the College will correspond with you to confirm your eligibility to run for election. **Prospective candidates may not campaign for election until they have received written notification from the College that their nomination has been approved.**