

## BRIEFING NOTE

**TO:** Council

**FROM:** Registration Committee

**DATE:** December 2 and 3, 2019

**SUBJECT:** 18.1 Student/intern Supervision Policy

☒ For Decision

☐ For Information

☐ Monitoring Report

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### **Purpose:**

To provide Council with considerations for amendment of criteria for student and intern supervision.

### **Background:**

The Student/Intern Supervision policy sets out the guiding principles by which the College of Opticians of Ontario (the “College”) carries out its mandate on setting the minimum professional standards that an optician must meet in order to be eligible to supervise students and interns.

The current Student/Intern Supervision Policy requires that opticians who act as supervisors be registered with the College, in good standing, without terms, conditions or limitations on their certificate of registration and be actively and currently practising for a minimum of three (3) consecutive years.

### **For Consideration:**

At its meeting on November 4, 2019, the Registration Committee considered the necessity of revision of criterion one, which states that a supervising optician must have been actively and currently practising for a minimum of three consecutive years. The Committee considered whether the requirement that an optician has practised for a minimum of *three consecutive* years constitutes a barrier to some individuals.

The Committee noted that the requirement that an optician practices “for a minimum of three consecutive years” may adversely affect individuals who take a leave of absence from the profession for any reason, including reasons that would be covered by the protected grounds under the *Human Rights Code* (for example, a leave related to disability or family status). The Committee further noted that the requirement of practising for a minimum of three years ultimately disqualifies individuals who acquired the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment in a shorter period.

Therefore, the Committee approved an amendment to the Student/Intern Supervision policy to change criterion one to allow individuals who have experienced a break in their practice or acquired

the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment in a period less than three years to be eligible for supervision of students and interns. The Committee also approved an addition to the Student/Intern Supervision Policy to include a criterion for opticians wishing to supervise the contact lens fittings of student and intern opticians.

The amended Student/Intern Supervision Policy, with tracked changes, is included for Council's consideration and approval.

**Recommendations/Action Required:**

The Registration Committee recommends that Council approve the amended Student/Intern Supervision Policy, with an immediate effective date.

The College of Opticians of Ontario (the “College”) is committed to supporting registered opticians who provide on-site education to opticianry students and interns. The College strongly encourages registered opticians to participate in the preparation of students and interns studying opticianry. The education and training of opticians requires learning in both the classroom and in the practice setting. While the classroom training is provided within approved opticianry education programs, students and interns receive clinical training from registered opticians.

### **Guiding Principles**

These guiding principles apply, with necessary modifications, whether the individual being supervised is a member of the College or not.

Student and intern opticians are permitted to perform all aspects of the controlled act of dispensing eyewear under the supervision of a registered optician. The tasks in dispensing eyewear are not delegated to students or interns. Registered opticians who supervise students and interns are responsible for all patient services provided by the student or intern and are expected to adhere to the supervision requirements set out in this policy. The supervising optician accepts and maintains primary responsibility for the student or intern whom he or she supervises. Under no circumstances should an optician permit a student or intern to dispense in the absence of the optician. The supervising optician accepts responsibility for judging the knowledge, skills and abilities of the students and interns under his or her supervision prior to assigning patient care responsibilities.

### **Optician Responsibilities**

Opticians who supervise students or interns function as clinical educators. The supervising optician and the student or intern should meet to jointly formulate clear, objective and measurable goals to be used in the evaluation process, prior to the student or intern providing clinical services. The goals should be measured using a schedule to be determined jointly by the supervisor and the student or intern. The supervising optician shall also:

- 1) Be registered with the College, in good standing, without terms, conditions or limitations on his or her certificate of registration and be actively and currently practising for a minimum of three (3) years within the last five years, or have fitted a minimum of 750 eyeglasses within the last five years . Members, who wish to supervise the contact lens fittings of student or intern opticians, must also meet the requirements of the College’s Contact Lens Mentor policy.
- 2) Provide the College with the names of all students and interns they are supervising;
- 3) Be comfortable assessing his or her own skills and abilities as well as evaluating the skills and abilities of others and should agree to act as a clinical educator only in areas of clinical practice where he or she is competent;

- 4) Be familiar with students' and interns' learning objectives and with their curricula, including course content, program philosophy and expectations;
- 5) Orient the student or intern to the facility (including equipment, protocols and documentation requirements) and to the specific conditions, needs and/or goals of individual patients;
- 6) Ensure an individual who they are supervising is registered and in good standing with the College as a student optician or intern optician or, if the student is not registered with the
- 7) College, ensure that he or she is enrolled in an approved educational institution and fulfilling the requirements to become a member of the College and the act being performed is within the scope of practice of the profession and is done under the supervision or direction of the supervising optician.
- 8) Ensure that duties assigned are appropriate to the student or intern's level of education, ability, experience, comfort level and learning style, as well as the complexity of the environment/practice setting;
- 9) Provide feedback to the student or intern regarding performance on a consistent, timely basis, based on the criteria established by the respective opticianry educational program;
- 10) Have the right to refuse to supervise or to discontinue supervising a student or intern when the supervising optician, in the best interests of the public, deems such action to be necessary and appropriate.

**Determining the Amount of Supervision Required**

- 1) The supervising optician must always directly supervise a student or intern's patient contact. Direct supervision means that a member must be on-site, able to intervene, and available to provide in-view observation, formal feedback and guidance while a student or intern performs a controlled act.
- 2) The amount of supervision a student or intern will need will depend on the type of task assigned and the overall competence of the student or intern.

**Identification**

To avoid confusion or misrepresentation, registered opticians, and registered students and interns must wear their College issued photo identification badge in compliance with the Registration Regulation. Students who are not registered must wear a photo identification badge issued by the educational institution while working in a practice setting. The badge issued by the educational institution must include the name and a photograph of the student, the name of the educational institution and the current valid year.

**Complaints**

Student and intern opticians who are registered with the College are members of the College. Accordingly, complaints regarding the actions or conduct of student and intern opticians will be handled in compliance with the complaints provisions of the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and the policies of the College. Dependant upon the circumstances, complaints regarding the actions or conduct of students (registered with the College or not) or interns could also result in an investigation of the supervising optician.

**For More Information**

Students, interns and opticians with questions about supervision should contact the College.