Fair Registration Practices Report

Optometrists (2016)

The answers seen below were submitted to the OFC by the regulated professions.

This Fair Registration Practices Report was produced as required by:

- the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act (FARPACTA) s. 20 and 23(1), for regulated professions named in Schedule 1 of FARPACTA
- the Health Professions Procedural Code set out in Schedule 2 of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) s. 22.7 (1) and 22.9(1), for health colleges.

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1. Qualitative Information

a) Requirements for registration, including acceptable alternatives

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

Following approval by the College Council at its April 20, 2016 meeting, the criminal record check requirement was changed to a CPIC vulnerable sector check. It was also changed to require CPIC vulnerable sector checks for all jurisdictions where an applicant practised optometry.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

For most jurisdictions, there has been little or no reported impact of the change on applicants. Where applicants live in the City of Toronto, the Toronto Police Service requires applicants to obtain a waiver form signed by an authorized staff person from the College after their identity is verified. According to the Toronto Police Service, a CPIC clearance letter takes 5-10 business days to process and costs $20, while a vulnerable sector search takes 2 weeks for individuals who are not on file with any federal, provincial or local database and costs $65 if it is requested for employment (or registration) purposes.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

In some jurisdictions, the police service requires the College to confirm the CPIC vulnerable sector check requirement by letter to the police service. As required by the Toronto Police Service, the College had to complete and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Toronto Police Service in order to have CPIC vulnerable sector checks processed for applicants who live in the City of Toronto. In addition, some staff had to undergo a CPIC check in order to become authorized to sign the waiver forms for applicants after verifying the applicants' identity. Despite additional paperwork required by police services in some jurisdictions, the College is able to better protect the public.

b) Assessment of qualifications

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

On July 1, 2016, the fee charged by the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Bodies of Canada (FORAC) to assess

the credentials of internationally educated applicants, increased from $850 plus 13% HST or $960.50 to $1,000 plus 13% HST or $1,130.

In the spring 2017, CEO-ECO will administer a new entry-to-practice exam for the first time. Like the CACO, the new exam comprises a written and clinical portion. Most notably, the clinical portion is now an Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE). CEO-ECO has also changed the name of the entry-to-practice exam approved by the College from the CACO exam to 'CEO written exam and OSCE'. CEO-ECO will no longer offer the CACO exam. In addition, as posted on the CEO-ECO website and effective Dec. 31, 2016, the cost of the CEO written exam and OSCE is $5,900, compared to $4,055 for the cost of all components of the CACO exam (written and practical).

The International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) administration made a decision to offer a Bridging Two program in 2017 admitting 12 candidates at a cost of $34,000 per candidate, based on the number of candidates eligible to apply to Bridging Two in the candidate ranking pool. This is a departure from previous years as Bridging Two used to be only offered every other year, and was not scheduled to run in 2017. Due to the significantly smaller intake of candidates for Bridging One (only nine participants) in 2017, the cost of Bridging One was set at $17,000 per candidate which is significantly higher than in previous years. For example, the cost of Bridging One in 2016, 2015, and 2014, was $8,000 per candidate.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

An internationally educated applicant has to pay $169.50 more to have his/her credentials assessed by FORAC.

An internationally educated candidate now has to pay $1,845 more to challenge a full administration of the entry-to-practice exam approved by the College and administered by CEO-ECO.

An internationally educated candidate eligible to apply for Bridging Two, may have been offered a spot in Bridging Two in 2017 at a cost of $34,000. An internationally educated candidate eligible to apply for Bridging One, may have been offered a spot in Bridging One in 2017, but required to pay $17,000 which is significantly higher than in previous years. For example, the cost of Bridging One in 2016, 2015, and 2014, was $8,000 per candidate.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

c) Provision of timely decisions, responses, and reasons

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

d) Fees

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

Please refer to section 1. b) Assessment of qualifications.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Please refer to section 1. b) Assessment of qualifications.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

Please refer to section 1. b) Assessment of qualifications.

e) Timelines

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

As mentioned in 1. b), Bridging Two is scheduled to run in 2017, which is a departure from previous years as it used to be offered every other year.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Candidates accepted in Bridging Two, have the opportunity to complete their bridging education a lot sooner than candidates accepted in Bridging Two in previous years.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

f) Policies, procedures and/or processes, including by-laws

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

Starting January 1, 2017, new applicants for registration must be certified to prescribe therapeutic drugs (or TPA-certified) prior to making their application to the College, and that applicants presently in the system would be accepted under the current requirements. There have been recommendations posted on the College website for internationally educated applicants to become TPA-certified prior to challenging the evaluating exam in preparation for this deadline. At the January 16, 2015, College Council meeting, the deadline for College members to become certified to prescribe therapeutic drugs or TPAs, was extended from January 1, 2016, to January 1, 2017. The January 1, 2016 TPA-certification deadline for members was set at the January 17, 2014 Council meeting.

At its September 21, 2016 meeting, Council approved the circulation to members and stakeholders of a draft amendment to the Registration Regulation, which specifies good character requirements for all applicants. In addition, amendments to the College by-laws were approved for circulation, to charge non-practising members of the College half the fee charged to practising members. Member and stakeholder feedback was to be provided to the College Council at its January 16, 2017 meeting.

The process of referring candidates to Touchstone Institute to challenge the evaluating exam, was transitioned from the College to FORAC in early November 2016.

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

Some internationally educated candidates achieved their TPA-certification prior to challenging the evaluating exam. In the case of two of these candidates, they were approved to challenge the entry-to-practice exam directly without undergoing bridging education.

Transitioning the evaluating exam referral process from the College to FORAC is not expected to have an affect on

internationally educated applicants.

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

The TPA-certification deadline of January 1, 2017, has resulted in increased work by College staff, for example, to verify TPA-certification by internationally educated candidates. Ontario optometrists received the authority to prescribe drugs in April 2011 and only those who are deemed "TPA-certified" by the College, may prescribe drugs. As a matter of public protection, all new applicants for registrtion must be certified to prescribe drugs (or TPA-certified) prior to making their application to the College, bringing applicants in line with the standard of practice expected of members of the College. The College and FORAC, will be working with Touchstone Institute and the IOBP to ensure the TPA certification of internationally educated applicants.

In anticipation of the approval of the proposed draft amendment to the College by-laws, the College drafted a Non-Practising Fee Administration Policy for posting on the College website directly following the January 16, 2017 Coiuncil meeting.

Transitioning the evaluating exam referral process from the College to FORAC has resulted in a decrease in calls by internationally educated candidates to the Collegfe to inquire about the status of their referral to challenge the evaluating exam.

g) Resources for applicants

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

h) Review or appeal processes

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

l) Access to applicant records

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

> No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

> No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

> No changes this year

j) Training and resources for registration staff, Council, and committee members

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

> No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

> No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

> No changes this year

k) Mutual recognition agreements

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

> No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

> No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

> No changes this year

l) Other (include as many items as applicable)

i. Describe any improvements / changes implemented in the last year.

> No changes this year

ii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on applicants.

> No changes this year

iii. Describe the impact of the improvements / changes on your organization.

No changes this year

Describe any registration-related improvements/changes to your enabling legislation and/or regulations in the last year

At its September 21, 2016 meeting, Council approved for circulation proposed amendments to the Registration Regulation (O.Reg. 837/93) as amended under the *Optometry Act, 1991,* and College by-laws. If approved by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, these amendments would have:

- Added a "good character" provision to the Regulation, which would provide the College with more robust regulatory tools when assessing new registrants.
- Added a non-practising status to the Regulation, which would set out the process for non-practising members to return to active practice.
- Eliminated the Academic Certificate of Registration, which would remove potential bias from the Regulation and enhance public protection.

In addition and as mentioned in section 1. f), the following amendment to the College by-laws was approved for circulation:

- Reduction of the annual fees paid by non-practising members, bringing the College in line with other regulatory bodies.

These proposals were circulated for 60 days for stakeholder feedback.

2. Quantitative Information

a) Languages

Indicate the languages in which application information materials were available in the reporting year.

Language	Yes/No
English	Yes
French	No

Other (please specify)

Additional comments:

b) Gender of applicants

Indicate the number of applicants in each category as applicable.

Gender	Number of Applicants
Male	42
Female	85
None of the above	0

Additional comments:

c) Gender of members

Indicate the number of members in each category as applicable. Select the option that best corresponds to the terminology used by your organization.

Gender	Number of Members
Male	1066
Female	1258
None of the above	0

Additional comments:

d) Jurisdiction where applicants obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education[1] in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International		Unknown	Total
58	3	45	U.K. 14 China 2 India 1 Iran 3 Nigeria 1 Total 21		0	127

[1] Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

e) Jurisdiction where applicants who became registered members obtained their initial education

Indicate the number of applicants who became registered members in the reporting year by the jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education[1] in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International		Unknown	Total
55	3	39	U.K. 14 Philippines 1 India 2 Iran 3 Egypt 3 Iraq 1 China 1 Hong Kong 2 Colombia 1 S. Africa 1 Total 29		0	126

[1] Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

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f) Jurisdiction where members were initially trained

Indicate the total number of registered members by jurisdiction where they obtained their initial education[1] in the profession or trade.

Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International		Unknown	Total
			Afghanistan	1		
			Australia	3		
			Brazil	1		
			China	17		
			Colombia	10		
			Ecuador	1		
			Egypt	24		
			U.K.	86		
			Guatemala	2		
			Hong Kong	3		
			India	22		
			Ireland	3		
			Iran	27		
1461	60	560	Iraq	3	0	2324
			Nigeria	9		
			Nicaragua	1		
			New Zealand	1		
			Pakistan	3		
			Philippines	5		
			Russia	3		
			S Arabia	1		
			Syrian Arab Republic	2		
			Venezuela	9		
			S. Africa	4		
			OTHER	2		
			Total	243		

[1] Recognizing that applicants may receive their education in multiple jurisdictions, for the purpose of this question, include only the jurisdiction in which an entry-level degree, diploma or other certification required to practice the profession or trade was obtained.

Additional comments:

g) Applications processed

Indicate the number of applications your organization processed in the reporting year:

Jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

from January 1st to December 31st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
New applications received	58	3	45	21	0	127
Applicants actively pursuing licensing (applicants who had some contact with your organization in the reporting year)	74	3	57	51	0	185
Inactive applicants (applicants who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year)	1	0	2	5	0	8
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who became FULLY registered members	55	3	39	29	0	126
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence[3] but were not issued a licence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence[3]	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1] An alternative class of licence enables its holder to practice with limitations, but additional requirements must be met in order for the member to be fully licensed.

Additional comments:

h) Classes of certificate/license

Inidcate and provide a description of the classes of certificate/license offered by your organization.

You must specify and describe at least one class of certificate/license (on line a) in order for this step to be complete.

#	Certification	Description
a)	General Certificate of Registration	Description (a)

		In general, the requirements for a General Certificate of Registration to become a member of the College of Optometrists of ontario include: 1. Apply and pay the application fee. 2. Meet the established academic criteria. 3. Successfully complete the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry and/or CEO-ECO written exam and OSCE. 4. Successfully complete the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence exam. 5. Pay all applicable registration and assessment fees. The above application process must be successfully completed for the issuance of a General Certificate of Registration.
		Description (b)
b)	Academic Certificate of Registration	In order to be eligible for an Academic Certificate of Registration, the applicant must hold a full time appointment as a faculty member of the University of Waterloo, or another university or optometric educational facility in Ontario approved by the College Council. An applicant for an Academic Certificate of Registration must meet specified academic criteria, but is not required to successfully complete the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry and/or CEO-ECO written exam and OSCE.

Additional comments:

i) Reviews and appeals processed

State the number of reviews and appeals your organization processed in the reporting year (use only whole numbers; do not enter commas or decimals).

Jurisdiction where applicants were initially trained in the profession (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

from January 1st to December 31st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
Applications that were subject to an internal review or that were referred to a statutory committee of your governing council, such as a Registration Committee	0	1	0	2	0	3
Applicants who initiated an appeal of a registration decision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appeals heard	0	0	0	0	0	0
Registration decisions changed following an appeal	0	0	0	0	0	0

from January 1st to December 31st of the reporting year	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total

Additional comments:

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j) Paid staff

In the table below, enter the number of paid staff employed by your organization in the categories shown, on December 31 of the reporting year.

When providing information for each of the categories in this section, you may want to use decimals if you count your staff using half units. For example, one full-time employee and one part-time employee might be equivalent to 1.5 employees.

You can enter decimals to the tenths position only. For example, you can enter 1.5 or 7.5 but not 1.55 or 7.52.

Category	Staff
Total staff employed by the regulatory body	9.6
Staff involved in appeals process	1.3
Staff involved in registration process	2.0

Additional comments:

3. Submission

I hereby certify that:

Name of individual with authority to sign on behalf of the organization:
Dr. Paula L. Garshowitz, OD

Title:
Registrar

Date:
2017/02/15