

TO: Council

FROM: Registration Committee

DATE: May 28, 2019

SUBJECT: 19.2 Practicum Policy

Purpose: To seek Council approval of a proposed practicum policy which would be implemented when the new Registration Regulation comes into force.

Background: The College of Opticians of Ontario (the College) is currently seeking significant changes to its Registration Regulation. One of the proposed changes is to move the details of the practical experience requirement for registration into a policy (“practicum policy”).

Currently the details of the practical experience requirement are set out in regulation (specifically, the required 1000 hours of dispensing experience, and required number of eyeglass and contact lens “fits”). Moving this requirement to policy will allow the College to make quicker changes to the practical experience required for licensure. For example, changes may be deemed appropriate to reflect changing practice environments and/or advances in eyewear technology.

A practicum policy needs to be set before the new Registration Regulation can be enacted.

For Consideration: The Registration Committee is of the view that the initial practicum policy should simply reflect the current practical experience requirements in the regulation, since the current requirements are well-established and form part of existing education programs. The Registration Committee recognizes that a change to this policy will require significant consultation including with education institutions. The Registration Committee will conduct an environmental scan to begin looking at possible future changes to the practicum.

A draft practicum policy is attached as **Appendix A**.

Recommendations: The Registration Committee recommends that Council approve the draft practicum policy, which would come into effect when the new Registration Regulation is enacted.

Appendix A

DRAFT Practicum Policy

Introduction

This policy explains how the Registration Committee of the College of Opticians of Ontario (the College) evaluates the practical experience of an applicant for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician (RO).

The College's *[proposed, draft]* Registration Regulation provides that every applicant for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician (RO) must successfully complete a practicum approved by the Registration Committee.¹ A practicum is a course of practical opticianry experience supervised by an optician, optometrist or ophthalmologist. A practicum will usually form part of an opticianry education program.

Practicum Policy

The Registration Committee will approve a practicum if it meets the following criteria:

1. The practicum includes at least **1,000 hours of verified dispensing experience**.

The 1000 hours must be verified by the optician, optometrist or ophthalmologist who supervised this experience. If the dispensing experience is completed outside of Canada, an applicant must provide a sworn affidavit stating that they have completed the required 1000 hours of dispensing experience. The Affidavit must be sworn in the presence of a Commissioner of Oaths.

2. The practicum includes at least **250 eyeglasses fittings**, including 100 multifocal fittings and twenty-five high myopic or hyperopic fittings, under the supervision or direction of an optician, an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.
3. The practicum includes at least **20 contact lens fittings**, including at least **five rigid gas permeable (RGP) contact lens fittings**, under the supervision or direction of an optician who is certified in the fitting of contact lenses or an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.² The fittings must fulfill the requirements of the College's [Contact Lens Fittings Policy](#).

¹ This is the requirement set out in section 5(1)2 of the proposed amended Registration Regulation, as submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for approval on June 12, 2017.

² These requirements are identical to the requirements set out in the College's current [Registration Regulation](#), O. Reg. 869/93, Sections 5(1)3 and 5(2)2 and 3.

4. A supervisor must meet the College's requirements for supervision, as set out in the College's [Student and Intern Supervision Policy](#) and, with respect to contact lens fittings, the College's [Contact Lens Mentor Policy](#).

Exemptions to practical requirements

If an applicant has not successfully completed a practicum approved by the Registration Committee, the applicant may still be registered with the College, if the applicant successfully completes practical experience that, in the opinion of the Registration Committee, is equivalent to an approved practicum.

The Registration Committee may also grant exemptions to requirements 2 and 3 above (**eyeglass and contact lens fittings**). This may mean an applicant may be registered without having proof of completion of some or all of the required eyeglass and contact lens fittings. The Registration Committee may grant such an exemption if it is in the public interest to do. In order to grant an exemption, the Registration Committee may also require the applicant to successfully complete additional training and/or examinations. The Registration Committee may also impose restrictions on an optician's certificate of registration.