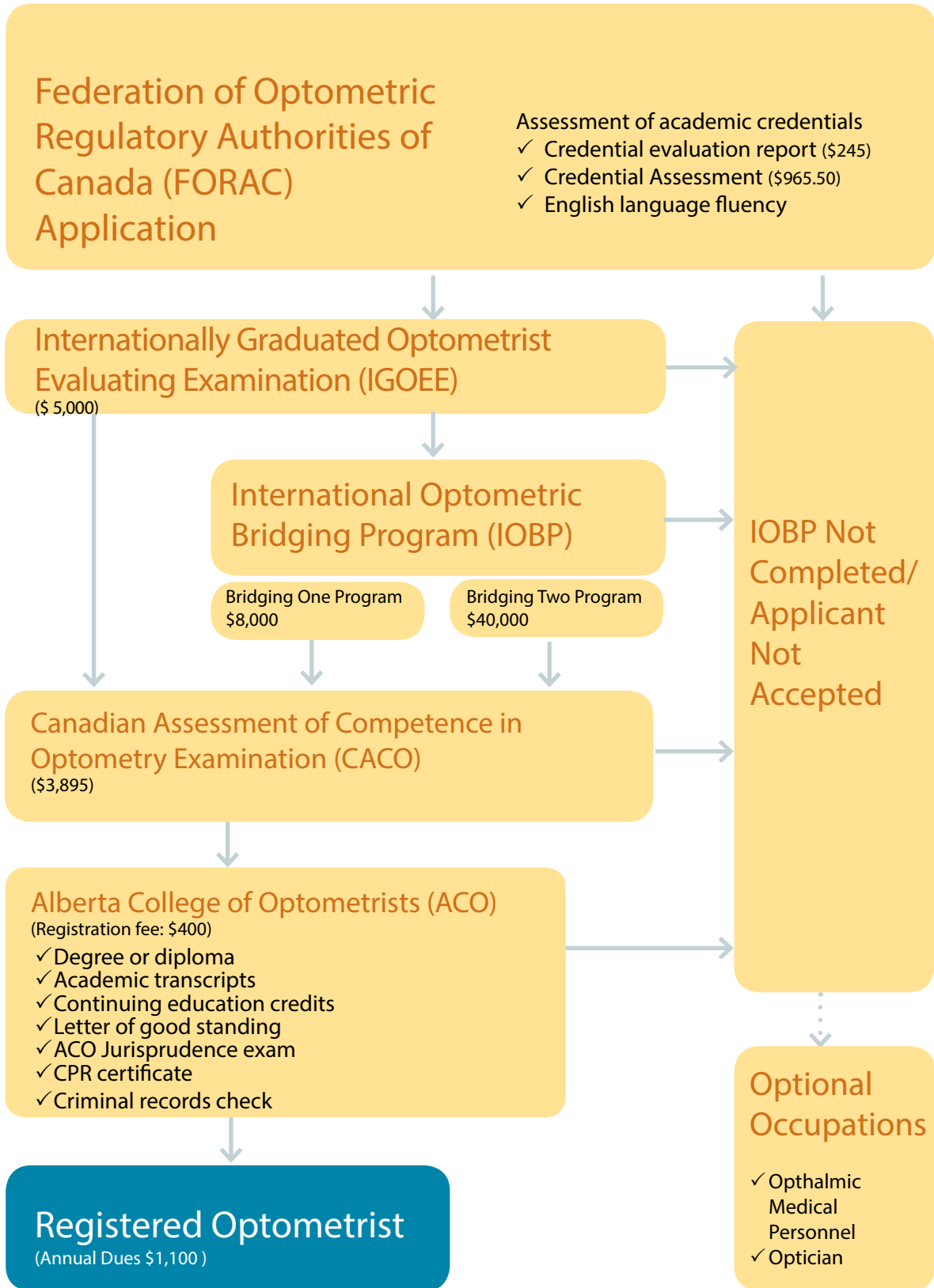


Optometrist

Registration Process



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Description of Occupation

Optometrists are sometimes referred to as Eye Doctors. Their duties include examining a patient's eyes, measuring the eye and its visual function, diagnosing eye disorders and diseases, prescribing medications, prescribing visual aids such as eyeglasses and contact lenses, and helping individuals care for their eyes.

In Alberta, Optometrists work in a variety of clinical settings. They may be self-employed or work as part of a health care team with Receptionists, Ophthalmic Assistants, Opticians and Ophthalmologists.

Obtaining Registration in Alberta

To become an Optometrist in Alberta, you must register with the Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO). To register with the ACO, you must first apply for an Academic Credential Assessment from the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC). The credential assessment will result in a recommendation on whether you are eligible to apply for the Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGOEE). If you are successful on the IGOEE, you may challenge the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO) exam. If you are not successful on the IGOEE, you will be referred to the University of Waterloo's International Optometric Bridging Program (IOBP). Once you have finished either the short or long Bridging program, you will be able to write the CACO.

Once you have completed the CACO, you can apply for registration with ACO by submitting the following:

- Official copies of post-secondary transcripts
- Certified copy of your degree or diploma in Optometry
- A summary of your continuing education credits
- A letter of good standing from the Registrar in your jurisdiction, forwarded directly from the Registrar
- Documents showing you have successfully completed the IOBP or IGOEE
- Documents showing you have successfully completed the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO)
- Documents showing you have successfully completed the ACO Jurisprudence exam
- A current Health Care Practitioner (HCP) Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate
- A criminal records check
- Required fees

Contact information and other resources are at the end of this document.

Residency Requirement

There is no residency requirement to register as an Optometrist, however, if you are accepted into Bridging Two of the IOBP, you will need to prove your Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status.

Requirements

Internationally educated Optometrists must meet the following requirements:

1. *Academic Credentials*

You must submit all of the materials listed on FORAC's website in order to begin the IOBP assessment process. The assessment process consists of:

- An academic qualification assessment, which determines if you have a similar education to that of a Canadian Optometrist. You will require:
 - A Credential Evaluation Report from World Education Services (WES).
 - Official copies of descriptions for all optometry-related courses taken, sent directly from your university in a sealed envelope.
 - Any necessary translations.
- An English language fluency assessment
- The IGOEE

Each step in the assessment process must be completed before moving on to the next. Once you make it to the Bridging Program stage, you will be placed in one (1) of two (2) programs:

- Bridging One
 - Eight- (8) week program
 - Includes 82 hours of classroom instruction, 48 hours of clinical instruction and a four- (4) week externship in a professional practice
- Bridging Two
 - 48-week program
 - Includes a three- (3) week English language program, 15 to 16 weeks of lectures and clinical instruction, four (4) to five (5) weeks in the School of Optometry Clinic, a seven- (7) to eight- (8) week primary care externship, a 14-week ocular disease and therapeutic externship, and two (2) to three (3) weeks of reviews and examinations.

There are also educational requirements to register with the ACO. In order to evaluate your education, the ACO requires the following:

- Official copies of all post-secondary transcripts, including courses taken during your B.Sc., M.Sc., O.D., Ph.D., or other equivalent programs. They may be forwarded directly from your college or university, or you may have them sent to you and forward them to the ACO yourself. If you submit your own transcripts, you must send them in their original, sealed envelope. Opened or unsealed envelopes will not be accepted.
- A certified copy of your degree or diploma in Optometry. Certified means they are notarized (signed) by a lawyer, public notary, Justice of the Peace, university official or Commissioner of Oaths.
- A summary of your continuing education credits for the past three (3) years, forwarded directly from the Registrar in your jurisdiction to the ACO.
- A Letter of Successful Completion of the IOBP forwarded to the ACO Registrar or a record of having successfully completed the IGOEE.

2. **Work Experience**

Clinical externships are included as part of the IOBP. Additional work experience is not required to register with the ACO.

3. **Good Character and Reputation**

You must have the Registrar in your jurisdiction forward a letter of good standing directly to the ACO. It should be dated within 30 days of your application. The letter should state:

- If you are currently a member in good standing
 - If you are under investigation for professional misconduct
- AND
- Whether you have ever been found guilty of professional misconduct in the past.

4. **English Language**

The ACO does not require an additional English language test as part of their registration process since it is evaluated as part of the Credential Assessment and IOBP.

However, if English is not your first language, you will be required to complete a standard English language test during your assessment for the IOBP. The IOBP accepts the following language tests and scores:

- Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLBPT): Overall average of 8.0 with no individual scores lower than 8.0
- OR
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Minimum overall average of 7.5 with no individual scores lower than 7.0
- OR
- CanTEST: Minimum overall average of 4.5 with no individual scores lower than 4.0.

5. **Examinations**

You will be required to complete the IGOEE which consists of two (2) tests:

- A written, multiple-choice test that evaluates your current knowledge of the practice of optometry.
- A practical evaluation of your optometric clinical skills.

Once you have completed the IOBP and are ready to register for the ACO, you will need to take two (2) exams prior to registration:

- The CACO exam
 - The CACO exam has six (6) components: optometric synthesis, ocular therapeutics and four (4) clinical skills tests which look at assessing different conditions and functions.
 - There are two (2) exam sittings in the spring and one (1) exam sitting in the fall. The exams are held in Waterloo, Ont. and Montreal, Que.

- The ACO Jurisprudence exam
 - This exam is about provincial legislation and is in a true/false and multiple-choice format.
 - It is a closed-book exam and you have one (1) hour to complete it.
 - It can be written at the college office in Edmonton or in Calgary at the private office of a member of the ACO Registration Committee.

6. Other

In addition to the steps listed above, you must complete:

- A health care practitioner cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificate from a reputable facility (submit the CPR certificate with your application).
- A criminal records check (if you are a new applicant). This can be obtained directly from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), who must then submit the results directly to the ACO office.

Payment

The following fees must be submitted during the registration process. Contact the associations for payment arrangements. Fees are in Canadian dollars.

Credential Assessment & IOBP	
Credential Evaluation Report (WES)	\$245
Credential Assessment (FORAC)	\$960.50
IGOEE Exams	Approximately \$5,000
IOBP Books and Equipment	\$3,000
Bridging One program	\$8,000
Bridging Two program	\$40,000
CACO	
CACO Exam	\$3,895
ACO	
Preliminary Registration Fee	\$400
ACO Jurisprudence Exam	No charge
ACO Annual Dues	\$1,100
*Fees are subject to change. See association for most up-to-date fees.	

Employment Options

You can also consider working in Alberta in related occupations such as Ophthalmic Medical Personnel or Optician.

For more information about additional employment options, go to the following website: [Alberta Learning Information Service \(ALIS\) Occupational Profiles — Optometrist](http://www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo) (for information on all occupations see www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo).

Contact Information

Alberta College of Optometrists
102 – 8407 Argyll Road NB
Edmonton, Alberta T6C 4B2
Telephone: 780-466-5999
Toll-Free (Alberta only): 800-668-2694
Fax: 780-466-5969
Email: admin@collegeofoptometrists.ab.ca
Website: www.collegeofoptometrists.ab.ca

Resources

This information is an overview of the registration process. For the most current information on Optometrist registration, visit the ACO website at www.collegeofoptometrists.ab.ca.

Application Forms and Information:

[Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada \(FORAC\) \(FORAC\)](#)
[International Optometric Bridging Program Registration Package](#)
[Alberta College of Optometrists Registration Process](#)

Credential Evaluation Report

www.wes.org/ca/.

English Language:

[Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks](#)
[International English Language Testing System](#)
[CanTEST](#)

Examinations:

[Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination \(IGOEE\)](#)
[Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry Examination](#)