
NOVA SCOTIA
COLLEGE OF
OPTOMETRISTS
(NSCO)

Fair Registration
Practices Act (FRPA)
Review
July 2018

Province of Nova Scotia

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Executive Summary

Through the FRPA Review Process, the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists (NSCO) has indicated that, despite its small size, it is committed to taking some measures to promote transparency, impartiality, objectivity and procedural fairness of its registration practices. Through collaboration at the national level with the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC), NSCO has improved the consistency of the registration process for all applicants. To further the fair-access agenda in this context, NSCO should explore working with the FORAC to monitor the impact and challenges of the assessment process, examination and bridging requirements to ensure impartiality, objectivity, transparency and procedural fairness.

While I expect NSCO to partner with the FORAC to improve fair practice for the assessment and registration of international applicants at the national level, the regulators' 2018 Action Plan is local in focus.

Recommendations for further improvement include:

- Making enhancements to NSCO's online application system to enable applicants to track their application status and automatically send them notification once their application documents have been submitted.
- Improving transparency of registration information on NSCO's website.
- Developing policy or amending section 4 of the Regulations to address:
 - the provision of a written decision whether registration is granted, and
 - the timeframe for a registration decision to be made once the completed application has been submitted.
- Developing policy or bylaws regarding the internal review process, including:
 - the timeframe for an applicant to request an internal review;
 - the form of submissions for the internal review;
 - the timeframe for the internal review decision-maker to issue its decision, and
 - an explicit statement that no one who acted as a decision-maker in respect of a registration decision acted as decision maker in an internal review
- Creating policy around:
 - accepting alternative information when required documentation cannot be obtained for reasons beyond the applicant's control, and
 - providing applicants with access to the documentation pertaining to their application, and make this policy accessible to applicants.
- Developing and implementing a training plan for decision-makers, which may include training in administrative law and cultural competency.

I appreciate NSCO's cooperation during the conduct of the registration review and look forward to working with the regulator on the progress opportunities identified in its Action Plan.



Cara Spittal
Review Officer, Fair Registration Practices Act

Introduction

The purpose of the Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA) Review is to share the Review Officer's understanding of the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists' (NSCO) practices regarding the fair consideration of individuals applying for registration.¹ During the FRPA Review Process, a regulatory body's registration practices are measured against both the specific and general duties outlined in the *Fair Registration Practices Code*—all of which encompass the overarching principles of transparency, objectivity, impartiality and procedural fairness.²

The analysis is based on the FRPA Review Officer's work with the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists (NSCO) to date. The *Nova Scotia College of Optometrists 2018 Review* captures the results of the FRPA Review Process and includes an inventory of exemplary licensing practices and an Action Plan that holds the NSCO accountable for continuous improvement within two years of the review.

Through the 2018 FRPA Review, the FRPA Review Officer aims to build on the work of the NSCO to date and identify opportunities to further improve and evolve registration practices.

¹ For more information on the FRPA Review Process, see the *Guide to Fair Registration Practices Act*: http://novascotia.ca/lae/RplLabourMobility/documents/FRPA_GuidetoReviewProcess_WEB.pdf

² The *Fair Registration Practices Code* is delineated in Sections 6-12 of the Fair Registration Practices Act. *Government of Nova Scotia*. Ch. 38 of the Acts of 2008, as amended by 2014, c. 14.

Context of the Profession in Nova Scotia

Occupational Profile

An optometrist is an independent primary health care provider who specializes in the examination, diagnosis, treatment, management, and prevention of diseases and disorders of the vision system, the eye and associated structures as well as the diagnosis of related systemic conditions.

There are more than one hundred and thirty Doctors of Optometry widely distributed in communities throughout Nova Scotia, providing eye health care to the public. Optometrists examine, diagnose, measure and treat conditions of the eye by any method other than surgery. Optometrists prescribe, fit and apply glasses, contact lenses or other devices to correct, relieve or treat the eye. Other procedures or therapies may be prescribed to monitor and improve vision or eye health. Patients are referred to other health care practitioners as required.

Doctors of Optometry complete a four year professional degree in Optometry and Vision Science, usually after completing a Bachelor's degree in Science. Many Doctors of Optometry complete optional Residency and Fellowship programs as well.

Organizational Description

Optometrists who practice in Nova Scotia are licensed by the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists (NSCO). Through the Optometry Act of Nova Scotia, the province has given the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists the responsibility to govern its affairs and safeguard the public interest.

The College has two fundamental mandates that it exercises to protect the public:

- it licenses Optometrists, and
- it regulates and maintains standards of professional practice and conduct for the optometry profession in Nova Scotia.

Active Membership Requirements

To be an active member of the NSCO, applicants must meet the registration and renewal requirements for licensure as an Optometrist in Nova Scotia. Registered members must also stay current in both practice hours and continuing education hours as required by the Board and take part in Practice Assessment audit(s) when/if required.

Registration Requirements

All individuals wanting to practice optometry in Nova Scotia must meet the requirements for registration and licensing with the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists. The requirements for registration are set out in the Optometry Act and its Regulations, primarily (but not solely) in the *Registration and Licensing Regulation*, s. 3

Eligibility for Registration

3 To be eligible for registrations, an applicant must meet all of the following qualifications:

- (a) the applicant must successfully complete 1 or more examinations by an examining body approved by the Board;
- (b) the applicant must successfully complete the Canadian Standard Assessment of Optometry or its equivalent;
- (c) the applicant [must] possess the professional liability insurance required by Section 33; and
- (d) the applicant must pass a test of language proficiency in French or English.

CFTA Transfers

Applicants applying under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), now the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), are required to show they are in good standing in the jurisdiction they are practicing as well as those jurisdictions they may have previously practiced. The applicants must also provide verification that they have completed a minimum of 250 hours of primary optometric care in a Canadian jurisdiction during the previous 12-month period commencing the day the application is received. This verification is not a requirement for initial licenses and only commences one year after graduation.

International Applicants

Registration of an International candidate starts with the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC). FORAC is the national voice of optometric regulatory bodies in the 10 provinces and 3 territories. Internationally educated optometrists or eye care professionals seeking registration to practice optometry in any Canadian Province or Territory (except Quebec), must have their credentials assessed by FORAC. Once an applicant has successfully completed the International Bridging Program through the University of Waterloo and the Optometry Board of Canada exam, he/she may apply for licensure in Nova Scotia.

Organizational Structure and Staffing

The NSCO Board consists of 5 Directors elected from the membership by secret ballot held in conjunction with its annual meeting and two Directors who are appointed by the province to be the public members on the Board. Board members serve for a term of three years and shall not serve for more than three consecutive terms. The NSCO has four part-time staff members, an Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Administrator and Accountant. In addition to the Board there are standing committees such as, Registration, Complaints, Hearing, Legislation, Mediation and Practice Enhancement.

Types of Licenses/Certificates Issued

The NSCO only grants practicing licenses to those applicants who meet all of the requirements for licensure.

In 2017, the NSCO had 136 licensed optometrists at year end.

Overview of Registration Process

Registration Information

Applicants applying for registration can review the requirements on the NSCO website or may contact the NSCO Administrator by email, phone or in person. An application form, along with all other required documents/fees are submitted to complete the applicant's file. Once the file is complete, the applicant must then pass a jurisprudence exam. Upon successful completion of the jurisprudence exam, a licensing application and invoice will be issued to the applicant. When the licensing application is completed and all fees are paid, a license to practice optometry in the province of Nova Scotia will be issued. As of November 2017, the application and licensing process is completed solely online.

Registration Process

National (Canada & US) and AIT Applicant:

Must provide/complete the following:

- Application Form
- Recent Passport photo
- Proof of Canadian citizenship
 - notarized copy birth certificate or citizenship papers

- If applicable, Permanent resident status under Immigration Act (Canada)
 - notarized copy of certificate showing permanent residence status
- If applicable, authorization under the Immigration Act (Canada) to engage in practice of optometry – notarized copy of authorization
- Certified copies of all Academic transcripts in support of all degrees & qualifications
 - **have institutions send directly to NSCO**
- Certificate of Standing form completed from all jurisdictions in which licensed
 - **Please have form(s) sent directly to NSCO**
- Two confidential assessment forms
 - **Referees to send completed forms directly to the NSCO.** Please note, in section B of the form, referee asked to comment on traits such as moral/ethical character of applicant. Referees should be someone who has known applicant and can speak to character.
- Payment of application/jurisprudence exam fees
- Jurisprudence examination
- Complete license application
- Payment of licensing fees

**Candidates should expect a three month processing period after sitting the OEBC before obtaining final registration in Nova Scotia.*

International applicant:

Step 1

Contact the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC). FORAC is responsible for the credential assessment of candidates.

Step 2

Complete the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP) at the University of Waterloo.

Step 3

Successful completion of the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) national exam.

Step 4

Begin the NSCO application process.

Applicants must provide/complete the following:

- Application Form
- Recent Passport photo - notarized
- Proof of Canadian citizenship
 - notarized copy birth certificate or citizenship papers
- If applicable, Permanent resident status under Immigration Act (Canada)
 - notarized copy of certificate showing permanent residence status
- If applicable, authorization under the Immigration Act (Canada) to engage in practice of optometry – notarized copy of authorization
- Certified copies of all Academic transcripts in support of all degrees & qualifications
 - **have institutions send directly to NSCO**
 - **with respect to degree obtained date, if you have not yet received your degree, declare your expected degree and date of graduation.**

- Certificate of Standing form completed from all jurisdictions in which licensed
- **Please have form(s) sent directly to the NSCO**
- Two confidential assessment forms
- **Referees to send completed forms directly to the NSCO.** Please note, in section B of the form, referee asked to comment on traits such as moral/ethical character of applicant. Referees should be someone who has known applicant and can speak to character.
- Payment of application/jurisprudence exam fees
- Jurisprudence examination
- Complete license application
- Payment of licensing fees

***Candidates should expect up to a three-month processing period after sitting the OEBC before obtaining final registration in Nova Scotia.**

Cost of Registration (including payment methods)

Payment methods are by cash, cheque, money order or credit card.

All applicants pay a \$500 application fee. It includes the jurisprudence examination fee of \$200.

The initial licensing fee is pro-rated and is based on the month an applicant becomes licensed. The 2017 fees are listed below.

Pro-Rated Monthly												
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Dues	1,553.00	1,423.58	1,294.17	1,164.75	1,035.33	905.92	776.50	647.08	517.67	388.25	258.83	129.42
HST	232.95	213.54	194.13	174.71	155.30	135.89	116.48	97.06	77.65	58.24	38.83	19.41
Total	1,785.95	1,637.12	1,488.29	1,339.46	1,190.63	1,041.80	892.98	744.15	595.32	446.49	297.66	148.83

For International Candidates, an approximate breakdown of the costs follows:

- WES (ICAP) - \$245.00
- Credential Assessment fee - \$1299.50
- Translations – payment is the responsibility of applicant/fees will vary
- Documents from Universities – payment is the responsibility of applicant/fees will vary
- IGOEE exam – \$5000.00
- Bridging Program U of Waterloo (tuition) – \$47,326
- OEBC exam – \$6200.00
- Approximate total - \$60,070.50

Once all of these steps completed/fees paid, an international candidate would then have to apply for licensure in Nova Scotia and pay the application fee (\$500.00+HST) and the applicable licensing fee in the table above.

2017 Registration Data

The following is a copy of the information provided to the FRPA Review Office through the Annual Assessment Questionnaire.

#	Question	Response
1	Total number of individuals with practicing licenses/certifications. Do not report on any licenses or certificates you issue to a business, school or group.	136
2	Number of registrations for the reporting year, from applicants who received their qualifications as indicated below:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) in NS, new applicant. 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications in Canada, new applicant - n/a for trades - issue a Certification of Qualification. 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) internationally, new applicant. 	5
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIT/CFTA Transfers, applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction. 	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of applicants. 	11
3	Types of practicing licenses/certificates you issue and total number of individuals for each type identified for the reporting year.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optometry License 	11
4	Number of completed applications submitted by applicants who received their qualifications as indicated below.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) in NS, new applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted: 0 Rejected: 0 Still in process: 0 Withdrawn: 0 File inactive or closed: 0 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications in Canada, new applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted: 2 Rejected: 0 Still in process: 0 Withdrawn: 0 File inactive or closed: 0 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) internationally, new applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted: 5 Rejected: 0 Still in process: 0 Withdrawn: 0 	

	○ <i>File inactive or closed:</i>	0
	● AIT/CFTA transfers, applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction:	
	○ <i>Accepted:</i>	4
	○ <i>Rejected:</i>	0
	○ <i>Still in process:</i>	0
	○ <i>Withdrawn:</i>	0
	○ <i>File inactive or closed:</i>	0
5	For those new Canadian applicants (not NS), list the provinces in Canada (and associated numbers) where the level of education to qualify the applicant for licensure (training or work experience for trades) was obtained.	
	● Ontario	2
6	For new international applicants, list the source countries (and associated numbers) where the applicant received the level of education to qualify them for licensure (training or work experience for trades).	
	● United States of America	4
	● Wales	1
7	Average length of time (in days) between receipt of a completed application and response to the applicant, for those who received their qualifications as indicated below. Response to the applicant to include whether they meet the requirements, partially meet and need to fill gaps, or there is no match and other pathways might be a consideration.	
	● Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) in NS, new applicant:	0
	● Received qualifications in Canada, new applicant:	2
	● Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) internationally, new applicant:	2
	● AIT/CFTA transfers, applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction:	2
8	Average registration process time (or application approval) for those who received their qualifications as indicated below.	
	● Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) in NS, new applicant:	0
	● Received qualifications in Canada, new applicant - n/a for trades - issue a Certification of Qualification	12
	● Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) internationally, new applicant	7
	● AIT/CFTA transfers, applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction	11
9	Total costs (to the applicant) associated with registration (certification) for applicants who received their qualifications as indicated below. Separate costs that the regulatory body themselves imposes on the applicant from other necessary costs incurred related to registration.	
	● Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) in NS, new applicant:	Regulatory body costs: 0 Other: 0

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications in Canada, new applicant: 	Regulatory body costs: \$582.38 (pro-rated on a monthly basis) Other: \$500.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) internationally, new applicant 	Regulatory body costs: \$776.50 (pro-rated on a monthly basis) Other: \$500 (Not including bridging program costs)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIT/CFTA transfers, applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction: 	Regulatory body costs: \$679.44 (pro-rated on a monthly basis) Other: \$500
10	Number of appeals, internal reviews or challenges related to a registration decision from applicants who received their qualifications as indicated below:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) in NS, new applicant: 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications in Canada, new applicant: 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) internationally, new applicant 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIT/CFTA transfers, applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction: 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of appeals, internal reviews or challenges related to a registration decision: 	0
11	Length of time the appeals or internal review process took for applicants who received their qualifications as indicated below:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) in NS, new applicant: 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications in Canada, new applicant: 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received qualifications (training/work experience for trades) internationally, new applicant: 	0
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AIT/CFTA transfers, applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction: 	0
12	What does registration with your organization authorize?	
	Scope of Practice Rights and rights to use an Occupational Title - International candidates may not use the term O.D. after their name as they do not earn this degree. They may however use the term Dr.	

Exemplary Practices

As part of its continuous improvement strategy, the FRPA Review Office identifies the commendable practices of regulated professions in Nova Scotia.

An Exemplary Practice is defined as program, activity or strategy that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- improves transparency, objectivity, impartiality and/or fairness of registration practices;
- produces successful outcomes for regulators and/or applicants; and
- is shown to be effective through qualitative and/or quantitative data.

The Nova Scotia College of Optometrists is committed to ensuring that applicants have access to registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair. During the FRPA Review Process, the progressive steps that the NSCO has taken to improve registration practices were brought to light, including:

Name of the Exemplary Practice:	
Exemplary Practice Category:	<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable alternatives for meeting registration requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Training for decision-makers <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition of prior learning / work experience <input type="checkbox"/> Governance <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural competency, equity, diversity and inclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration at regional, national level <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach <input type="checkbox"/> Making or communicating registration decisions <input type="checkbox"/> Workforce integration <input type="checkbox"/> Impartial, objective and consistent assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Exams <input type="checkbox"/> Preparation and pre-arrival supports <input type="checkbox"/> Appeals <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment criteria and methods
Description:	<p>The Nova Scotia College of Optometrists is a member of the Federation of Optometry Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC). FORAC is the national voice of optometric regulatory bodies in 10 provinces and 3 territories. It is dedicated to facilitating discussion, exchanging information, providing a national voice and communicating with others about legislation, registration, standards of practice, continuing competence and any other issues related to the health care system that includes the profession of optometry.</p> <p>The NSCO's Registrar regularly attends FORAC board meetings. As a member of the board, he is able to comment and give opinion on registration issues.</p>
Value to Applicants:	<p>Participation in FORAC promotes and enhances the regulation of the profession of optometry. The integrity of the Federation is demonstrated by its ethical conduct, fairness, openness and accountability. Internationally educated applicants or eye care professionals seeking registration in any Canadian province or territory must first contact FORAC to have their credentials assessed. The value to the applicants is that they are dealing with a national institution that regulates the profession in a transparent and safe manner and there are national standards in place.</p>
Value for Regulator:	<p>Opinions on regulatory issues are voiced at a national level with a collaborative body.</p>
Link to further information:	<p>www.FORAC-faroc.ca</p>

Fair-access Analysis

Overall, the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists' registration practices comply with *the Fair Registration Practices Code* as outlined in Sections 6 to 12 of the *Act (FRPA)*.

Per Section 16 of the Act, the registration practices of a regulating body must be reviewed and a public report produced. The FRPA Office works with the regulatory bodies to assess their registration practices against the Fair-access Guidelines listed below, and develop an Action Plan to help each organization comply with the Act and improve their registration practices.

The NSCO's responses to the FRPA Review Survey are detailed below, along with the Review Findings determined by the Review Officer in accordance with the Act.

FRPA Review Questionnaire and Assessment

	Question	Respondent Answer	Compliance Guideline	Review Finding	FRPA Reference
1a	How (what methods) do you use to provide information to potential applicants on your registration practices? (i.e. internet, individual counselling, hard copies)?	<p><i>Internet</i> <i>email</i> <i>Hard Copy</i> <i>Telephone</i></p> <p><i>Websites that explain the registration practices are, www.nSCO.ca, www.FORAC-faroc.ca and www.uwaterloo.ca/optometry</i></p> <p><i>Students can begin the application process in their final semester of school. They may begin to fill out the application and upload the required documents as received. Their application will not be considered complete until all required documents and fees are received. Throughout the process, the College will communicate in detail with applicants confirming when requirements are met and/or are still outstanding at each step.</i></p>	<p>Level 1 Paper forms and information made available to applicants via regular post, Telephone</p> <p>Level 2 E-mail forms and information, telephone.</p> <p>Forms and information can be downloaded from website to be emailed / faxed / mailed in after completion</p> <p>Level 3 Automated on-line form on website and information is easily accessible on a website</p> <p>Process in place for applicants to</p>	Level 2	16(3)(g)

			track application status		
1b	Can applicant begin the process outside of Canada?	Yes <i>Easily started outside of Canada. All information and forms available on the websites (FORAC/NSCO) mentioned in Question 1. Email addresses also listed for inquiries</i>	Level 1 No Level 2 Yes	Level 2	
2	Please provide a link to your website.	www.nSCO.ca	Level 1 No website	Level 2	16(3)(g)
2a	I believe that information on our website is: clear and understandable, written in plain language?	<input type="radio"/> 1 (Strongly Agree) <input checked="" type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 (Strongly Disagree)	Level 2 Website is not up to date Website is not in plain language Website does not have links for international applicants		
2b	On what basis do you make changes to your website?	<i>Feedback from Applicants</i>	Website does not contain all forms and/or guidelines		
2c	When was the section of the website pertaining to registration last updated?	<i>Within the last 6 months</i> <i>Our website was completely revamped in October 2017. Looked to NS College of Physicians and Surgeons and Ontario/BC/NB colleges of Optometry for style and content that appealed to us.</i>	Level 3 Website content is reviewed for accuracy and updated annually Website is in plain language Website is easy to navigate (e.g. international applicants) Website contains all forms and/or guidelines Information on pathway to licensure		

3a	Are your requirements (e.g. education, work experience, examination and fees) for registration specified by legislation, regulation and/or policy?	<i>Regulation</i>	Level 1 Policy describing the registration process does not exist or is not documented	Level 2	7(a), 7(c), 7(f), 16(3)(a), 16(3)(d)
3b	Specify the appropriate section(s)	<i>NSCO Regulations 3&4</i>	Documents only available upon specific request		
3c	Is this information made available to applicants	<i>Yes</i>	Level 2 Policy exists to describe certain aspect of registration process Available to the applicant Level 3 Policy exist to describe all aspects of the registration practices Available to the applicant		
4	Are you waiting for legislation to be passed?	<i>Yes</i> <i>We have been waiting for amendments to our Regulations for several years now. First submission made in 2013 and then updated in 2016. Still in process.</i>	N/A	N/A	
5a	Is the criteria for meeting the requirements of registration documented?	<i>Yes</i>	Level 1 Criteria is made available to applicants verbally but no supplemental documentation	Level 2	7(d), 16(3)(b)
5b	Do you provide applicants with the description of the criteria used to assess whether the requirements have been met (i.e. the	<i>Yes</i> <i>For North American graduates from Accredited Optometric schools, they would need to refer to the NSCO</i>	Level 2		

	number of years of schooling needed to be considered equivalent to a degree)?	<p><i>website/office for the information/documents required for licensure.</i></p> <p><i>For international candidates, they would need to consult the FORAC website/office and complete all of the listed requirements, then complete the university of Waterloo bridging program and then finally the NSCO requirements for licensure</i></p>	<p>Criteria is documented and made available to applicants</p> <p>Limited information about the standard you will be assessed against</p> <p>Level 3 Criteria is documented and made available to applicants</p> <p>Criteria clearly outlines all assessment methods to be used and what competencies are being assessed by each method</p> <p>Applicants know the required standards that they will be assessed to</p>		
6	If you require translation of specific documents how is the applicant informed?	<p><i>Web site</i> <i>Email</i> <i>Telephone</i></p> <p><i>Documents are already translated once an applicant has applied for licensure in Nova Scotia through FORAC</i></p>	<p>Level 1 No indication of translation requirements</p> <p>Available to applicants upon request</p> <p>Level 2 Translation requirements indicated but not specific</p>	Level 2	7(a)

			Available to applicants Level 3 Translation requirements documented with specific instruction Available to applicants		
7	Do you have a streamlined registration process for those applicants already registered in another Canadian jurisdiction (as per Chapter 7 Canadian Free Trade Agreement)?	Yes	Level 1 Yes – process not documented Level 2 Yes – process documented Level 3 Yes – process documented and made public on website Any additional requirements approved by government are explained on website	Level 2	3
8	Does your organization make accommodation for applicants with physical or mental disability?	Yes <i>Accommodations are made at the FORAC level, University of Waterloo, OEBC and NSCO</i>	Level 1 Yes – process not documented Level 2 Yes – process documented Level 3 Yes – process documented and available to applicant	Level 1	16(3)(h)

9a	Is any of your assessment process conducted by a third party (i.e. national bodies, credential assessment agencies, etc.)?	Yes	<p>Level 1 Regulatory body assumes that the certifying organization meets FRPA standards</p> <p>Level 2 Regulatory body has received documentation indicating that the certifying organization meets FRPA standards</p> <p>Level 3 Regulatory body has influence with the certifying organization (e.g. membership) or has an agreement with the certifying organization</p>	Level 3	16(3)(i)
9b	If so, please specify the name of the organization and describe their role.	<i>FORAC is a federation of the optometric regulatory and licensing bodies in Canada Touchstone Institute - Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination. University of Waterloo - International Bridging Program. OEBC - National licensing exam</i>			
9c	Please indicate the types of activities that they assist with.	<i>Credential assessment Verification of documents Examinations Recognition of prior learning</i>			
9d	Can you describe how they adhere to the General Duties of the Regulatory Body as outlined in the Act, including transparency, objectivity, impartiality and procedural fairness?	<i>Participation on board The NSCO is a member of FORAC and is represented by our Registrar. This membership provides us input into the process and updates. The Registrar's input assists in standardizing the registration practices across Canada and bringing any provincial registration matters to FORAC's attention.</i>			
9e	Are you informed of all decisions made by third parties on applicants?	No			
9f	Does the third party have an internal review process for unsuccessful applicants?	<i>Yes FORAC has an internal review process. As well at the IOGEE exam, University of Waterloo and OEBC exam.</i>			
10a	What types of supports do you provide to applicants during the registration process?	<i>Internet Telephone Print material</i>	<p>Level 1 None</p> <p>Level 2 Multiple types of supports exist but not well documented</p>	Level 3	7(e), 16(3)(k)
10b	Have you had applicants who need support mechanisms that you can't	No			

	provide or are not available?		Level 3 Multiple types of support exist, well defined and accessible		
11	Where practical, do you provide unsuccessful applicants with information on programs and services they can participate in to facilitate successful registration in the future?	Yes <i>Unsuccessful applicants advised of their shortfalls during credentialing assessment by FORAC</i>	Level 1 Only upon request Not documented Level 2 Yes – not documented Level 3 Yes – documented and available to applicant Applicants are told what their competencies gaps are that need to be addressed	Level 3	8(d)
12	Do you have a reasonable timeframe to respond to inquiries from applicants?	<input type="radio"/> 1 <i>Very Reasonable</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <i>Very Unreasonable</i> <i>Typically within a few days via email or phone</i>	Level 1 No policy Level 2 Policy in Place Level 3 Policy in place and accessible	Level 2	7(b), 8(a), 8(b), 8(c)
13 a	Do you provide written decisions, responses and reasons for acceptance or rejection of an application?	Yes	Level 1 Upon request, limited documentation and no standard timeline Level 2	Level 2	8(b), 8(c), 10
13 b	Do you have a formal policy for this process?	Yes			
	Do you have a standard timeline	No			

			Some documentation Level 3 Well-documented process with clearly established timelines		
13 c	Do you provide applicants who are not granted registration with information regarding an internal review process (including the opportunity to make submissions respecting such reviews?)	Yes	Level 1 Yes – upon request, limited documentation Level 2 Yes – limited documentation	Level 2	
13 d	Based on the previous questions, describe ways your organization could improve the timeliness of your decisions and/or how you could communicate the results.	<i>The timelines are very reasonable (FORAC). The NSCO has not turned down an applicant since its inception in 2006.</i>	Level 3 Yes – well documented process		
14 a	Do you provide information on what documentation of qualifications must accompany an application?	Yes	Level 1 Documents indicated and communicated verbally	Level 2	9(a), 16(3)(a), 16(3)(b), 16(3)(e)
14 b	Do you include a process for verification of documentation authenticity?	Yes <i>The NSCO application and proof of Canadian citizenship must be notarized. Proof of academic degrees must come directly from the degree granting institutions. No photocopies are accepted.</i>	Level 2 List of required documents indicated on website Process to verify document authenticity Level 3 N/A		

15	Do you provide information on the steps in the registration process including supporting documentation required at the various steps?	<p>Yes</p> <p><i>Applicants are provided with a registration guide, application and forms that must be completed. They also receive emails indicating if any documents are missing for their application/what is still outstanding</i></p>	<p>Level 1 General information Not broken into steps</p> <p>Level 2 Step by step process indicate where applicant needs to supply information</p> <p>Level 3 Step by step process indicate where applicant needs to supply information Pathway to licensure</p>	Level 3	7(c), 16(3)(a), 16(3)(b)
16	Do you accept alternative information if required documents cannot be obtained for reasons beyond the applicant's control (i.e. a sworn statement in lieu of full documentation)?	<p>Yes</p> <p><i>The NSCO once had a case where an international applicant could not obtain proof of education/licensing in home country because of war. The documents that they submitted to the University of Waterloo for their bridging program were accepted by the NSCO in this particular case.</i></p>	<p>Level 1 Yes – on a case by case basis</p> <p>Level 2 Yes – examples documented Process not clearly laid out or documented</p> <p>Level 3 Yes – process clearly documented</p>	Level 2	9(b), 16(3)(c)
17	What difficulties or obstacles are faced by applicants who received their qualifications in a country other than Canada?	<p><i>Obtaining original documents</i> <i>Verification of credentials</i> <i>Identifying and participating in gap training programs</i> <i>Language proficiency or professional technical language</i></p>	N/A	N/A	6, 9(b), 16(3)(c)

		<i>All of these obstacles are reviewed and addressed by FORAC before their application goes forward to the University of Waterloo</i>			
18 a	Do you have a process for which requests for access documentation related to registrations are considered?	<i>Yes</i>	Level 1 Not documented Level 2 Documented Level 3 Documented and made available to applicants	Level 1	12, 16(3)(j)
18 b	Is this made available to applicants?	<i>Yes</i>			
18 c	What information may you exclude?	<i>Applicants can access their file.</i>			
18 d	Do you charge a fee?	<i>No</i>			
19	Does your Act include an authority to conduct an internal review of the registration decision?	<i>No</i>	Level 1 N/A Level 2 N/A Level 3 Yes	N/A	7(a)
20	Do you have a regulation or by-law that defines the internal review process?	<i>No</i> <i>This is typically done through FORAC at the beginning of the registration process. They have an internal review appeals process.</i> <i>The NSCO has a review process. It is described in NSCO Regulation 4(6).</i>	Level 1 N/A Level 2 N/A Level 3 Yes	Level 3	7(a), 10
21	When are unsuccessful candidates informed of their right to internal review of the registration decision?	<i>Other - an internal review is completed by FORAC. An applicant who is denied registration at the NSCO level must be notified of this decision and the appeal process.</i>	Level 1 No specific timeline Level 2 Specific timeline Not documented Level 3 Specific timeline	Level 1	7(a), 10(1)

			Documented and communicated		
22 a	Do you have an internal review process and procedures document (policy document)?	Yes	Level 1 Yes Not documented	Level 1	7(a), 10(1)
22 b	Does this include time frames for the internal review?	Yes <i>Please see the FORAC appeal policy in the Appendix</i>	Level 2 Yes Documented Level 3 Yes Documented and available to applicant		
23 a	With regards to the internal review process you make available to applicants that are not granted registration: summarize the process of the internal review.	Please see the FORAC appeal policy in the Appendix	Level 1 Not documented Level 2 Documented Level 3 Documented and made available to applicant	Level 1	7(a), 10, 16(3)(m)
23 b	Describe the opportunities made available to an applicant to make submissions respecting such review.	Please see the FORAC appeal policy in the Appendix			
23 c	Specify the format for the internal review submission	<i>Written</i>			
23 d	What is the timeline for submitted supporting evidence?	<i>Days</i>			
23 e	Do you believe this is enough time to receive supporting evidence from outside Canada?	Yes			
24 a	Are the results of the internal review made available to applicants in writing with reasons?	Yes	Level 1 Yes Level 2	Level 1	

24 b	In what timeframe are the results of the internal review made available to applicants?	<i>1-2 months</i>	Yes Specific timeline Level 3		7(a), 10(3)
24 c	Are these timelines communicated?	<i>Yes</i> Please see the FORAC appeal policy in the Appendix	Yes Specific timeline and communicated		
25	Have individuals who make internal review decisions received appropriate training?	<i>Yes</i> <i>Members of the COEC receive training related to the credentialing process only</i>	N/A	N/A	7(a), 11, 16(3)(p)
26	Do you have a prohibition that states that ‘no one who acted as a decision-maker in respect of a registration decision acted as a decision-maker in an internal review?’	<i>Yes</i> Please see the FORAC appeal policy in the Appendix	Level 1 N/A Level 2 N/A Level 3 Yes	N/A	7(a), 10(5), 16(3)(n)
27	Do you have any international agreements (i.e. reciprocal recognition) endorsed by your regulatory body or national organization?	<i>No</i>	N/A	N/A	7
28	Has your organization experienced any unintended consequences—defined as an unintended negative impact on labour market, economic, social or other condition—arising as a result of the implementation of Chapter 7 of the Agreement on Internal Trade / Canadian Free Trade Agreement?	<i>No</i>	N/A	N/A	3
29	Does your legislation and/or regulations include labour mobility provisions (i.e. the ability to accept applicants	<i>Yes</i>	N/A	N/A	Chapter 7, CFTA

	already certified in another Canadian jurisdiction regardless of the requirements in the previous jurisdiction?				
30	Do you review the requirements of the other provincial regulatory bodies regularly?	Yes <i>That is something FORAC does regularly</i>	N/A	N/A	3, Chapter 7, CFTA
31 a	Has your organization made any changes to the occupational standards in your legislation, regulations and/or by-laws (i.e. entry to practice standards, continuing education requirements, codes of ethics) within the last two years?	Yes <i>Our bylaws were reviewed and revised in 2017 by our Standards committee, Board and legal council</i>	N/A	N/A	
31 b	If yes, did you work with the Labour Mobility Coordinator or a Provincial Government representative to complete an AIT/CFTA notification (i.e. notification form sent prior to approval that informs other Canadian jurisdictions of the proposed change)?	No			

FRPA Action Plan

In accordance with the *Fair Registration Practices Code*, the FRPA Action Plan outlines the measures that the NSCO has agreed to work towards before the commencement of its next FRPA Review.

#	Action	Questionnaire Reference	FRPA Reference	Plan for Completion
1	<p>Enhance the online application system with the ability for applicants to track their application status, or to automatically send applicants a notification once their application documents have been submitted and the application is sent to the Registrar.</p> <p><i>(in the meantime)</i></p> <p>Specify on the NSCO website how long an applicant should allow before contacting the NSCO to enquire about the status of their application.</p>	1, 13	6	<p>Will work on this over the next 12-18 months.</p> <p><i>(in the meantime)</i></p> <p>Will post on the website that an applicant should wait 5 business days before contacting us to enquire about their application.</p>
2	<p>Create delineated sections on the NSCO website to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specific registration requirements, • registration criteria, including criteria to address the good character requirement, • required documentation, including document translation requirements, • the timelines for each stage of the application process that is under the NSCO's control, and • a step-by-step registration process, including a visual pathway to licensure, for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new members • inter-provincial and territorial transfers; and • internationally trained applicants. 	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15	7	Changes will be made following completion of report.
3	<p>Enhance the NSCO website to describe what steps of the registration process for internationally-educated applicants can be completed pre-arrival.</p>	1, 10, 17	6	Changes will be made following completion of report.

4	Add the NSCO's bylaws to the Regulations section of the website.	2	6	Will be posted following completion of report
5	Develop a policy regarding accommodations for applicants with disabilities, particularly on the jurisprudence exam.	8	16(3)(h)	Will review sample policy and amend for NSCO's use. Next 12 months
6	Add information to the Contact Us webpage on the timeframe for responding to enquiries.	12	8(a)	Will specify 48 hours before responding Changes will be made following completion of report.
7	Develop a policy, or amend section 4 of the Regulations to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of a written decision whether or not registration is granted, and • the timeframe for a registration decision to be made once the completed application has been submitted. 	13	8(b)-(c)	Will develop over the next 12-18 months
8	Develop a policy regarding accepting alternative information when required documentation cannot be obtained for reasons beyond the applicant's control.	16	9(b)	Will review sample policy and amend for NSCO's use. Next 12 – 18 months
9	Develop a policy around providing applicants with access to the documentation pertaining to their application, and make this policy accessible to applicants.	18	12	Will review sample policy and amend for NSCO's use. Next 12 – 18 months
10	Develop policy or bylaws regarding the internal review process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the timeframe for an applicant to request an internal review; • the form of submissions for the internal review; • the timeframe for the internal review decision-maker to issue its decision, and • an explicit statement that no one who acted as a decision-maker in respect of a registration decision acted as decision maker in an internal review 	20-24, 26	10	Next 18 – 24 months

11	Develop a training plan for internal review decision-makers, which may include training in administrative law and cultural competency.	25	11	NSCO Board and committee personnel undergo mediation/complaint and hearing training annually. Internal review training could be arranged at an ad hoc basis or when required.
12	<p>Follow-up with the OEBC on the ability of international applicants to challenge the OEBC exam directly following the IGOEE exam, and request that the OEBC update their website accordingly.</p> <p>Request that FORAC explore the impact of removing the Bridging 1 program from the pathway to licensure for international applicants.</p> <p>Discuss coordination of the registration process for international applicants at the national level, such as ensuring that IGOEE exam results are received in time for applicants to apply for the bridging program.</p> <p>Work with the 3rd parties to develop an evaluating exam that will enable internationally trained applicants to bypass the bridging program when they demonstrate the required competencies for practice.</p>	9	16(3)(i)	<p>The website is correct. OEBC candidates may challenge the exam directly following the IGOEE exam.</p> <p>This decision has been made. Not enough candidates for Bridging 1 and could not ensure that standards were being met with this program.</p> <p>Matter for FORAC</p> <p>Can challenge the exam now.</p>

Disclaimer

The Nova Scotia College of Optometrists hereby declares that the information contained in this report is a true and accurate representation of current registration practices of their organization.

Registrar

Date

Appendix

- ✓ NSCO Application Form
- ✓ NSCO Certificate of Standing Form
- ✓ NSCO Application Guide
- ✓ FORAC Guide for International Applicants
- ✓ FORAC Sample Assessment Letter

APPLICATION FORM FOR REGISTRATION

as an **Optometrist** in the Province of Nova Scotia (to the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists)

The Optometry Act (2005)

Amended: May 29, 2014

Please do not fold this form. Please complete this form in PRINT or TYPE

A.

Last Name: _____

Given Names: _____
(Underline the name you commonly use)

Current Address: _____

Current Telephone Number: () _____

E-mail Address: _____

(Please attach a recent passport photo here)

Address to which you want all correspondence mailed after the current academic term:

Telephone Number: () _____

1. Are you able to speak and write with reasonable fluency in:
 the English Language Yes ___ No ___
 the French Language Yes ___ No ___
2. Are you a Canadian Citizen? Yes ___ No ___
(If YES please provide a notarized copy of your birth certificate or citizenship papers and go to Question 5)
3. Do you have permanent resident status under the Immigration Act (Canada)? Yes ___ No ___
(If YES please provide a notarized copy of your certificate showing permanent resident status)
4. Do you have authorization under the Immigration Act (Canada) to engage in the practice of optometry? Yes ___ No ___
(If YES please provide a notarized copy of your authorization)
5. Have you ever applied for a license or certificate of registration to practice optometry and had your application refused or rejected? Yes ___ No ___
6. Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or an offence under the Narcotic Control Act (Canada) or the Food and Drug Act (Canada)? Yes ___ No ___

If your answer to question 5 or question 6 is YES please provide details:

(If you require more space please attach second page)

****Each case regarding citizen status will be considered individually****

B. EDUCATION RECORD

Attach certified copies of Academic Transcripts to support all degrees and qualifications declared on this form.

NEW GRADUATES ONLY – may submit the final transcript no later than June 30.

1. Doctor of Optometry Degree or the comparable degree of _____ awarded by
_____ of the _____ of _____, 20_____.
(day) (month)

2. List additional qualifications (degrees, fellowships, certificates)

Qualifications	Institution	Date
----------------	-------------	------

3. If candidate has passed the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO) attach certified copies of documents supporting this qualification. Date CACO was written: _____

C. OPTOMETRISTS PRESENTLY IN PRACTICE

Please complete this section by listing any jurisdiction (i.e. province, state) in which you have been licensed and have practiced.

LOCATION

DATES OF PRACTICE IN THAT LOCATION

Are you applying for registration under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)? Yes ___ No ___

D.

1. ALL CANDIDATES please have the enclosed TWO CANDIDATE CONFIDENTIAL ASSESSMENT (CHARACTER REFERENCE) FORMS completed and send directly to the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists.
2. PRACTICING OPTOMETRISTS ONLY, please have the enclosed CERTIFICATE OF STANDING FORM(S) completed by the licensing authority(ies) listed above and sent directly to the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists.

E. OPTOMETRIC PRACTICE ASSOCIATION

Are you intending to practice in an 'optometric practice association' as defined by NSCO Regulation 25(1)? Yes ___ No ___

If 'Yes', will you meet the requirements of regulation 25(2), particularly with respect to patient files and advertising? Yes ___ No ___

F. TO THE NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

I, _____ of the _____ of _____ in the county of _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

_____, Province/State of _____ DO SOLEMNLY DECLARE:

That, if granted a certification of registration in practice optometry in the Province of Nova Scotia, I will practice ethically and maintain the dignity and honour of the profession and comply with all requirements of the Nova Scotia Optometry Act, Regulations, Bylaws, and Standards of Practice.

That I give permission to the NSCO to correspond with the Canadian Examiners in Optometry (CEO) and to correspond or interview any parties who I have referred to or listed on this application form.

That, I believe all of the above statements to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as made under oath and by virtue of the Canada Evidence Act.

Declared before me at _____ Province of _____ this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

A Commissioner, etc., or Notary Public (Seal)

Signature of Applicant

Nova Scotia College of Optometrists

CERTIFICATE OF STANDING

SECTION 1 – CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

This Section is to be completed by the Applicant. A copy of this Consent for Release of Information is to be sent to the regulatory authority (College, Board or Association) in every jurisdiction in which the Applicant has ever practiced optometry or any other health profession together with a copy of the attached Certificate of Standing.

I, Dr. _____
First Name Last Name

have applied to the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists for a Certificate of Registration in order to engage in the practice of optometry in Nova Scotia.

The Nova Scotia College of Optometrists, as part of its registration process, requires that a Certificate of Standing form be completed by every jurisdiction in which I was licensed and/or engaged in the practice of optometry, or any other health profession. As most jurisdictions require my consent to release the requested information, I am hereby signing my permission to and irrevocably authorize and direct the

_____ [name of regulatory authority]
to provide, at my expense, the information requested by the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists. I understand and accept that this means that you will be providing full disclosure of any and all information requested on the attached form or any additional information determined by the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists to be relevant to my application for registration.

I acknowledge that the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists has advised me that I have the right to obtain legal advice prior to executing this consent, and that I have either done so or have had sufficient opportunity to do so prior to executing this Consent for Release of Information. I am signing this document of my own free will, voluntarily and without coercion, having read it and having understood it.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have duly executed this Consent for Release of Information form this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

[printed name of Applicant]

[signature of Applicant]

[printed name of witness]

[signature of witness]

Nova Scotia College of Optometrists

SECTION 2 – CERTIFICATE OF STANDING

This Section is to be completed by the regulatory authority and returned by the regulatory authority directly to the Nova Scotia College of Optometrists at the following address:

Nova Scotia College of Optometrists
502, 5657 Spring Garden Road
Box 142
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3R4

The _____
[name of regulatory authority]
records indicate the following information (where available) concerning:

Name: _____
[first name] [last name]

Registration Number: _____

Current primary professional address: _____

1. Registration Status

(i) The Applicant has been registered / licensed in _____ from _____
(M/D/Y) to _____ (current or M/D/Y).

(ii) If the Applicant ceased to be a registered/licensed member, please specify the reasons below:

_____.

(iii) The Applicant currently holds or previously held

- a. a General Certificate / Licence from _____ (M/D/Y) to _____
(current or M/D/Y).
- b. a Temporary (Courtesy?) Certificate / Licence from _____ (M/D/Y) to _____
(current or M/D/Y).
- c. an Academic Certificate / Licence from _____ (M/D/Y) to _____
(current or M/D/Y).

(iv) Does the Applicant have the authority to prescribe drugs in your jurisdiction?

YES NO

Nova Scotia College of Optometrists

(v) To the best of your knowledge, is or has the Applicant also been registered/licensed to practice optometry or _____, or engaged in the practice of optometry or _____ in any other jurisdiction(s)?

YES NO

If YES, please provide details below:

Jurisdiction	Registered/Licensed	
	From	To
	(M/D/Y)	(M/D/Y)
	(M/D/Y)	(M/D/Y)
	(M/D/Y)	(M/D/Y)

(vi) Is the Applicant in arrears of any fees or other monies owing to your organization?

YES NO

If YES, please provide details below:

_____.

(vii) Does the Applicant have or has the Applicant ever had any restrictions, terms, conditions or limitations on his or her Certificate/Licence?

YES NO

If YES, please provide details below:

_____.

(viii) Has the Applicant ever had his or her Certificate/Licence suspended, cancelled, revoked or struck off the Register/Roll?

YES NO

If YES, please provide details below:

_____.

Nova Scotia College of Optometrists

2. Professional Conduct Record

i. Complaints

Has your organization ever received a formal complaint about the Applicant?

- YES NO

If YES, please provide details of any investigation(s) that is/are in progress or have been completed by your organization with a decision, action or resolution being reached (including dismissing the complaint).

ii. Discipline Proceedings

Has your organization ever initiated a discipline proceeding with respect to the Applicant?

- YES NO

If YES, please provide details of any hearing(s) that is/are in progress or have been completed by your organization with a decision / action being issued (including dismissing the allegations) or that involved the Applicant's resignation.

iii. Fitness to Practice (including physical ailment, mental health condition or addiction)

Has your organization ever initiated a fitness to practice hearing or inquiry with respect to the Applicant?

- YES NO

If YES, please provide details of any hearing(s) that is/are in progress or have been completed by your organization with a decision / action being issued (including dismissing the allegations) or that involved the Applicant's resignation.

Nova Scotia College of Optometrists

iv. Quality Assurance Programs

Has the Applicant ever been the subject of a professional inspection other than regularly scheduled or randomly selected inspections?

- YES NO

If YES, please provide details of any inspection(s) that is/are in progress or have been completed by your organization with a decision / action being issued or that involved the Applicant entering into an Agreement or Undertaking with your organization.

v. Continuing Education Requirements

Has the Applicant ever failed to be in compliance with your continuing education requirements?

- YES NO

If YES, please provide details of the nature of non-compliance and the action taken, if any.

vi. Currency of Practice Requirements

Has the Applicant ever failed to be in compliance with your practice hours requirement?

- YES NO

If YES, please provide details of the nature of non-compliance and the action taken, if any.

Nova Scotia College of Optometrists

vii. Agreements and Undertakings

Has the Applicant ever entered into an Agreement or Undertaking with your organization?

YES NO

If YES, please provide details of the nature of the Agreement or Undertaking and the current status.

viii. Please provide details of any other relevant information that has been reported to you.

Are other sheets/documents attached to this form?

YES NO

Certification

Signature _____ Title _____

Signed and sealed this date _____

Application Guide for Registration to Practice Optometry in Nova Scotia

Thank you for your interest concerning entering the practice of optometry in Nova Scotia

I Abbreviations

CACO	Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry
NSCO	Nova Scotia College of Optometrists

II Requirements for Issuing of a Certificate of Registration

- 1) The applicant must have completed a NSCO application.
- 2) The applicant must have graduated from a school of optometry, accredited by the American Council of Optometric Education.
- 3) If the applicant has previously practiced optometry, he or she must be a member of good standing in all jurisdictions where he or she holds a certificate of registration.
- 4) The applicant must not have been convicted of a criminal offense or an offense under the Narcotic Control Act (Canada) or the Food and Drug Act (Canada) or of any offense of similar laws in any other country.
- 5) The applicant must have Canadian citizenship, permanent residency or authorization under the Immigration Act (Canada) to engage in the practice of optometry.
- 6) The applicant must successfully complete all examinations set or approved by the NSCO.
- 7) The applicant must be approved by the Board of the NSCO.
- 8) Upon approval by the Board of the NSCO the applicant must complete an annual membership report form.
- 9) The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the NSCO receives his or her information. Please contact the NSCO admin offices if you do not receive updates from us regarding the status of your application.

III Process for Registration

Please visit our website @ www.nasco.ca and complete the application online.

With respect to degree obtained and date: If you have not yet received your degree, declare your expected degree and date of graduation.

Upon receipt of your completed application, it will be reviewed by the Registrar.

The application must be complete in all respects before it will be considered.

Once all documents have been received, all fees paid, and the application is complete, the Registrar will allow the applicant to write the jurisprudence exam via email. The applicant will be provided with the study materials. The exam consists of 40 multiple choice questions and is an open book format. The applicant has 10 days to complete it.

Upon successful completion of the jurisprudence exam, a licensing application and invoice will be issued to the applicant.

When the licensing application is completed and all fees are paid, a license to practice optometry in the province of Nova Scotia will be issued to the applicant.

***Candidates should expect a three month processing period after sitting the CACO before obtaining final registration in Nova Scotia.**

FORAC *Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada*
Canadian Optometric Evaluation Committee (COEC)

APPLICANT GUIDE TO CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT
(April, 2017)

National Steering Committee on Academic Credential Assessment,
FORAC

APPLICANT GUIDE TO CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT

Introduction

In 2014, the Optometry profession in Canada assigned responsibility for assessing the academic credentials of internationally educated eye care professionals to the Canadian Optometric Evaluation Committee (COEC), a committee of the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC).

Internationally educated eye care professionals are defined as individuals who have carried out the same work as optometrists in Canada even though their professional titles may be different.

COEC examines the academic credentials of internationally educated eye care professionals to assess applicants' eligibility to apply for the Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluation Examination (IGOEE) administered by the Touchstone Institute. Following credential assessment, COEC makes a recommendation to the optometry regulatory body in the province(s) identified by applicants as their expected Canadian destination.

Academic Criteria for Eligibility to Apply for IGOEE

Graduates from institutions or programs accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) or by another accrediting body approved by a provincial regulator are not required to have their academic credentials assessed. These graduates may apply directly to the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC-BEOC) to challenge the national registration examination, the OEBC exam (formerly CACO).

Applicants who are graduates of non-accredited optometry programs and institutions (including all institutions outside Canada and the United States) must meet the following academic criteria before they will be considered eligible to apply for IGOEE. If you have not completed one of the following educational paths, you will not be eligible to practice optometry in Canada.

FORAC Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada

Canadian Optometric Evaluation Committee (COEC)

If your enrolment in your undergraduate study program commenced after August 31, 2014, you must have successfully complete:

- a) three complete academic years of full-time* undergraduate university studies in sciences and a 4-year optometry degree**

or

- b) a 4-year optometry degree** followed by three years of optometric work experience outside Canada .

If your enrolment in your undergraduate study program commenced prior to September 1, 2014, you must have successfully completed either:

- a) three complete academic years of full-time* undergraduate university studies and a 4-year optometry degree**

or

- b) a 4-year optometry degree** followed by three years of optometric work experience outside Canada .

NOTES:

*Full-time refers to 5 courses per four-month term or semester with two terms per year.

** The following is accepted as equivalent to a 4-year optometry degree: A three-year optometry degree followed by a pre-registration period of supervised practice endorsed by an appropriate authority in the source country and successful completion of the final assessment. Applicants must provide evidence of this endorsement; specifically, official correspondence from organizations assessing performance and evidence from sources of supervised practice confirming hours and areas of practice.

THIS APPLICANT GUIDE

This guide describes the requirements for the credential assessment process and contains details that you will need to make application. This application is the first of several steps you must take before you may apply for registration to practice optometry in any province or territory in Canada (except Quebec¹). A flowchart of the credential assessment process is available on the FORAC website at: <http://www.forac-faroc.ca/>.

It is important that you also contact the optometric regulatory authority in your destination province in Canada to determine what additional documents and other information they require for your registration in that province. Do not assume that the requirements of all provinces are the same. Contact information for every regulator is available on the FORAC website at: <http://www.forac-faroc.ca/>.

FIRST STEPS

If you are considering practicing optometry in Canada, the **first action you should take** is to review the Doctor of Optometry course descriptions published by the University of Waterloo. See <https://uwaterloo.ca/optometry-vision-science/courses#course>. These descriptions constitute the criteria against which your optometry education and training will be assessed by COEC. If after reviewing the course descriptions, you think that the combination of your degree(s) and other formal training in optometry is comparable to the education and training provided at the University of Waterloo, you should consider applying for credential assessment.

The second action you should take is to obtain a Credential Evaluation Report from World Education Services (WES). FORAC requires that your university education be evaluated by WES before you apply to FORAC for credential assessment.

FORAC requires that you purchase from WES an International Credential Advantage Package (ICAP) and a detailed course-by-course evaluation report for all of your postsecondary education credentials. The fee is \$245 per person.

WES will authenticate your documents, confirm the level and subject of your education, and determine the recognition status of your educational institutions in the source country. WES will also confirm the language in which you obtained your degree(s). Purchasing the ICAP Package means that you do not have to provide FORAC with your transcripts, degrees, diplomas or certificates. FORAC will obtain them through WES. Please ask WES for a second copy of their evaluation report and send it, sealed, to FORAC along with your completed application form and other required documents.

WES can be reached at: <https://www.wes.org/ca/>.

¹ If you would like to register as an optometrist in the Province of Quebec or practice optometry in the French language in another part of Canada, contact the Ordre des optométristes du Québec at: <https://www.ooq.org>.

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If FORAC has reason to believe that academic documents are forged, fraudulent, altered, irregular, or involved cheating, it will investigate. Applicants will be contacted to verify their information and if they cannot provide a satisfactory explanation, their record will be closed. All documents received become the property of FORAC and FORAC will notify in writing, the applicant or their representative and the credential assessment services with which FORAC works.

The presence of fraudulent or altered documents will lead to refusal to issue credential assessment results. Further assessment will not be carried out if it is determined that documents have been falsified in any way. Applicants may request a review and appeal of an assessment panel's decision to close their record.

After you have completed the first two steps described above, your application for credential assessment should be submitted to the FORAC Credentialing Office and include the following items. They are each described in detail in the next section of this Guide.

1. A fully completed Application Form (see Form 5 – available on the FORAC website)
2. A completed Release of Information Authorization Form and a Document Access Fee Form (see Forms 2 and 24 – available on the FORAC website)
3. Confirmation of a completed credential evaluation report from World Education Services (WES)
4. Course descriptions of all optometry-related courses including your undergraduate studies.
5. Official documentation on additional optometry-related education or training (if any)
6. COEC Assessment fee (see Form 23 – available on the FORAC website)
7. Confirmation of English test results (if required)
8. All necessary translations

Please note that your application for credential assessment will not be considered active until all of the above have been submitted to the FORAC Credentialing Office. FORAC will send you a letter by email confirming receipt of all your documents within 7 days of their receipt.

All forms referred to in this document are available on the FORAC website at <http://www.forac-faroc.ca/>.

If you have any questions regarding your application or its processing contact the FORAC Credentialing Office by telephone at (416) 644-0055 or by email at: credentialing@forac-faroc.ca.

1. A Fully Completed Application (Form 5)

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A fully completed application form must be included at the time of your application. The form can be obtained from the FORAC website or by emailing a request to the FORAC Credentialing Office. Once you have completed the Application Form, save it as a pdf document and then print, sign, and mail it to the FORAC Credentialing Office with your other documents.

The mailing address is:

FORAC Credentialing Service
Sheppard Centre Post Office
4841 Yonge Street, Unit B6
PO Box 43215
Toronto, Canada
M2N 6N1

NOTE: FORAC staff do not meet with applicants in-person. If you have a question about the application process, contact the Credentialing Office by mail, telephone at (416) 644-0055 or email at: credentialing@forac-faroc.ca.

2. A Completed Release of Information Authorization (Form 2)

In order to preserve your privacy, only authorized personnel may access information from applicant records. This includes members of COEC, FORAC staff involved in credential assessments, and any other person authorized in writing by applicants. FORAC-approved consultants may access applicant records for the purpose of FORAC research and evaluation on the condition that a confidentiality agreement is signed.

Completion of Form 2 also authorizes FORAC to provide documents to provincial optometric regulatory bodies and the International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP).

FORAC will refuse to provide any person including applicants with any information that in FORAC's opinion jeopardizes the safety of any person.

3. Confirmation of a Completed Credential Evaluation Report from World Education Services (WES)

As described earlier, when WES completes its evaluation of your credentials it will provide you with a report. FORAC requires a copy of this report to be submitted along with your application.

4. Course Descriptions

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FORAC must receive official copies of descriptions for all optometry-related courses taken. FORAC will only accept official descriptions sent directly from applicants' universities in a sealed envelope. Please note that course descriptions should include all undergraduate and graduate courses that you believe are relevant to optometry. This may mean that you must arrange for them to be sent from more than one university.

If course descriptions are not obtainable directly from your university, notarized copies may be accepted but it will depend on your circumstances. You should provide FORAC with a detailed written explanation of these circumstances. Convenience is not an acceptable basis for submitting notarized documents. If notarized copies of course descriptions are accepted by FORAC, they must include both the signature and the seal of the notary public along with their name (printed), address and phone number. FORAC reserves the right to contact notary publics who have notarized applicants' documents to verify submitted information.

A notary public is an official authorized by government to certify that copied documents are true copies of the original by applying his or her official signature and seal. Notary public is a specialized role that is recognized internationally. The following are NOT equivalent to a notary public:

- Justice of the Peace
- Commissioners of Oaths
- Commissioners of Declarations
- Health care professionals
- Embassy officials unless they are notaries public

5. Official Documentation on Additional Optometry-related Education or Training (if any)

In accordance with FORAC policy, an applicant's undergraduate courses in sciences (natural or social sciences) that have been assessed by WES, and are optometry-related, will be assessed as part of COEC's Education Analysis upon request by applicants. These undergraduate courses must represent a minimum of 3 full-time academic years of undergraduate studies in sciences for you to qualify for professional practice anywhere in Canada (except Quebec).

In its analysis, COEC will also take into account additional optometry education and training acquired outside your initial optometry degree programs. This could include graduate degree courses, post-graduate certificates and diplomas, residency training, and possibly other courses from other optometry professional development programs offered in source countries. It may also include optometry courses that do not directly correspond to University of Waterloo optometry courses (e.g. immunology taken in another program).

In addition, if you have taken additional education and training including professional development courses in optometry, please include with your application as much information

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as possible on their relevance, structure, depth, breadth, credibility, authenticity, and method of evaluation.

Supervised Practice

The country in which your degree was obtained must endorse any pre-registration period of supervised practice that you might have undertaken. You must provide evidence of this endorsement; specifically, official correspondence from organizations assessing performance and evidence from sources of supervised practice confirming hours and areas of practice.

6. COEC Assessment Fee

FORAC is a not-for-profit organization. It makes every effort to keep costs and fees to a minimum but to be sustainable, it must recover the costs of services it provides to applicants. Applicants are responsible for providing FORAC with full payment of credential assessment fees in advance of their application being activated.

You will be required to send your assessment fee payment to the FORAC Credentialing Office using a Credential Assessment Fee Payment Form (Form 23 – available on the FORAC website). Fees may be paid by certified cheque made payable to the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada or by credit card. Only payment in Canadian currency will be accepted. These fees are non-refundable.

The fee for a COEC academic credential assessment is \$1000.00 + HST (harmonized sales tax – 13%) = \$1130.00 Canadian Funds. On July 1, 2017 the fee will be increased to \$1150.00 + 13% HST = \$1299.50.

Other FORAC Fees

If at any time you request copies of documents in your FORAC record, you will be asked to complete a Release of Information Authorization Form (Form 2) and a Document Access Fee Payment Form (Form 24). FORAC staff will advise you in writing of the costs of fulfilling your request and the amount charged will be determined by the number and size of documents and costs of administration according to the following schedule:

- Photocopy costs for copies of documents from your record: Depends on number of copies.
- Postage costs, if any: Depends on size of package, destination, and method of delivery.
- Courier costs, if any: Depends on size of package, destination, and method of delivery.
- Administration costs: \$50.00 per request.

Form 2 and Form 24 are available from the FORAC website at <http://www.forac-faroc.ca/>.

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7. Confirmation of English test results (if required)

If your optometry degree program was conducted in English you are not required to undertake a language proficiency test.

WES will confirm the language of instruction for your degree and advise FORAC.

If your optometry degree program was not conducted in English, you must successfully complete an English proficiency test. You must achieve the minimum score indicated for any one of the following tests:

- Canadian Language Benchmark Placement Test – no individual score lower than 8.0.
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Academic – minimum overall average of 7.5 with no individual score lower than 7.0.
- CanTest – minimum overall average of 4.5 with no individual score lower than 4.0.

Official notice of the results of your English language test must be submitted to the FORAC Credentialing Office directly from the testing institution.

8. Translations

All documents submitted for academic credential assessment must be in English or translated into English. Applicants wishing to have their credentials assessed in French will be referred to the Ordre des optométristes du Québec.

Translations of all languages must be authentic, true, and dependable to ensure that all relevant information is considered during the assessment process.

WES provides FORAC with access to your verified transcripts, degrees, diplomas, certificates, and their English translations. You do not need to submit translations of these documents to FORAC. However, all other documents such as course descriptions must be translated into English. They must be accompanied by the original documents in the original language. All translations must be conducted by one of the following:

1. A certified translator at the original source (e.g. the university from which the applicant graduated), or
2. A certified translator at a consulate, high commission or embassy of the country in which the document originated, or
3. A certified translator at a Canadian consulate, high commission or embassy in the country from which the document originated, or
4. A certified translator in Canada.

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An original statement from the translator must accompany all translations and affirm that:

1. The translation is accurate and authentic.
2. The translator is certified.
3. The identification number and/or seal, name, address and telephone number of the translator.
4. The printed name and original signature of the translator.

Arranging translations and providing them to FORAC is the responsibility of applicants. The cost of translations into English is also the responsibility of applicants. If FORAC receives documents directly from organizations in source countries, it will forward copies of these documents to applicants to arrange appropriate translations.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

FORAC recognizes that in order to treat applicants equitably, there may be circumstances in which individual applications require special consideration. Two examples illustrate but do not limit this policy: first, credential assessment procedures may be modified to accommodate applicants with disabilities. Secondly, if applicants are unable to obtain required documents due to situations of war or other crises in source countries, alternative procedures will be considered in consultation with applicants. Decisions are subject to review and appeal.

To request consideration of special circumstances, you must apply in writing and provide sufficient evidence to justify your request. FORAC will contact you to discuss your situation and you will be notified of FORAC's decision in writing with reasons.

ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

COEC credential assessments result in recommendations to provincial regulators on whether applicants should be considered eligible to apply for IGOEE. It is the responsibility of provincial regulators to make all decisions. Notification to unsuccessful applicants will explain where evidence is lacking, and provide applicants with information on where they might be able to obtain further relevant education that could be favourably considered by FORAC upon re-application.

FORAC makes every effort to advise applicants of the results of their assessment within 7 days of assessment completion.

REVIEWS AND APPEALS

If you are dissatisfied with an assessment recommendation by COEC, you may request a review by the original assessment panel within 45 days after it is sent out from FORAC. A review will

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be held within 45 days of FORAC's receipt of your request and you will be notified of the results within 30 days of the review.

If you are dissatisfied with the results of the review, you may request an appeal by a COEC Appeal Panel within 45 days that it has been sent out by FORAC. COEC Appeal Panels are comprised of three members of COEC who did not participate in the assessment or review of an applicant's academic credentials. Requests for an appeal must be made in writing within 30 days of your receipt of a review results notification. An appeal will be held within 45 days of FORAC's receipt of your request and you will be notified of the results within 30 days of the appeal.

Applicants may request reviews and appeals on procedural and substantive grounds, that is, relating to assessment panel procedures and the merits of its decisions.

Procedural Details

In the case of credential assessment reviews, the following steps will be followed:

1. Applicants provide the FORAC office with a written request for a review. Reasons for the request and any supporting documentation must be provided at this time. Contact information including address, phone number, and email address are also required.
2. The review is scheduled.
3. The review is held by the assessment panel. The panel bases its decision on a full review of its earlier assessment, the information in the applicant's record, the written request for review and any additional documentation provided by the applicant.
4. The assessment panel notifies the applicant of its review decision in writing with reasons that explain the basis for the decision. The applicant is also advised of their right to appeal the review decision. The relevant regulators are also informed of the decision.

In the case of credential assessment appeals, the following steps will be followed:

1. Applicants provide the FORAC office with a written request for an appeal. Reasons for the request and any supporting documentation must be provided at this time. Contact information including address, phone number, and email address are also required.
2. The appeal is scheduled.
3. The appeal is held by the Appeal Panel. The applicant does not attend. The Appeal Panel bases its decision on the information in the applicant's record, the original assessment, COEC's review decision, the written request for appeal, and any additional information provided by the applicant.

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4. The Appeal Panel notifies the applicant of its decision in writing with reasons that explain the basis for the decision. The applicant is advised that the appeal decision is final. The relevant regulators are also informed of the decision.

FORAC welcomes all qualified internationally educated eye care professionals to Canada. The requirements and procedures contained in this Guide are designed to protect both applicants and the public. We hope you find the information helpful and we are pleased to receive your comments and suggestions.

Click here to enter text.

Dear Click here to enter text.

Re: Academic Credential Assessment Request

Thank you for submitting your education and training documentation to the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC). As you know, FORAC's credential assessment process involves an education analysis of applicants' optometry-related education and training in relation to the University of Waterloo's Doctor of Optometry program.

The Canadian Optometric Evaluation Committee (COEC) has conducted an assessment of your application and unfortunately, we have determined that the evidence submitted does not establish your eligibility to apply for IGOEE (Internationally Graduated Optometrists Evaluating Exam).

In particular, the assessment found that Click here to enter text.

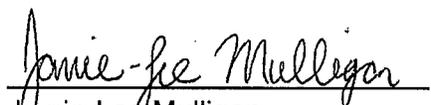
We encourage you to consider further education in the above areas. For example, you may wish to explore applying for advanced standing to an ACOE-accredited optometry degree program. Helpful information is available at:

<http://www.aoa.org/optometrists/for-educators/accreditation-council-on-optometric-education/accredited-programs>

You have the opportunity to request a review of this decision by the COEC Assessment Panel within 30 days of receiving this letter. You may submit a letter to FORAC detailing the reasons for your review. Please include supporting documentation if possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact the FORAC Credentialing office if they can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,



Jamie-Lee Mulligan

Administrative Assistant

FORAC Credentialing Office