

Fair Registration Practices Report

Optometrists (2013)

The answers that you submitted to OFC can be seen below.

This Fair Registration Practices Report was produced as required by:

- the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act (FARPA) s. 20 and 23(1), for regulated professions named in Schedule 1 of FARPA
- 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.

Provision of Information About Registration Practices (1 / 13)

Describe how you make information about registration practices available to individuals applying or intending to apply for registration. Specify the tools used to provide information, and the manner in which you make that information available, current, accurate and user friendly in each of these subcategories:

a) steps to initiate the registration process

Applicants can obtain information about how to initiate the registration process by:

- clicking on 'Registration' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website. This page provides general information about the registration process, including timelines
- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website. This page provides more detailed information about the registration process and includes information for labour mobility applicants and links to application forms, the Canadian Examiners in Optometry (administrator of the national entry to practice exam), and additional information for international graduates about the pre-registration process
- clicking on 'Registration/International Graduates' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website. This page provides pre-registration information for international graduates educated outside North America with a detailed flow chart illustrating the process, including links to the International Optometric Bridging Program at the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science (WOVS)
- clicking on 'Registration/FAQs' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website. This page provides answers to frequently asked questions related to the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam, the CPIC Report (criminal record check), getting documents notarized, etc.
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms. The College recently converted its registration application form from a pdf to a pdf-writable form. This saves the applicant from having to print out the form and require access to a scanner or fax machine. The College is in the process of converting the pre-registration application form into a pdf-writable version.

b) requirements for registration

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

General and detailed information regarding the requirements for registration is available in the Registration section of the College website and in all application packages.

Every application package includes a copy of the registration requirements as they appear in the Registration Regulation with a recommendation regarding the sequence for completing the requirements and with notes in plain language to help explain the requirements and timelines for meeting them. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms.

A copy of the amended Registration Regulation (O.Reg. 837/93), is available on the College website by clicking on 'Governance' then 'Legislation & By-Laws'. The website also provides pre-registration information with a flow chart illustrating the process specific to international applicants and a link to the International Optometric Bridging Program.

Clicking on 'Registration/FAQs' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website provides answers to frequently asked questions related to the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam, the CPIC Report (criminal record check), getting documents notarized, etc.

c) explanation of how the requirements for registration are to be met, such as the number of years of schooling required for a degree to be deemed equivalent to an Ontario undergraduate degree, length and type of work experience, credit hours or program content

1. General and detailed information regarding how the requirements for registration are to be met is available in the Registration section of the College website and in all application packages.

All application packages include a copy of the registration requirements as they appear in the Registration Regulation with a recommendation regarding the sequence for completing the requirements and with notes in plain language to help explain the requirements and timelines for meeting them. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail or fax for information and/or application forms.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the application form was separated from the application packages and made pdf-writable. Under the 'International Graduates' page, completion of a full-time three-year undergraduate degree in lieu of three years of work experience is detailed for pre-registration international applicants. In addition, the credential assessment process is described in detail.

Clicking on 'Registration/FAQs' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College web site provides answers to frequently asked questions related to the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam, the CPIC Report (criminal record check), getting documents notarized, etc.

The College web site provides general and pre-registration information for international applicants (click on 'Registration/International Graduates') and direct links to World Education Services (WES), the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, and the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP). Any international applicant who contacts the College by phone, fax, email or in person, is provided contact information for these organizations.

d) any education or practical experience required for registration that must be completed in Ontario or practice that must be supervised by a member of the profession who is registered in Ontario

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) includes a practical externship that must be completed as part of that program. The externship may be in Ontario or another Canadian province/territory. The College website provides a link to the International Optometric Bridging Program and any international applicant who contacts the College by phone, fax, email or in person, is provided contact information for the IOBP.

e) requirements that may be satisfied through acceptable alternatives

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The requirements for having fluency in English or French, the absence of criminal convictions and the letter of good standing, are exemptible requirements. Information is included in the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Resource Binder that is mailed to applicants 4-6 weeks before they are scheduled to write the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence exam and also available on the College website under 'Resources/College Publications'. Information is also provided during the Jurisprudence Seminar conducted by the College twice annually. Applicants may attend the seminar one or more times prior to writing the exam.

A list of required documents that may be satisfied through acceptable alternatives, is available on the College website (click on 'Registration'). Requirements specific to international applicants that may be satisfied through acceptable alternatives, are found by clicking on 'Registration/International Graduates'. Additional information associated with prior learning assessments for international applicants, is available on the websites of the IOBP and Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO). The College website provides links to the IOBP (click on 'Registration/International Applicants') (<http://uwaterloo.ca/international-optometric-bridging-program/>) and CEO (click on 'Registration/How to Apply') (<http://www.ceo-eco.org/>). Any international applicant who contacts the College by phone, fax, email or in person, is also provided contact information for the IOBP and CEO.

f) the steps in the assessment process

Flow charts are available on the College website (click on 'Registration') that illustrate the steps in the assessment for each of the General Certificate of Registration and the Academic Certificate of Registration. In addition, a flow chart is available (click on 'Registration/International Graduates') that illustrates the steps in the pre-registration assessment process for international graduates.

Information regarding the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO) exam (the national entry-to-practice exam) and links to the Canadian Examiners in Optometry (the third party administrator of the exam), are available in the Registration section of the College website and in every application package. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' in the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' in the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the application form was separated from the application packages and made pdf-writable.

The College website provides general and pre-registration information for international applicants and direct links to World Education Services (WES), the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, and the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) (click on 'Registration/International Applicants'). Detailed information regarding the assessment of international education and experience, may be obtained from the College website and from the IOBP. Any international applicant who contacts the College by phone, fax, email or in person, is provided information about the third-party organizations involved in the assessment process.

g) the documentation of qualifications that must accompany each application; indicate which documents, if any, are required only from internationally trained applicants

A list of documents required of all applicants is available in all application packages. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees'; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail or fax for information and/or application forms.

Detailed information regarding the documentation of qualifications that are required in the pre-registration process for international applicants, can be found by clicking on 'Registration/International Graduates' on the College website. A Pre-Registration Form must be completed by all international applicants. In addition, international applicants are required to apply for World Education Services reports that authenticate their credentials (WES ICAP service) and to arrange for detailed course information associated with their international optometry-related degree to be sent to the College. International applicants are required to send a notarized copy of their Certificate of Completion to the College which indicates the applicant's successful completion of the program. In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the application form was separated from the application packages and made pdf-writable.

If an applicant is not a Canadian citizen, he or she is required to provide a notarized copy of a permanent residency document or authorization under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to engage in the practice of optometry. Information regarding this requirement is available in the 'Registration/How to Apply' section of the College website and in every application package.

h) acceptable alternatives to the documentation if applicants cannot obtain the required documentation for reasons beyond their control

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

A list of the required documentation that may be satisfied through acceptable alternatives, is available on the College website (click on 'Registration').

Applicants who inform the College that they cannot provide a Certificate of Standing or a letter of good standing from an optometry regulator in a country where they previously practised are informed of the College policy that a letter may be sent by the highest authority available, as follows:

1. a Certificate of Standing/letter of good standing from the regulator; or
2. a Certificate of Standing/letter of good standing from the authority that could remove the applicant's right to practice (e.g., Ministry of Health or relevant state or government agency); or
3. a Certificate of Standing/letter of good standing from the employer (e.g., state hospital, university).

Where none of the above are possible, the applicant is asked to sign an affidavit. The College provides the applicant with the necessary language for the affidavit and information on who can prepare the affidavit for them.

If an applicant cannot obtain a Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) report (criminal record check) because he or she is not yet a resident in Canada but has completed all of the other requirements for registration, the applicant is informed that he or she may complete the registration process but will not be authorized to begin practice until the CPIC report has been submitted. The applicant is asked to sign an Agreement with the College that a CPIC report will be provided immediately once the he or she is in Canada.

When an applicant informs the College that he or she is unable to obtain immigration documents authorizing him/her to practise optometry in Ontario but has otherwise met all of the requirements for registration, the College assists the applicant by providing a letter that can be presented to immigration officials.

i) how applicants can contact your organization

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Information regarding how applicants can contact the College by letter, e-mail, telephone (including toll free number), fax or in person, is available on every page of the College website under 'Contact Us' and is available on every application form.

The College's telephone contact information (including toll free number and web site address) is included in the yellow pages phone book for every community in Ontario.

There are direct links to the following external organizations (this list is not exhaustive):

- University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science
- International Optometric Bridging Program
- World Education Services
- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
- Canadian Examiners in Optometry
- Ontario Association of Optometrists
- Canadian Association of Optometrists
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Office of the Fairness Commissioner

j) how, why and how often your organization initiates communication with applicants about their

applications

The College formally initiates communication with applicants through a minimum of five letters:

- An initial letter confirms receipt of the application for registration and lists any outstanding documents needed in order to complete the application. The letter is accompanied by a payment receipt.
- A second letter accompanies a copy of the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Resource Binder. This binder includes information regarding the structure and role of the College as well as relevant legislation, policies and guidelines with which members must be familiar. This information is the basis of the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam and is reviewed in a seminar offered to all applicants twice annually. The binder is sent out 4-6 weeks before the exam along with a study guide and details of the seminar/exam schedules and location(s).
- A third letter is sent with the results of the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam. If the applicant's file is now complete, he or she is assigned a registration number, sent an invoice for their (prorated) membership fee and is asked to complete a Report Upon Entering Practice form, Information from New Registrants form, and Confirmation of Malpractice Insurance form. If the applicant's file is incomplete, the third letter provides the results of the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam and serves as a reminder of the documents (and related timelines) required to complete the file.
- A fourth letter is sent when the applicant becomes registered confirming that their registration number has been activated by the Registrar. Enclosed with the letter are the applicant's Certificate of Registration and a receipt for their membership fee.
- If an applicant fails to complete their application (e.g., documents are outstanding), a fifth letter is sent 21 months after the application was received by the College informing the applicant that he or she has three months to complete the application or the file will be closed. This letter also informs applicants if any of their submitted documents would need to be re-submitted (e.g., a CPIC report or letter of standing that is more than 6 months old). If there is no response, a final effort is made to contact the applicant 24 months after the application was received. If there is no response, the file is closed and all documents are returned to the applicant.

In addition to the above, the College communicates with applicants via e-mail as necessary to follow up on inquiries from applicants, outstanding issues, or documentation submitted by applicants who do not meet the College requirements, and/or to inform applicants about any changes relevant to the registration process. For international applicants, the College confirms the receipt of completed pre-registration forms and informs applicants by e-mail, phone, in person, and/or letter mail, about the next steps in the process.

k) the process for dealing with documents provided in languages other than English or French

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Applicants wishing to submit a document that is not in English or French, are informed that the document (s) must be translated at the expense of the applicant. Generally, these documents are related to the applicant's education and membership/good standing status in their native country.

l) the role of third-party organizations, such as qualification assessment agencies, organizations that conduct examinations or institutions that provide bridging programs, that applicants may come into contact with during the registration process

General information regarding the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO) (the national entry to practice exam) and links to Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) (the third party administrator of

the exam) are available in the Registration section of the College website and in every application package. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the application form was separated from the application packages.

The College website provides general and pre-registration information for international applicants and direct links to World Education Services (WES) and the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) (click on 'Registration/International Applicants'). Detailed information regarding the assessment of international education and experience may be obtained from the College website and from the IOBP. Any international applicant who contacts the College by phone, fax, email or in person, is provided detailed information about the role of third-party organizations.

m) any timelines, deadlines or time limits that applicants will be subject to during the registration process

Timelines related to registration are as follows:

An application for registration may remain open at the College for 24 months if the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Examination was successfully completed within 12 months of the application date. An applicant may submit a new application if the registration process is not completed in 24 months. No applicant may have more than one valid application for registration open with the College at any one time. Applicants who re-apply are not required to re-submit documents already submitted to the College unless they are subject to the timelines/deadlines listed below:

- Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam: This exam must be successfully completed within one year of applying for registration. (If an applicant does not successfully complete the jurisprudence exam within one year of applying, there is nothing preventing them from submitting a new application form and application fee).
- Criminal Record Check: A Canadian Police Information Centre report must be submitted and must be dated no more than six months prior to the Certificate of Registration being issued and activated.
- A Certificate of Standing or a letter of good standing (if required): A letter of good standing must be sent to the College directly from the issuing body and must be dated no more than six months prior to the Certificate of Registration being issued and activated.
- Permanent residency or authorization under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* to engage in the practice of optometry (if required): If the applicant is not a Canadian citizen, he or she must submit a notarized copy of their immigration/authorization document. In order for a Certificate of Registration to be issued and activated, this document must be valid.

The above information is available in the Registration section on the College website and in all application packages. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or

- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the application form was separated from the application packages.

In addition, applicants are reminded about timelines when they are sent letters from the College during the application process [see 1. j), above].

n) the amount of time that the registration process usually takes

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Applications are open for two years from the date they are received by the College and most applicants complete the process in less than one year. This information is available in three places in the Registration section of the College web site (Registration main page, How to Apply and Registration FAQs) and in all application packages. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms.

o) information about all fees associated with registration, such as fees for initial application, exams and exam rewrites, course enrolment or issuance of licence

A direct link to the College's Schedule of Fees is found on the web page by clicking on 'Registration;. In addition, a link to the Schedule of Fees can be found by clicking on 'Governance/Legislation & By-Laws' then by clicking on 'By-Laws of the College of Optometrists of Ontario' or by clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' then on 'Fees'.

An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, email, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the application form was separated from the application packages.

Applicants are referred to the Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) for information, including fees, related to taking the Canadian Assessment Competency in Optometry exam. Links to CEO (the third party administrator of the exam) are available in the 'Registration' section of the College web site and in every application package.

The College website provides general and pre-registration information for international applicants and direct links to World Education Services (WES), the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, and the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) (click on 'Registration/International Applicants'). Detailed information, including program fees, may be obtained directly from these organizations. Any international applicant who contacts the College by phone, fax, email or in person, is provided information about the third-party organizations involved.

p) accommodation of applicants with special needs, such as visual impairment

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Special needs are considered on an individual basis. The College building is wheelchair accessible.

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the application form was separated from the application packages and made pdf-writable. This saves the applicant from having to print out the form and require access to a scanner or fax machine. The College is in the process of converting the pre-registration application form into a pdf-writable version.

A direct link to the College's Schedule of Fees was created on the 'Registration' main web page. In addition, a link to the Schedule of Fees can be found by clicking on 'Governance/Legislation & By-Laws' then by clicking on 'By-Laws of the College of Optometrists of Ontario' or by clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' then on 'Fees', thereby making the College's Schedule of Fees accessible in many ways.

The College of Optometrists of Ontario assumed responsibility on an interim basis, for the credential assessment of applicants for all of Canada except for Quebec. This interim process is pending the establishment of a national process, in development under the direction of the Canadian Optometric Regulatory Authorities (CORA).

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Amount of Fees (2 / 13)

Are any of the fees different for internationally trained applicants? If yes, please explain.

Internationally trained applicants are required to provide a fee (\$475 plus 13% HST) to have their credentials assessed by the College's Credential Assessment Committee .

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that

occurred during the reporting year.

Initially, the College was to collect the credential authentication fee on behalf of World Education Services (WES) and to remit that portion of the credential assessment fee to WES later. However, streamlining of fee collection was abandoned in favour of allowing applicants the ability to undergo credential authentication while they were outside of Canada.

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Provision of Timely Decisions, Responses and Reasons (3 / 13)

a) What are your timelines for making registration decisions?

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The decision to register an applicant once all registration requirements have been met and documentation submitted to the College is made within seven business days.

The Registrar's decision to refuse registration and refer the matter to the Registration Committee is made within five business days of the Registrar being apprised of the applicant not meeting a requirement for registration.

If an applicant fails to meet one of the requirements for registration, they will receive a letter indicating which requirement they have failed to meet and informing them that the Registrar proposes to refuse their application for registration and the matter is being referred to the Registration Committee. The letter is typically sent out within five business days of the application being completed. The applicant is told that he/she has 30 days to make a written submission to the Registration Committee. The Registration Committee will consider the matter at their immediate next meeting. The Committee meets at least once every one to two months but often meets more frequently due to the workload, for example, by teleconference. Meeting dates are judiciously set to allow prompt consideration of referrals and reviews.

If waiting for the next scheduled Registration Committee meeting means that an applicant is not going to receive an appropriately timely response, the Committee may deal with a member's review electronically prior to their next in-person meeting.

b) What are your timelines for responding to applicants in writing?

SAME AS LAST YEAR

Confirming receipt of application: within 10 business days of receiving the application.

Sending results of the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam: within four weeks of the administration of the exam.

Registrar's decision to refuse registration and refer matter to the Registration Committee: within five business days of the Registrar being apprised of the applicant not meeting a requirement for registration.

Decision from the Registration Committee regarding an applicant not meeting a requirement for registration: within two weeks of the Committee's decision.

Sending Certificate of Registration number and invoice for pro-rated membership fee: within six business days of confirming that the applicant has met all of the other requirements for registration.

Sending a notice that an application will be terminated in 30 days for non-activation (requirements met but fees not paid): 30 days after original fee notice is sent out.

Sending notice that an application has been terminated for non-activation: 60 days after the original fee notice is sent out.

Sending notice that an application will expire in three months: 21 months after the application is received by the College.

Sending notice that an application has expired: 24 months after the application is received by the College.

c) What are your timelines for providing written reasons to applicants about all registration decisions, internal reviews and appeal decisions?

SAME AS LAST YEAR

A letter is sent to applicants who fail the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam within four weeks of the exam date and includes information regarding areas of weakness shown by their results, in addition to information pertaining to future exam sittings.

If an applicant fails to meet one of the requirements for registration, they will receive a letter indicating which requirement they have failed to meet and informing them that the Registrar proposes to refuse their application for registration and the matter is being referred to the Registration Committee. The letter is typically sent out within five business days of the Registrar being apprised of the failure to meet a registration requirement. The applicant is told that he/she has 30 days to make a written submission to the Registration Committee. The Registration Committee will consider the matter at the Committee's immediate next meeting; the Committee meets at least once every one to two months or more frequently depending on the workload, for example, by teleconference. Meeting dates are judiciously set to allow prompt consideration of referrals and reviews.

If waiting for the next scheduled Registration Committee meeting means that an applicant is not going to receive a timely response, the Committee may deal with a member's review by teleconference prior to the next in-person meeting.

Once the minutes of the meeting dealing with the matter have been confirmed by the Chair, College staff will write to any applicant(s) who have had their application considered, informing them of the Committee's decision and reasons. This is typically done within two weeks following the meeting. This letter includes information regarding the applicant's right to appeal the Registration Committee's decision to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB) and contact information for HPARB.

d) Explain how your organization ensures that it adheres to these timelines.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

We adhere to these timelines using several methods:

- retaining applicants' registration information and status in a table and adhering to the timelines by using the "sorting" feature, and reviewing this information daily basis
- using a check list at the front of each applicant file tracking the applicant's registration progress (dates when documents submitted, exams completed, etc.)
- scheduling Registration Committee meetings around when decisions are most likely going to be required
- having a policy that minutes must be completed within two weeks of the meeting date and staff provides follow-up on action items, prioritizing the communication of registration decisions to applicants
- reporting back on action items, including communication to applicants, at each Registration Committee meeting
- implementing a policy for the Registration Committee to review timelines of its decisions, responses and reasons annually

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

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Access to Records (4 / 13)

a) Describe how you give applicants access to their own records related to their applications for registration.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Usually, the College does not receive requests from applicants requesting access to their records. Should an applicant request a copy of his or her record, for instance to prepare for an appeal to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB), the College makes a copy of the documents provided to HPARB available to the applicant.

b) Explain why access to applicants' own records would be limited or refused.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College would only limit or refuse access to an applicants' own record in order to protect a third party.

c) State how and when you give applicants estimates of the fees for making records available.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College currently does not charge a fee for making records available.

d) List the fees for making records available.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College currently does not charge a fee for making records available.

e) Describe the circumstances under which payment of the fees for making records available would be waived or would have been waived.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College currently does not charge a fee for making records available.

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

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Resources for Applicants (5 / 13)

a) List and describe any resources that are available to applicants, such as application guides, exam blueprints or programs for orientation to the profession.

Comprehensive application packages and information are available on the College website or by contacting the College offices. These include:

- information regarding how to complete the application form
- a description of what it means to get a document notarized
- contact information for the Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO), the third party organization that administers the Canadian Assessment of Competency in Optometry (CACO), the entry-to-practice exam for the profession
- information regarding how to obtain a Canadian Police Information Centre report (criminal record check)
- a copy of the registration requirements as they appear in the Registration Regulation with a recommendation regarding the sequence for completing the requirements and with notes in plain language to help explain the requirements.
- a check list to help ensure the application is complete

- a list of Acceptable Variations in Documents required for registration
- a flow chart to illustrate the pre-registration process for international applicants (Steps 1 and 2)
- flow charts prepared to illustrate the registration process for applicants

Applicants registered for the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam are sent a copy of the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Resource Binder four to six weeks before the exam. The Resource Binder is also available on the College website. A study guide that includes where to find the relevant information in the Resource Binder, is provided to applicants with their binder. The exams are offered six times annually and twice annually, the College offers a one-day seminar to help prepare applicants for the exam. Sample exam questions are reviewed at the end of the seminar. Applicants may attend the seminar one or more times prior to writing the exam.

The College website provides general and pre-registration information for international applicants and direct links to World Education Services (WES), the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, and International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) (click on 'Registration/International Applicants'). Detailed information about the program may be obtained directly from the IOBP. Any international applicant who contacts the College by phone, fax, email or in person, is provided detailed information about the pre-registration process.

The College website and application packages provide information specifically for applicants registered in another Canadian jurisdiction who wish to apply for registration in Ontario under the labour mobility provisions.

Applicants are referred to the Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) for information related to taking the Canadian Assessment of Competency in Optometry (CACO) exam. Links to CEO (the third party administrator of the exam) are available in the Registration section of the College website and in every application package. The CEO website includes an extensive guide for the CACO exam and sample exam questions.

College staff respond to registration inquiries on a daily basis by phone, email, mail, in person, and by fax.

b) Describe how your organization provides information to applicants about these resources.

Information about these resources is available on the College website and is included in all application packages. An application package may be obtained by:

- clicking on 'Registration/How to Apply' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website (application form links are at the top of the page); or
- clicking on 'Resources/Forms & Fees' on the left-hand menu of every page on the College website; or
- contacting the College by phone, e-mail, letter mail, in person, or fax for information and/or application forms.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the registration application form was converted from a pdf to a pdf-writable form. This saves the applicant from having to print out the form and require access to a scanner or fax machine. The College is in the process of converting the pre-registration application form into a pdf-writable version.

The College provides information to applicants for registration about the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam and seminar by letter and/or e-mail.

College staff respond to registration inquiries and provide information regarding relevant resources on a daily basis by phone, e-mail, letter mail, in person, and by fax.

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

In order to make the registration application information more clear and user friendly, a separate landing web page was created for applicants for a General Certificate of Registration and the registration application form was converted from a pdf to a pdf-writable form. This saves the applicant from having to print out the form and require access to a scanner or fax machine.

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Internal Review or Appeal Processes (6 / 13)

In this section, describe your internal review or appeal process. Some regulatory bodies use these two terms (*internal review* and *appeal*) for two different processes, some use only one of these terms, and some use them interchangeably. Please use the term that applies to your profession. If you use both terms (for two different processes), please address both.

a) List your timelines for completing internal reviews or appeals of registration decisions.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

If an applicant fails to meet one of the requirements for registration, they will receive a letter indicating which requirement they have failed to meet and informing them that the Registrar proposes to refuse their application for registration and the matter is being referred to the Registration Committee. The letter is typically sent out within five business days of the Registrar being apprised of the failure to meet a registration requirement. The applicant is told that he/she has 30 days to make a written submission to the Registration Committee. The Registration Committee will consider the matter at their immediate next meeting; the Committee meets at least once every one to two months or more frequently depending on the workload, for example, by teleconference.

If waiting for the next scheduled Registration Committee meeting means that an applicant is not going to receive a timely response, the Committee may deal with a member's review by teleconference prior to the next in-person meeting.

i. State the number of internal reviews or appeals of registration decisions that exceeded your timelines.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

There were no internal reviews or appeals of registration decisions that exceeded our timelines in 2013.

ii. Among internal reviews or appeals that exceeded your timelines, state the number that were from internationally trained applicants.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

There were no internal reviews or appeals of registration decisions associated with internationally trained applicants that exceeded our timelines in 2013.

b) Specify the opportunities you provide for applicants to make submissions regarding internal reviews or appeals.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

When a letter is sent to the applicant informing him/her of the Registrar's proposal to refuse registration, a clause is included about the applicant's rights to make a written submission to the Registration Committee. Similarly, the applicant is notified of his/her rights during any type of communications including phone, e-mail, letter mail, in-person, and by fax.

c) Explain how you inform applicants about the form in which they must make their submissions (i.e., orally, in writing or by electronic means) for internal reviews or appeals.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Applicants who fail to meet a registration requirement are sent a letter with the following information quoting the relevant legislation:

"You have failed to successfully complete Accordingly, the Registrar proposes to refuse your application because you have not met a requirement of the Registration Regulation (1). Your application will be referred to the Registration Committee (2).

You have the right to make a written submission to the Committee within 30 days of the receipt of this letter if you wish to do so. (3)

After considering your application and your written submission, if any, the Registration Committee will make a decision respecting your application.(4)

- (1) O. Reg.. 837/93, Registration, s. 2.
- (2) Regulated Health Professions (Code), Section 15. (2) (c)
- (3) Ibid., Section 15. (3)
- (4) Ibid., Section 18. (2)"

d) State how you ensure that no one who acted as a decision-maker in a registration decision acts as a decision-maker in an internal review or appeal of the same registration decision.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The Registrar makes the initial registration decision. The Registration Committee considers all referrals and reviews and the Registrar is not involved.

e) Describe your internal review or appeal process.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

When an applicant sends a written submission to the College, the College staff person supporting the Registration Committee notifies the Committee Chair. The referral/review is added to the agenda of the Committee's immediate next meeting. Anonymized copies of the applicant's submission are distributed to the Committee members in advance of the meeting. Once the minutes of the meeting have been written and confirmed with the Chair, the applicant is informed of the Committee's decision and reasons.

f) State the composition of the committee that makes decisions about registration, which may be called a Registration Committee or Appeals Committee: how many members does the committee have; how many committee members are members of the profession in Ontario; and how many committee members are internationally trained members of the profession in Ontario.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The Registration Committee is a statutory committee comprised of four practising optometrists in Ontario and a public member appointed by the Government of Ontario. One Committee member is an internationally educated optometric graduate.

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

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Information on Appeal Rights (7 / 13)

This section refers to reviews or appeals that are available after an internal review or appeal. Describe how you inform applicants of any rights they have to request a further review of or appeal from a decision.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Directly following a meeting of the Registration Committee to consider the applicant's referral/review, a letter is written to the applicant incorporating the following clause:

"You have the right to appeal the decision of the Registration Committee. If you choose to appeal this decision, your appeal should be addressed to:

Health Professions Appeal and Review Board
151 Bloor Street West, 9th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5S 2T5

Tel: 416.327.8512

Toll Free: 1.866.282.2179

Fax: 416.327.8524"

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

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Assessment of Qualifications (8 / 13)

This category covers your processes for assessing all qualifications, such as academic credentials, competencies, language ability or practical experience.

a) List the criteria that must be met in order for an applicant's qualifications to satisfy the entry-to-practice requirements for your profession.

The requirements for registration are outlined in detail in the amended Registration Regulation (O.Reg. 837/93) under the Optometry Act which came into effect on September 14, 2012. The College issues General Certificates of Registration and Academic Certificates of Registration.

Section 2. (1) 2. of the amended Registration Regulation details the academic requirement for a General Certificate of Registration as follows:

" i. A degree in optometry,

A. awarded by the School of Optometry and Vision Science of the University of Waterloo, or

B. awarded by an educational institution as a result of the successful completion of a program that has been accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education or another accrediting body approved by the Council at the time the applicant successfully completed the program, or

ii. A degree together with any further education or training, or combination of education and training, as specified by a panel of the Registration Committee that when taken together evidences, in the opinion of the panel, completion of a program that is substantially equivalent to a program the completion of which would result in the awarding of a degree referred to in sub-subparagraph i A."

Section 5. (1) 2. of the amended Registration Regulation details the academic requirement of an Academic Certificate of Registration as follows:

"2. The applicant must hold an appointment as a professor, lecturer, resident, supervising clinician or graduate student at the School of Optometry of the University of Waterloo, or another university or optometric educational facility in Ontario approved by the Council.

3. The applicant must have one of the following academic qualifications:

i. successful completion of a course in optometry at a university, if the course, at the time the applicant commence it, was accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education or another accrediting body approved by the Council, together with the award of a degree of doctor of optometry from that university,

ii. successful completion of a course in optometry at a university in the United Kingdom, together with the award of a degree from that university, and current or past membership in the British College of Optometrists,

iii. successful completion of a course outside of Ontario, other than one mentioned in subparagraphs i or ii that the Registration Committee, having considered the rest of the applicant's qualifications, determines is acceptable."

Other criteria common to the application processes of both General and Academic certificates of registration, are listed below:

- Ability of applicants to speak and write in English or French with reasonable fluency
- Absence of professional misconduct/incompetence/incapacity findings against applicants if they previously practised optometry in other jurisdiction(s)
- Absence of criminal offence findings against applicants
- Requirement of having Canadian citizenship/permanent residency/authorization under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada) to engage in the practice of optometry

b) Describe the methodology used to determine whether a program completed outside of Canada satisfies the requirements for registration.

Applicants who are graduates of optometry schools that are accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE), are not required to undergo a credential assessment.

After the amended Registration Regulation (O.Reg. 837/93) came into effect, the following methodology was followed for international applicants who were not graduates of ACOE-accredited optometry schools:

- Authentication of credentials by World Education Services (WES) prior to consideration by the College's Credential Assessment Committee
- Provision of detailed optometry-related and translated course descriptions, in electronic format if possible, indicating the course length in hours/days/weeks associated with the international optometry-related program they completed. Applicants may be required to provide additional information as it relates to their employment history.
- The College's Credential Assessment Committee compares the optometry-related courses that the applicant completed, to courses in the optometry degree program at ACOE-accredited optometry schools, in particular, the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science.
- The Committee determines if the pre-registration applicant has met the minimum standards of optometric education to be considered an optometrist in Ontario, in order to move forward in the pre-registration process such as being able to apply to challenge the prior learning assessment (PLA) exam.
- Based on information that an applicant provides on the Pre-Registration Form, the Committee may

factor in any relevant work experience into the paper review of the applicant's credentials if it can be tied to a time frame, for example, in hours/days/weeks.

- The Committee makes a recommendation

The College continued to require that international applicants who were applicants for registration, have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES). The College recognized candidates already in the process of having their credentials assessed by the IOBP and continued to have their credentials recognized by the College, providing that their credential assessment was completed by March 1, 2012.

c) Explain how work experience in the profession is assessed.

Work experience is, generally, not a requirement for registration. Optometric work experience is defined as experience in the practice of optometry in a country outside Canada.

When international applicants apply for pre-registration, work experience may be considered in lieu of undergraduate education prior to a four-year professional optometric degree. The IOBP assesses the clinical portion of the applicants' prior learning. Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) assesses the theoretical portion of their prior learning by administering a multiple-choice test. Applicants are required to submit reference letters from their employers to the IOBP.

If an applicant has ever been licensed or registered to practise optometry or any other regulated health profession, the applicant must arrange for the licensing body where he/she practised to send the College a Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing, outlining his/her current status in that jurisdiction, and whether there have ever been any proceedings against the applicant involving allegations of professional misconduct, incapacity or like finding. The Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing must be dated no more than six months before their Certificate of Registration is issued and activated.

The College continued to require that applicants applying under the Labour Mobility provisions to have been registered in another Canadian jurisdiction and to have practised the profession of optometry to the extent that would be permitted by a general certificate of registration at any time in the three years immediately before the date of the applicant's application. Proof of the applicant having practised in another Canadian jurisdiction needs to be verified by a Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing completed by the respective Canadian optometry regulatory body; a notation on the website of the respective Canadian optometry regulatory body to indicate that the applicant is practising; and confirmation from a licensed optometrist who has worked with the applicant.

d) Describe how your organization ensures that information used in the assessment about educational systems and credentials of applicants from outside Canada is current and accurate.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College continued to require that international applicants have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES). WES authenticates credentials and verifies the currency of documents by direct communication with the overseas universities. The College recognized candidates already in the process of having their credentials assessed by the IOBP and continued to have their credentials recognized by the College, providing that their credential assessment was completed by March 1, 2012. The College ensures

that the information used in the assessment about educational systems, is kept current and accurate by, for example, requesting the provision of detailed optometry-related and translated course descriptions associated with the applicants' international optometry-related degrees to be sent directly to the College by the institution (s) where the international applicants studied, and ensuring that the course descriptions correlate chronologically with the degree completed. In addition, the College's Credential Assessment Committee performs a detailed course-by-course analysis of the courses in comparison to the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science optometry degree program.

All applicants must complete the application form and sign it, attaching documents that are required to be notarized. Upon successful completion of the application process, applicants are asked to confirm the accuracy of the information provided in their application form. If applicants provide the College with false or misleading information on their application, the applicants will be deemed not to have satisfied the requirements for registration. Similarly, international applicants for pre-registration are required to complete and sign their pre-registration forms.

e) Describe how previous assessment decisions are used to assist in maintaining consistency when assessing credentials of applicants from the same jurisdictions or institutions.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College's Credential Assessment Committee continued to accumulate information in regards to the credential assessment of international applicants who graduated with optometry-related degrees from the same educational institutions and jurisdictions. The information is saved in an Excel spreadsheet using a consolidated Academic Qualifications Assessment (AQUA) template. This amassed information is referred to by the Committee when analyzing the credentials of other international applicants.

f) Explain how the status of an institution in its home country affects recognition of the credentials of applicants by your organization.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The credentials of graduates of optometry schools accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE), are recognized by the College.

The College continued to require that international applicants to have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES). The overseas optometry-related degrees of international applicants in addition to the institution granting them, need to be recognized by WES in order for the College to recognize the credentials of international applicants.

g) Describe how your organization accommodates applicants with special needs, such as visual impairment.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College accommodates special needs on a case-by-case basis. If an individual has the physical ability to perform the clinical procedures necessary to practise optometry, special needs will be accommodated. The College building is wheelchair accessible.

h) State the average length of time required to complete the entire registration process, from when the process is initiated to when a registration decision is issued.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Not all those who apply to the College to practise optometry in Ontario follow through with their application. The length of time required to complete the entire registration process varies depending on the individual's circumstances. The average length of time for applicants to complete the entire registration process is approximately 9-10 months. Applications may be submitted at any time and many applicants submit their application well in advance of completing the requirements for registration, e.g., many students submit an application several months before graduating from their optometry program.

i. State whether the average time differs for internationally trained individuals.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The average time differs for the majority of international applicants.

ii. If the average time differs for internationally trained individuals, state whether it is greater or less than the average for all applicants, and the reasons for the difference.

Generally, it takes longer for international applicants to complete the pre-registration followed by the registration process. Following the submission of a completed Pre-Registration Form, all internationally educated graduates¹ who are applicants for pre-registration must have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES) prior to consideration by the College's Credential Assessment Committee. Applicants are responsible to pay the WES fee to WES directly. Applicants are then required to provide to the College detailed optometry-related and translated course descriptions, in electronic format if possible, indicating the course length in hours/days/weeks associated with the international optometry-related program they completed. If course descriptions are not sent directly to the College by the institutions where the applicant studied the program, applicants are required to provide a notarized copy of the original translated course descriptions. Applicants may be required to provide additional information as it relates to their employment history so they can be given the appropriate credit as part of the credential assessment process. The Credential Assessment Committee, which meets approximately quarterly, determines if the degree(s) meets the established minimum standards of optometric education to be considered an optometrist in Ontario by comparing the courses that the applicant completed to the courses associated with the degree in optometry awarded by the School of Optometry and Vision Science of the University of Waterloo. Based on information that an applicant provides on the Pre-Registration Form, the Committee may factor in any relevant work experience into the paper review of the applicant's credentials as long as it can be tied to a time frame, for example hours/days/weeks. The Credential Assessment Committee then make a recommendation to the Registration Committee of the relevant province regarding a candidate's eligibility to proceed to the Prior Learning Assessment examination.

If successful in the PLA exams, international applicants are informed that they may apply to either the short or the long bridging program administered by the IOBP and are subject to program capacity. Accordingly, average timelines depend on many factors, including how frequently the bridging programs are offered and administered. It often takes an international applicant more than one attempt to pass the entry-to-practice exams. Some international applicants have difficulty obtaining the necessary immigration authorization to practise optometry in Ontario.

i) If your organization conducts credential assessments:

i. Explain how you determine the level (e.g., baccalaureate, master's, Ph.D.) of the credential presented for assessment.

The College continues to require that international applicants have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES). WES authenticates credentials and determines the level of the credential presented for assessment. The College recognized candidates already in the process of having their credentials assessed by the IOBP and continued to have their credentials recognized by the College, providing that their credential assessment was completed by March 1, 2012. The College requests detailed optometry-related and translated course descriptions associated with the applicants' international optometry-related degrees to be sent directly to the College by the institution(s) where the international applicants studied, and ensures that the course descriptions correlate chronologically with the degree completed. In addition, the College's Credential Assessment Committee performs a detailed course-by-course analysis of the courses in comparison to the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science optometry degree program. The Credential Assessment Committee determines if the degree(s) meets the established minimum standards of optometric education to be considered an optometrist in Ontario by comparing the courses that the applicant completed to the courses associated with the degree in optometry awarded by the School of Optometry and Vision Science of the University of Waterloo. Based on information that an applicant provides on the Pre-Registration Form, the Committee may factor in any relevant work experience into the paper review of the applicant's credentials as long as it can be tied to a time frame, for example hours/days/weeks.

ii. Describe the criteria that are applied to determine equivalency.

The College continues to require that international applicants have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES). WES authenticates credentials and determines the level of the credential presented for assessment. The College recognized candidates already in the process of having their credentials assessed by the IOBP and continued to have their credentials recognized by the College, providing that their credential assessment was completed by March 1, 2012. The College requests detailed optometry-related and translated course descriptions associated with the applicants' international optometry-related degrees to be sent directly to the College by the institution(s) where the international applicants studied, and ensures that the course descriptions correlate chronologically with the degree completed. In addition, the College's Credential Assessment Committee performs a detailed course-by-course analysis of the courses in comparison to the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science optometry degree program. The Credential Assessment Committee determines if the degree(s) meets the established minimum standards of optometric education to be considered an optometrist in Ontario by comparing the courses that the applicant completed to the courses associated with the degree in optometry awarded by the School of Optometry and Vision Science of the University of Waterloo. Based on information that an applicant provides on the Pre-Registration Form, the Committee may factor in any relevant work experience into the paper review of the applicant's credentials as long as it can be tied to a time frame, for example hours/days/weeks.

iii. Explain how work experience is taken into account.

Work experience is, generally, not a requirement for registration. Optometric work experience is defined as experience in the practice of optometry in a country outside Canada.

When international applicants apply for pre-registration to the College, work experience may be considered in lieu of undergraduate education in addition applicants can be credited for work experience for their education, if the work experience is associated with a time frame (i.e hours/days/weeks). The work experience needs to be independently verified before it can be taken into account, for example, by requesting that the applicant's non-relative colleague provide a letter on practice letterhead to confirm that the applicant had completed the work experience indicated.

The IOBP assesses the clinical portion of the applicants' prior learning. Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) assesses the theoretical portion of their prior learning by administering a multiple-choice test.

Once the applicant is in the registration process and has been licensed or registered to practise optometry or any other regulated health profession, the applicant must arrange for the licensing body where he/she practised to send the College a Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing, outlining his/her current status in that jurisdiction, and whether there have ever been any proceedings against the applicant involving allegations of professional misconduct, incapacity or like finding. The Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing must be dated no more than six months before their Certificate of Registration is issued and activated.

Once the amended Registration Regulation (O.Reg. 837/93) came into effect on September 14, 2012, applicants applying under the Labour Mobility provisions were required to have been registered in another Canadian jurisdiction and to have practised the profession of optometry to the extent that would be permitted by a general certificate of registration at any time in the three years immediately before the date of the applicant's application. Proof of the applicant having practised in another Canadian jurisdiction needs to be verified by a Certificate of Standing completed by the respective Canadian optometry regulatory body; a notation on the website of the respective Canadian optometry regulatory body to indicate that the applicant is practising; and confirmation from a licensed optometrist who has worked with the applicant.

j) If your organization conducts competency assessment:

i. Describe the methodology used to evaluate competency.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College does not conduct competency assessments. The clinical portion of the prior learning assessment exams for international applicants is administered by the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and the theoretical portion is administered by Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) which also implements the Canadian entry-to-practice exams.

ii. Explain how the methodology used to evaluate competency is validated, and how often it is validated.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College does not conduct competency assessments. The clinical portion of the prior learning assessment exams for international applicants is administered by the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and the theoretical portion is administered by Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) which also implements the Canadian entry-to-practice exams.

iii. Explain how work experience is used in the assessment of competency.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College does not conduct competency assessments. The clinical portion of the prior learning assessment exams for international applicants is administered by the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and the theoretical portion is administered by Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) which also implements the Canadian entry-to-practice exams.

k) If your organization conducts prior learning assessment:

i. Describe the methodology used to evaluate prior learning.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College does not conduct prior learning assessments. The clinical portion of the prior learning assessment exams for international applicants is administered by the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and the theoretical portion is administered by Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) which also implements the Canadian entry-to-practice exams.

ii. Explain how the methodology used to evaluate prior learning is validated, and how often it is validated.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College does not conduct prior learning assessments. The clinical portion of the prior learning assessment exams for international applicants is administered by the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and the theoretical portion is administered by Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) which also implements the Canadian entry-to-practice exams.

iii. Explain how work experience is used in the assessment of prior learning.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College does not conduct prior learning assessments. The clinical portion of the prior learning assessment exams for international applicants is administered by the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and the theoretical portion is administered by Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) which also implements the Canadian entry-to-practice exams.

l) If your organization administers examinations:

i. Describe the exam format, scoring method and number of rewrites permitted.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College administers the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Exam six times annually. It is an open book exam that consists of 60 multiple choice questions which cover all aspects of legislation governing the practice of optometry in Ontario. Applicants must obtain a minimum grade of 70% to pass. Results are reported on a

pass/fail basis. Applicants must successfully complete the exam within 12 months of submitting their application to the College. There is no limit to the number of times an applicant may write the exam. If an applicant fails to successfully complete the exam within 12 months of applying for registration, they may submit a new application for registration.

ii. Describe how the exam is tested for validity and reliability. If results are below desired levels, describe how you correct the deficiencies.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The exam is reviewed before and after each administration to ensure that the exam maintains its validity and reliability. If results indicate that a question is not valid, it is not included in the grading of the exam and is subsequently rewritten or removed from the bank of questions.

iii. State how often exam questions are updated and the process for doing so.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The exam questions are reviewed and updated annually by College staff and/or an external consultant.

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

The credential assessment process has not changed but the articulation has: The Credential Assessment Committee determines if the pre-registration applicant has met the minimum standards of optometric education to be considered an optometrist in Ontario, in order to move forward in the pre-registration process such as being able to apply to challenge the prior learning assessment (PLA) exam.

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Third-Party Organizations (9 / 13)

a) List any third-party organizations (such as language testers, credential assessors or examiners) relied upon by your organization to make assessment decisions.

The College continues to rely on World Education Services (WES) to authenticate the credentials of international applicants and the arms-length Credential Assessment Committee to analyze and assess the credentials of international applicants.

The College continues to rely on the Credential Assessment Committee to assess the credentials

of international applicants.

The College continues to rely on the IOBP to administer the clinical portion of the PLA exams and the bridging of international applicants. The College also relies on the Canadian Examiners in Optometry to administer the theoretical portion of the PLA exams and to develop and administer the Canadian Assessment of Competency in Optometry (CACO) exam, the national entry-to-practice exam.

The College now relies on the following tests to administer the testing of the English language proficiency level of international applicants: a) Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test, by the "Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks", - CLB level 8.0. b) International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic - minimum overall average of 7.5. c) CanTest - minimum overall average of 4.5.

b) Explain what measures your organization takes to ensure that any third-party organization that it relies upon to make an assessment:

i. provides information about assessment practices to applicants

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College website provides links to World Education Services (WES), the links to English Language proficiency testing sites, and the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) (click on 'Registration/International Applicants'). Detailed information about the programs, including comprehensive information about the assessment process, may be obtained directly from the College website. Any international applicant who contacts the college by phone, fax, email, letter mail or in person, is provided detailed information about assessment practices.

Links to Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) are available in the Registration section of the College website and in every application package. The CEO website includes administrative policies and an extensive guide for the CACO exam.

This information is reviewed by the College's Registration Committee annually.

ii. utilizes current and accurate information about qualifications from outside Canada

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College continues to require that international applicants have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES). WES authenticates credentials and verifies the currency of documents by direct communication with the overseas universities. The College recognized candidates already in the process of having their credentials assessed by the IOBP and continued to have their credentials recognized by the College, providing that their credential assessment was completed by March 1, 2012. The College ensures that the information used in the assessment about educational systems, is kept current and accurate by, for example, requesting the provision of detailed optometry-related and translated course descriptions associated with the applicants' international optometry-related degrees to be sent directly to the College by the institution (s) where the international applicants studied, and ensuring that the course descriptions correlate chronologically with the degree completed. In addition, the College's Credential Assessment Committee performs a detailed course-by-course analysis of the courses in comparison to the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science optometry degree program.

All applicants must complete the application form and sign it, attaching documents that are required to be notarized. Upon successful completion of the application process, applicants are asked to confirm the accuracy of the information provided in their application form. If applicants provide the College with false or misleading information on their application, the applicants will be deemed not to have satisfied the requirements for registration. Similarly, international applicants for pre-registration are required to complete and sign their pre-registration forms.

iii. provides timely decisions, responses and reasons to applicants

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College regularly communicates with the administrators of World Education Services (WES), the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO). In addition, College staff reviews each applicant file to ensure that timely decisions, responses and reasons, are provided to all applicants.

iv. provides training to individuals assessing qualifications

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College provides orientation and training, including anti-discrimination training, to all members of the Credential Assessment Committee and registration staff.

v. provides access to records related to the assessment to applicants

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Applicants to the IOBP are provided their detailed assessment results (scores) in addition to feedback on their areas of weakness. Bridging program participants receive individual feedback on their clinical evaluation results. Applicants whose assessment results show that they are not eligible to continue forward with one of the bridging programs may request a review/feedback related to their clinical assessment results.

vi. accommodates applicants with special needs, such as visual impairment

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

Special needs would be looked at on an individual basis. Providing an individual had the physical ability to perform the clinical procedures necessary for the provision of optometric care, special needs would be accommodated.

c) If your organization relies on a third party to conduct credential assessments:

i. Explain how the third party determines the level (e.g., baccalaureate, master's, Ph.D.) of the credential

presented for assessment.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College continues to use World Education Services (WES) to authenticate the credentials of international applicants and to determine the level of the credential presented for assessment.

ii. Describe the criteria that are applied to determine equivalency.

The College continues to require that international applicants have their credentials authenticated by World Education Services (WES). WES authenticates credentials and determines the level of the credential presented for assessment. The College recognized candidates already in the process of having their credentials assessed by the IOBP and continued to have their credentials recognized by the College, providing that their credential assessment was completed by March 1, 2012. The College requests detailed optometry-related and translated course descriptions associated with the applicants' international optometry-related degrees to be sent directly to the College by the institution(s) where the international applicants studied, and ensures that the course descriptions correlate chronologically with the degree completed. In addition, the College's Credential Assessment Committee performs a detailed course-by-course analysis of the courses in comparison to the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science optometry degree program.

iii. Explain how work experience is taken into account.

Work experience is, generally, not a requirement for registration. Optometric work experience is defined as experience in the practice of optometry in a country outside Canada.

When applicants apply for pre-registration to the College, work experience may be considered in lieu of undergraduate education in addition applicants can be credited for work experience for their education, if the work experience can be independently verified and associated with a time frame (i.e. hours/days/weeks). The IOBP assesses the clinical portion of the applicants' prior learning. Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) assesses the theoretical portion of their prior learning by administering a multiple-choice test.

If an applicant has ever been licensed or registered to practise optometry or any other regulated health profession, the applicant must arrange for the licensing body where he/she practised to send the College a Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing, outlining his/her current status in that jurisdiction, and whether there have ever been any proceedings against the applicant involving allegations of professional misconduct, incapacity or like finding. The Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing must be dated no more than six months before their Certificate of Registration is issued and activated.

Applicants applying under the Labour Mobility provisions are required to have been registered in another Canadian jurisdiction and to have practised the profession of optometry to the extent that would be permitted by a general certificate of registration at any time in the three years immediately before the date of the applicant's application. Proof of the applicant having practised in another Canadian jurisdiction needs to be verified by a Certificate of Standing/Letter of Standing completed by the respective Canadian optometry regulatory body; a notation on the website of the respective Canadian optometry regulatory body to indicate

that the applicant is practising; and confirmation from a licensed optometrist who has worked with the applicant.

d) If your organization relies on a third party to conduct competency assessments:

i. Describe the methodology used to evaluate competency.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The College does not conduct competency assessments. The clinical portion of the prior learning assessment exams for international applicants are conducted by the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP), and the theoretical portion is conducted by Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) which also implements the Canadian entry-to-practice exams. Applicants applying under the Labour Mobility provisions are not required to write the Canadian entry-to-practice exams.

ii. Explain how the methodology used to evaluate competency is validated, and how often it is validated.

With regard to the CACO, competency-based performance standards (CBPS) were developed by the CEO Competence Committee and the CBPS Working Group, a group of practising optometrists from across Canada. The Competency-Based Performance Standards have been sent for review to all provincial regulatory authorities in optometry, and national and international stakeholders. Initial versions were reviewed in detail by CEO committees and focus groups.

iii. Explain how work experience is used in the assessment of competency.

Work experience may be beneficial but is not required or specifically accounted for. When applicants apply for pre-registration to the College, work experience may be considered by the Credential Assessment Committee in lieu of undergraduate education in addition applicants can be credited for work experience for their education, if the work experience can be independently verified and associated with a time frame (i.e. hours/days/weeks). The IOBP assesses the clinical portion of the applicants' prior learning. Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) assesses the theoretical portion of their prior learning by administering a multiple-choice test.

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e) If your organization relies on a third party to conduct prior learning assessments:

i. Describe the methodology used to evaluate prior learning.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

For the clinical portion of the prior learning assessment (PLA) exams administered by the International Optometric Bridging Program, the prior learning assessment is conducted in two parts:

- Written test of optometric knowledge and clinical judgment that consists of 280 multiple-choice questions. 40% of these questions are exchanged on a yearly basis.
- Four 45 minute sessions evaluating clinical skills including communication skills.

Please refer to CEO's PLA blueprint at (http://docs.ceo-eco.org/dm/cache/documents/PLAdocs/CBPS_Document.pdf).

ii. Explain how the methodology used to evaluate prior learning is validated, and how often it is validated.

The written assessment is administered and validated on a regular basis by the Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO). CEO administers the entry-to-practice examination for optometry in Canada and the PLA is validated by the same methods used for validating this examination. Each administration of the theoretical portion of the PLA exams has a minimum 40% turnover of questions. The clinical assessment is administered by the IOBP.

iii. Explain how work experience is used in the assessment of prior learning.

Work experience may be beneficial but is not required or specifically accounted for.

When applicants apply for pre-registration to the College, work experience may be considered in lieu of undergraduate education in addition applicants can be credited for work experience for their education, if the work experience can be independently verified and associated with a time frame (i.e hours/days/weeks). The IOBP assesses the clinical portion of the applicants' prior learning. Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) assesses the theoretical portion of their prior learning by administering a multiple-choice test.

f) If your organization relies on a third party to administer examinations:

i. Describe the exam format, scoring method and number of rewrites permitted.

The IOBP PLA exam ranking policy is used to guide the College's Registration Committee for the PLA exam scoring method and number of rewrites permitted.

Please refer to the website for Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) for information on the CACO exam format, scoring method and number of rewrites permitted at <http://www.ceo-eco.org/>.

ii. Describe how the exam is tested for validity and reliability. If results are below desired levels, describe how you correct the deficiencies.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

CEO has a psychometrician on staff. A rigorous process of question analysis is undertaken by CEO's

Assessment Committee following an administration of the CACO in order to ensure that the questions included in the examination are unambiguous and discriminating. Questions that fail standard measures of their integrity are removed from scoring for all candidates.

Candidate's individual assessment experiences are also considered. If a question was not administered appropriately to an individual applicant, the item may be deleted from the scoring of that applicant alone. For example, if an event within the administration of a skills component prevented a candidate from obtaining particular results, then the affected questions are deleted from that candidate's scoring. Assessor's responses to questions are reviewed to ensure accuracy by comparing the expected clinical results to a candidate's results. Inaccuracies in assessor's responses are corrected prior to scoring.

Before publishing results, the Assessment Committee considers the overall reliability of scores generated. Particular attention is paid to ensure that item analysis determinations, generally and individually, have been applied to each candidate's assessment.

When a candidate appears to have failed a component, a further analysis is undertaken prior to publishing the results to ensure that the score resulted from that candidate's performance and not from administrative factors.

iii. State how often exam questions are updated and the process for doing so.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

A rigorous process of question analysis is undertaken by CEO's Assessment Committee following an administration of the CACO in order to ensure that the questions included in the examination are unambiguous and discriminating. Questions that fail standard measures of their integrity are removed from scoring for all candidates.

The CEO Assessment Committee is responsible for specifying the structure of the CACO, setting minimum performance levels for the CACO, selecting questions from the assessment questions database for its written components, administering the CACO, and reporting.

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

The College expanded the number of tests available to administer the testing of the English language proficiency level of international applicants to permit the testing to occur outside of Canada. For example, the College now relies on the following tests: a) Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test, by the "Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks", - CLB level 8.0. b) International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic - minimum overall average of 7.5. c) CanTest - minimum overall average of 4.5.

The IOBP PLA exam ranking policy is used to guide the College's Registration Committee for the PLA exam scoring method and number of rewrites permitted.

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Training (10 / 13)

a) Describe the training that your organization provides to:

i. individuals who assess qualifications

The College has provided training to members of the Credential Assessment and Registration committees on anti-discrimination and fair registration practices in addition the committee members received training on how to compare the credentials of applicants for pre-registration to the UWOVS optometry degree courses. CEO has training for its own clinical assessors and test question writers for the CACO.

The IOBP has assessors who assess qualifications, conduct academic credentialing, administer prior learning assessments and deliver the Bridging Program:

- Individuals assessing academic credentials have attended workshops offered by WES on this topic.
- Clinical skills assessments are administered by optometric practitioners. These practitioners undergo an orientation session to familiarize them with expectations from candidates as well as cultural differences that might arise during the assessment process.
- The Bridging programs are delivered by optometric faculty at the University of Waterloo School of Optometry and Vision Science. Faculty members undergo performance evaluations with regard to their teaching on an annual basis.

ii. individuals who make registration decisions

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

College Registration Committee members are provided with an orientation session at the beginning of each fiscal year. Applicant requests for an internal review are infrequent so Registration Committee members are given additional information about their role and responsibilities prior to each review.

Both Registration Committee members and College staff attend relevant educational seminars. College staff receive registration-related newsletters. The College is a member of the Ontario Regulators for Access Consortium (ORAC); registration staff regularly attend ORAC meetings and learning days. College staff members also attend working group meetings of the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario where registration issues are discussed.

Registration Committee members and staff also register for Managing Cultural Differences workshops and attend anti-discrimination and human rights training sessions and webinars provided by World Education Services (WES).

iii. individuals who make internal review or appeal decisions

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

College Registration Committee members are provided with an orientation session at the beginning of each fiscal year. Applicant requests for an internal review are infrequent so Registration Committee members are given additional information about their role and responsibilities prior to each review.

Both Registration Committee members and College staff attend relevant educational seminars. College staff receive registration-related newsletters. The College is a member of the Ontario Regulators for Access Consortium (ORAC); registration staff regularly attend ORAC meetings and ORAC learning days. College

staff members also attend working group meetings of the Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario where registration issues are discussed.

Registration Committee members and staff also register for Managing Cultural Differences workshops and attend anti-discrimination and human rights training sessions and webinars provided by World Education Services (WES).

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

The Credential Assessment Committee, an arms-length committee, was set up to review the credentials of international applicants and compare them to WOVS optometry degree courses and make recommendations to the College's Registration Committee.

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Agreements on the Recognition of Qualifications (11 / 13)

Examples of agreements on the recognition of professional qualifications include mutual recognition, reciprocity and labour mobility agreements. Such agreements may be national or international, between regulatory bodies, associations or jurisdictions.

a) List any agreements on the recognition of qualifications that were in place during the reporting period.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

The Ontario Labour Mobility Act (OLMA) received Royal Assent on December 15, 2009. If there is a conflict between the provisions of the amended Registration Regulation (837/93) and the OLMA, the OLMA prevails.

b) Explain the impact of these agreements on the registration process or on applicants for registration.

*** SAME AS LAST YEAR ***

OLMA requires the College to register optometrists registered in another Canadian jurisdiction with very limited exceptions.

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

Data Collection (12 / 13)**Languages in which application information materials are available**

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

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

Paid staff employed by your organization

b) 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, 1 full-time employee and 1 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	9.1
Staff involved in appeals process	2.0
Staff involved in registration process	2.5

Countries where internationally educated applicants were initially trained

c) In the following table, enter the top source countries where your applicants¹ were originally trained in the profession (**excluding** Canada), along with the number of applicants from each of these source countries.

Enter the country names in descending order. (That is, enter the source country for the greatest number of your applicants in the top row, the source country for the second greatest number in the second row, etc.)

Use the dropdown menu provided in each row to select the country.

Note that only one country can be reported in each row. If two or more countries are tied, enter the information for these tied countries in separate rows.

Country of training (Canada excluded)	Number of applicants in the reporting year
U.S.	27
U.K.	14
China	2
Iran	2
Philippines	2
Russia	1
S. Africa	1
India	1
Egypt	1
New Zealand	1

¹Persons who have applied to start the process for entry to the profession.
Select "n/a" from the drop-down list if you do not track this information. Enter "0" in a "Number of applicants" field if you track the information, but the correct value is zero.

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained

d) Indicate where your members² were initially trained in the profession (use only whole numbers; do not enter commas or decimals).

The numbers to be reported in the **Members** row are the numbers on December 31st of the reporting year. For example, if you are reporting registration practices for the calendar year 2009, you should report the numbers of members in the different categories on December 31st of 2009.

	Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in the profession (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)					
	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total

Members on December 31st of the reporting year	1427	56	479	180	0	2142
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² Persons who are currently able to use the protected title or professional designation of the profession.

Enter "n/a" if you do not track this information. Enter "0" if you track the information, but the correct value is zero.

Additional comments:

Applications your organization processed in the past year

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

from January 1 st to December 31 st of 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)					
	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Unknown	Total
New applications received	64	3	36	25	0	128
Applicants actively pursuing licensing (applicants who had some contact with your organization in the reporting year)	28	3	19	34	0	84
Inactive applicants (applicants who had no contact with your organization in the reporting year)	3	0	3	7	0	13
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	1	0	0	0	0	1
Applicants who became						

FULLY registered members	49	0	27	17	0	93
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence³ but were not issued a licence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence³	1	0	0	0	0	1

³ An alternative class of licence enables its holder to practise with limitations, but additional registration requirements must be met in order for the member to be fully licenced. Please list and describe below the alternative classes of licence that your organization grants, such as student, intern, associate, provisional or temporary.

Enter "n/a" if you do not track this information. Enter "0" if you track the information, but the correct value is zero.

Additional comments:

	Class of licence	Description
a)	Academic Certificate of Registration	In order to be eligible for an Academic Certificate of Registration, the applicant must hold an 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 Council. An applicant for an Academic Certificate of Registration is not required to successfully complete the entry-to-practice exam (CACO).
b)		<input style="width: 100%; height: 30px;" type="text"/>

c)		<input type="text"/>
d)		<input type="text"/>
e)		<input type="text"/>
f)		<input type="text"/>
g)		<input type="text"/>
h)		<input type="text"/>
i)		<input type="text"/>
j)		<input type="text"/>

Reviews and appeals your organization processed in the past year

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

from January 1 st to December 31 st of 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)					
	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	0	0	0	0	0
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

Enter "n/a" if you do not track this information. Enter "0" if you track the information, but the correct value is zero.

Additional comments:

Please identify and explain the changes in your registration practices relevant to this section that occurred during the reporting year.

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Certification (13 / 13)

I hereby certify that:

- i. I have reviewed the information submitted in this Fair Registration Practices Report (the "Report").
- ii. To the best of my knowledge:
 - all information required to be provided in the Report is included; and
 - the information contained in the Report is accurate.

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

Title: Registrar

Date: March 1, 2013

