

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Committee Members:

Robert Vezina, RO, Chair
Bryan Todd, RO, Vice-Chair
John Battaglia, RO
Trudy Mauth, Public Member
Jeffrey Fernandes, RO
Eve Hoch, Public Member
Joseph Richards, Public Member

Registration Appeal Panel:

Alain Chow, RO
Balbir Dhillon, RO
David Milne, Public Member

Number of Meetings

In 2017, the Registration Committee had two in-person meetings and three teleconferences. In addition, nine PLAR interviews were conducted over five interview days. The Registration Appeal Panel (RAP) did not meet in 2017.

2017 Statistical Report

A statistical report of the number of applications received and reviewed by the Registration Committee is attached.

Registration Regulation

The College's Registration Regulation sets out all the requirements for obtaining and maintaining a certificate of registration for all classes of licensure with the College of Opticians of Ontario. The Registration Committee worked diligently over the past several years on significant updates to the Registration Regulation. On January 30, 2017, Council approved the Registration Committee's final draft regulation. The College submitted its proposed amendments to the Registration Regulation (O. Reg. 869/93) to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on June 12, 2017. The College continues to await the Ministry's response.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Process Review

All applicants from non-accredited programs (Canadian or internationally educated applicants) must undergo the prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) process as a route to registration. The PLAR process includes completion of a Competency Gap Analysis (CGA), which is an online tool designed to assess the applicant's achieved learning outcomes against the National entry to-practice competencies, and an in-person, Behaviour-Based Interview (BBI) which assesses an applicant's practical knowledge.

With the assistance of NACOR and a psychometric consultant, the College completed work on a scorecard designed to assist Committees in understanding the relative weight of interview scores and

CGA scores and how these assessment components should be taken together and interpreted for the purpose of the Registration Committee assigning educational bridging programs.

In 2017, the College completed work on the last phase of the project which involved developing, pilot testing and validating a second test CGA form to increase the bank of questions. Pilot testing of the questions took place in January 2017 and validation by the National Exams Committee (NEC) occurred in February 2017. The project was completed in March 2017 with the two test forms being uploaded to a secure section of the NACOR website to facility use by each provincial regulator. Applicants are now randomly provided one of the two test forms.

Contact Lens Fitting Policy

It is a regulatory requirement that applicants complete a number of contact lens fits prior to registration as a registered optician. Following a consultation with accredited educator stakeholders, the Registration Committee approved a policy at its December 13, 2016 meeting to clarify how contact lens fittings are completed by students as they work towards the requirements of becoming registered as Registered Opticians (RO) with the College of Opticians. At its meeting on January 30, 2017, Council approved the Contact Lens Fitting Policy, to come into effect on September 1, 2017. The Registration Committee worked to notify all educational institutions and students of the new policy prior to the implementation date by sending an explanatory article to educational institutions and providing an opportunity for educational institutions and students to contact the College for clarification. A copy of the Contact Lens Fitting Policy is attached as Appendix A for Council's reference.

Contact Lens Mentor Policy

The Contact Lens Mentor policy sets out the criteria for acceptable supervisors for student and intern contact lens fits. The policy requires that Registered Opticians (ROs) who wish to supervise contact lens fits register with the College as mentors and verify that they have completed a specific number of hard or soft contact lens fits within a three year period. The Registration Committee considered that any RO holding the Certified Contact Lens Fitter (CCLF) designation could supervise contact lens fits (soft and rigid) and sign the student logbook, but were not required to declare their currency in contact lens fitting. The Registration Committee proposed amendments to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy to require that any RO who wishes to supervise contact lens fits must declare their currency and register with the College as a Contact Lens Mentor. At its meeting on January 30, 2017, Council approved the proposed amendments to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy, to come into effect on September 1, 2017.

At its meeting on September 11, 2017, the Registration Committee considered the criteria for a Contact Lens Mentor outlined in the revised Contact Lens Mentor Policy. The Committee approved an amendment to the Contact Lens Mentor policy to remove criterion three in order to allow individuals who have experienced a break in their practice to be eligible for Contact Lens Mentor status. The Committee also approved an addition to the Contact Lens Mentor policy to include a statement regarding accommodation requests. At its meeting on October 2, 2017, Council approved the revised Contact Lens Mentor Policy, to come into effect immediately. A copy of the revised Contact Lens Mentor Policy is attached as Appendix B for Council's reference.

By-Law Recommendation: Life Members

In 2017, the Registration Committee considered the Life-Member by-law criteria. The Committee considered whether life members should be able to:

1. Resign from the College and become life members and/or remain life members; and
2. Cease to pay their annual membership fees without facing suspension.

Upon consideration of the above, the Committee approved to submit to Council several by-law recommendations and a draft policy setting out Council criteria for life membership. At its meeting on October 2, 2017, Council approved the Registration Committee's proposed changes to the by-laws and the proposed Life Members Policy to circulate for feedback. A copy of the proposed changes to the by-laws and the proposed Life Members Policy is attached as Appendix C for Council's reference.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Vezina RO, Chair
Laura Briard, Manager of Professional Programs

2017 Statistical Report

PLAR Applications	
Initial Inquiries Received in 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internationally educated applicants Applicants from non-accredited Canadian programs No formal education 	49 41 8 0
Applications Received in 2017 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internationally educated applicants Applicants from non-accredited Canadian programs Applicants that completed international training & non-accredited Canadian education No formal education 	9 2 7 0 0
Applications Refused	0
Applications Completed in 2017 (Decision and Reasons Issued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants required to complete bridging Applicants permitted to write the National Examinations 	5 2 3

Active Applications in Process	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete applications – awaiting documentation from applicant 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Registration Committee Review pending 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants currently scheduled for the CGA/eligible to write CGA 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CGA completed, Interviews pending 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Registration Committee review pending 	0

Other Applications for Registration	
Applications for Reinstatement (3⁺ yrs.) Received in 2017	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete applications – awaiting documentation from applicant 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration Committee review pending 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications Approved to Reinstate, with/without continuing education 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competency Assessments Required 	2
Internal Registration Appeals	0
HPARB Appeals	0
Upgrading Programs Considered by Committee in 2017	4
Previously Approved Upgrading Program Completed in 2017	0
Requests for Extension of Registration Committee Decision Considered by Committee in 2017	3

Applicant Contact Lens Fitting Requirement

It is an exemptible requirement under Section 5 (2)3. of Ontario Regulation 869/93, that any applicant applying for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician must have,

“...completed, and must present evidence of, **at least twenty contact lens fittings, including at least five rigid gas permeable (RGP) contact lens fittings**, under the supervision or direction of an optician who is certified in the fitting of contact lenses or an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.”

The contact lens fitting requirement ensures that Registered Opticians possess the required entry-to-practice knowledge, skills, and judgement in contact lens fitting in order to provide safe and effective patient care.

RGP Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a RGP lens is defined as a contact lens where any portion of the lens is made of rigid or semi-rigid materials. This would include, but is not limited to, hybrid and scleral lenses.

Criteria for Acceptable Contact Lens Fitting

Normally, contact lens fittings are acquired during the course of completing accredited opticianry education and are monitored by the accredited opticianry program. For the purposes of registration with the College of Opticians of Ontario, an acceptable contact lens fitting must meet the following criteria:

1. One complete fit must include each of the following fitting steps:

- a. Obtaining and documenting the patient's health history
- b. Performing the initial fit
- c. Conducting a follow-up visit

It is not a requirement that steps a, b, and c be performed on the same patient, provided that all three steps are performed.

2. **Patients:** The fitting may be performed on “patients” that are either,
 - a. **Actual/retail patients in a dispensary setting:** refers to real patients who are actually seeking opticianry care, and who are appropriate candidates for contact lenses.
 - b. **Peer to Peer role-play/standardized patients in a classroom or dispensary setting:** refers to a person, not actually seeking opticianry care, who portrays the personal/medical history, physical symptoms, emotional characteristics and everyday concerns of an actual patient.
3. **Supervision for Soft Contact Lenses:** A soft contact lens fit for any patient type must be supervised by an optician who is recognized with the College of Opticians of Ontario as either a soft contact lens mentor, or a certified contact lens fitter (CCLF) who is also a soft contact lens mentor. The supervision may also be done by an optometrist or ophthalmologist registered with a regulatory College. The supervisor is required to sign the student log-book verifying that the fit took place. The supervisor must comply with the Student and Intern Supervision Policy.
4. **Supervision for RGP Contact Lenses:** A rigid contact lens fit for any patient type must be supervised by an optician who is recognized with the College of Opticians of Ontario as either a rigid contact lens mentor, or a certified contact lens fitter (CCLF) who is also a rigid mentor. The supervision may also be done by an optometrist or ophthalmologist registered with a regulatory College. The supervisor is required to sign the student log-book verifying that the fit took place. The supervisor must comply with the Student and Intern Supervision Policy.
5. **Follow-up Visits:** A complete fit, for any patient type, must include a follow-up visit. The follow-up visit must include the collection of subjective and objective information about the patient’s contact lens wear, in accordance with the College’s standards of practice.

Contact Lens Fittings Requirements

It is a requirement under Section 5 (2) 3. of Ontario Regulation 869/93, that an applicant for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician must have,

“... completed, and must present evidence of, at least twenty contact lens fittings, including at least five rigid gas permeable (RGP) contact lens fittings, under the supervision or direction of an optician who is certified in the fitting of contact lenses or an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.”

Supervision of Contact Lens Fittings and Signing of Logbooks

All registered opticians, who wish to supervise the contact lens fittings of student or intern opticians and sign the student or intern logbook, must be recognized by the College as a Contact Lens Mentor for either “soft” or “soft and rigid” fits.

Eligibility Criteria for Contact Lens Mentor Status

A Registered Optician who wishes to be recognized as a Contact Lens Mentor by the College must submit the appropriate application to the College, which confirms that s/he meets the following criteria, as set out by the Registration Committee:

1. Is a member in good standing with the College;
2. Has been registered with the College for a minimum of three years;
3. Currently works in a practice which includes the dispensing of contact lenses as part of the services offered to the public; and
4. In order to supervise soft contact lens fits: has fitted a minimum of 50 soft contact lenses (including 40 spherical and 10 non-spherical [toric or multifocal]) in the previous three years, OR
5. In order to supervise soft and rigid contact lens fits: has fitted a minimum of 50 soft contact lenses as described above and a minimum of 15 rigid contact lenses (including spherical and complex designs) in the previous three years.

A member who is approved by the College as a Contact Lens Mentor must agree to the following:

1. That his/her name be added to an official registry of Contact Lens Mentors for the purpose of supervising student or intern opticians who wish to obtain contact lens fittings;
2. Permit the College to inspect contact lens files for verification of required fittings; and
3. Not charge a fee to sign logbooks or supervise student or intern opticians.

Registered opticians may only begin supervising contact lens fits and signing student or intern logbooks after receiving confirmation from the College that his/her Contact Lens Mentor status has been approved. A letter will be provided by the College certifying the Contact Lens Mentor status.

Registered Opticians who are considered “soft Contact Lens Mentors” may *only* supervise and verify soft contact lens fits. Registered Opticians who are considered “soft and rigid Contact Lens Mentors” may supervise and verify *both* soft and rigid fits.

The Contact Lens Mentor status is valid for a period of three years from the date of approval. Registered Opticians are required to re-apply after three years in order to continue signing student logbooks.

The College is committed to adhering to the principles set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Registered Opticians who wish to be recognized as a Contact Lens Mentor may contact the College directly to request accommodation with respect to the criteria set out in this Policy.

APPENDIX C

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAW ARTICLE 3: LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Current By-laws	Proposed Changes	Explanation
3.1 Life Membership	<i>No change</i>	
(a) The College may designate Life Members.		
(b) Any person who was a registered optician, having permanently retired from the practice of opticianry, and having the number of years that he or she has been registered with the College and years of age that together total at least 85, may apply to the Registrar, or be nominated for designation as a Life Member, and shall be considered for such designation at the next meeting of Council based on these criteria and additional criteria established by Council from time to time.	(b) Any person who <u>is or</u> was a registered optician, having permanently retired from the practice of opticianry, and having the number of years that he or she has been registered with the College <u>as a registered optician for at least 25 years</u> and years of age that together total at least 85 , may apply to the Registrar, or be nominated for designation as a Life Member, and shall be considered for such designation at the next meeting of Council based on these criteria and additional criteria established by Council from time to time.	<p>The Registration Committee felt that both current and former members should be eligible to apply for life membership.</p> <p>The Registration Committee felt that it is unfair and discriminatory for the College to consider a member's age in determining eligibility. For example, a member might retire after 25 years of practice at age 50 because of a disability.</p>
(c) An applicant for the designation of "Life Member", in order to be so designated, must be approved for such designation by a two-thirds majority vote of those present at a meeting of Council.	<i>No change</i>	
(d) Despite subsection (b), if a Life Member intends to return to the practice of opticianry, the Life Member may apply to the Registration Committee and must satisfy the Registration Committee that the Life Member has sufficient knowledge, skills, and judgment to practise safely and in the public interest and should be permitted to retain the "Life Member" designation.	(d) Despite subsection (b), if <u>If</u> a Life Member intends to return to the practice of opticianry, the Life Member may apply to the Registration and must satisfy the Registration Committee that the Life Member has sufficient knowledge, skills, and judgment to practise safely and in the public interest, <u>in accordance with the Registration Regulation and applicable reinstatement policies. A Life Member who returns to practice shall not and</u>	<p>The Registration Committee felt that it is confusing and not in the public interest for life members who return to practice to continue to hold life member status.</p> <p>All other Ontario health colleges that have life members reserve life membership for individuals who are not practising the profession. The Registration Committee felt that this is appropriate and that life members</p>

	should be permitted to retain the “Life Member” designation.	<p>should be required to be retired and not practising.</p> <p>Note that the College’s by-laws were amended in 2015 to allow life members to return to practise, but no life member has done so to date.</p>
(e) A person who has been granted the designation of “Life Member” and who is not practising the profession shall be exempted from the payment of the annual fee, and shall be entitled to vote in elections of Council Members and receive all publications of the College at no charge but shall not be a member of Council.	(e) A person who has been granted the designation of “Life Member” and who is not practising the profession shall be exempted from the payment of the annual registration fee set out in Article 5.2 , and shall be entitled to vote in elections of Council Members and receive all publications of the College at no charge but shall not be entitled to vote in elections of Council members or to be a member of Council.	<p>The by-laws currently state that life members can vote.</p> <p>However, in practice, no life members can vote because life members are always suspended for non-payment of fees, unless they resign from the College. Suspended members are not allowed vote in College elections. Former members (i.e., members who have resigned) also cannot vote.</p> <p>The Registration Committee noted that no other Ontario health college permits life members to vote.</p>
(f) A person who has been granted the designation of “Life Member” and who has returned to the practice of the profession must pay the annual fee required by these by-laws.	(f) A person who has been granted the designation of “Life Member” and who has returned to the practice of the profession must pay the annual fee required by these by-laws.	The Registration Committee recommends that Life Members only be permitted to return to the practice of the profession if they give up their life membership status.
(g) Council may revoke a person’s “Life Member” designation if the person is deceased or no longer meets Council’s criteria for life membership.	No change	

DRAFT Life Member Policy

The College of Opticians of Ontario (COO) allows those who have held a Registered Optician certificate with COO for at least 25 years, and who have permanently retired from opticianry, to apply or be nominated for life membership. Article 3.1 of the College's by-laws sets out the core requirements for becoming a life member.

Council has approved the following additional criteria for life membership with COO:

The applicant must:

- Hold or have previously held a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician¹
- Be permanently retired from the practice of opticianry and agree not to practise opticianry

The applicant must not:

- Be in default of payment of fees or of any other obligation owed to COO, other than for payment of the annual membership renewal fee
- Be the subject of proceedings for professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity in relation to any profession, in any jurisdiction
- Be in breach of an order of a COO Committee or a panel of a COO Committee
- Be in violation of a decision of a panel of the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee requiring the member to be cautioned or to complete a specified continuing education or remediation program
- Be the subject of an ongoing inquiry or investigation by the Registrar, a COO Committee, or a panel of a COO Committee
- Have otherwise acted in a manner that is inconsistent with an ongoing association with COO

¹ Life members who choose to continue to hold a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician will be suspended for non-payment of fees.