

Guidelines for Eliminating Bias

Effective Date: April 2017

Overview

These guidelines have been established to assist College staff and Registration Committee members by:

- a) identifying characteristics of bias, potential sources of bias, and/or circumstances that may compromise impartial assessment decisions;
- b) removing bias from Registration Committee meetings; and
- c) providing guidance to staff and Committee members if a situation of bias is identified.¹

a) Identifying characteristics of bias, potential sources of bias and/or potentially compromising circumstances

1. Registration Committee members must undergo an orientation/training session, annually, once the new Committee is convened.
2. College staff and Registration Committee members are encouraged to complete the “Human Rights 101” module, an e-learning module of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/human-rights-101>)
3. Decisions by the Registration Committee are communicated to the applicant using a template, which documents the criteria considered by the Committee when assessing an applicant’s good character (please refer to: the Assessing an Applicant’s Good Character policy: http://www.collegeoptom.on.ca/images/pdfs/Assessing_an_Applicants_Good_Character.pdf). Committee members should refer to precedent decisions and follow the same process for all applicants for registration.

b) Removing bias from Registration Committee meetings

4. Before being appointed to the Registration Committee, candidates who are not elected or appointed members of Council, must provide their curriculum vitae or resumé to the College for review by the College’s Executive Committee.

¹ “Taking the bias out of meetings,” by Dan Lovallo and Oliver Sibony, article – *McKinsey Quarterly* – April 2010

5. The Executive Committee is tasked with establishing balance in committee composition that is representative of the optometric community in Ontario.
6. Once the Committee members and Chair are approved by the College Council, Committee members should review the facts of each case prior to meeting and not arrive at a final decision until there is full discussion at the Committee level encouraged by the Committee Chair with the participation of all members of the Committee.
7. During Committee meetings, the Committee Chair, guided by the Committee support staff, should create the 'right' atmosphere by encouraging admissions of individual experiences and interests that create possible biases, at the same time encouraging others to speak-up; managing Committee discussions; and periodically stepping back and reviewing the decision processes.

c) Guidance to Staff and Committee members

8. If College staff and/or Committee members identify a situation of bias, they should bring the issue to the attention of the Committee Chair and Committee support staff. The Committee Chair should attempt, while recognizing sensitivities, to eliminate the situation by asking appropriate questions during the Committee meeting before the Committee reaches a decision.
9. Should a situation of bias occur and be repeated by the same Committee member, an attempt should be made by the Committee Chair to take the Committee member aside to speak to him/her. If this step does not result in successful elimination of the situation of bias, the Committee Chair and Committee support staff should bring the matter to the attention of the Executive Committee/Council.