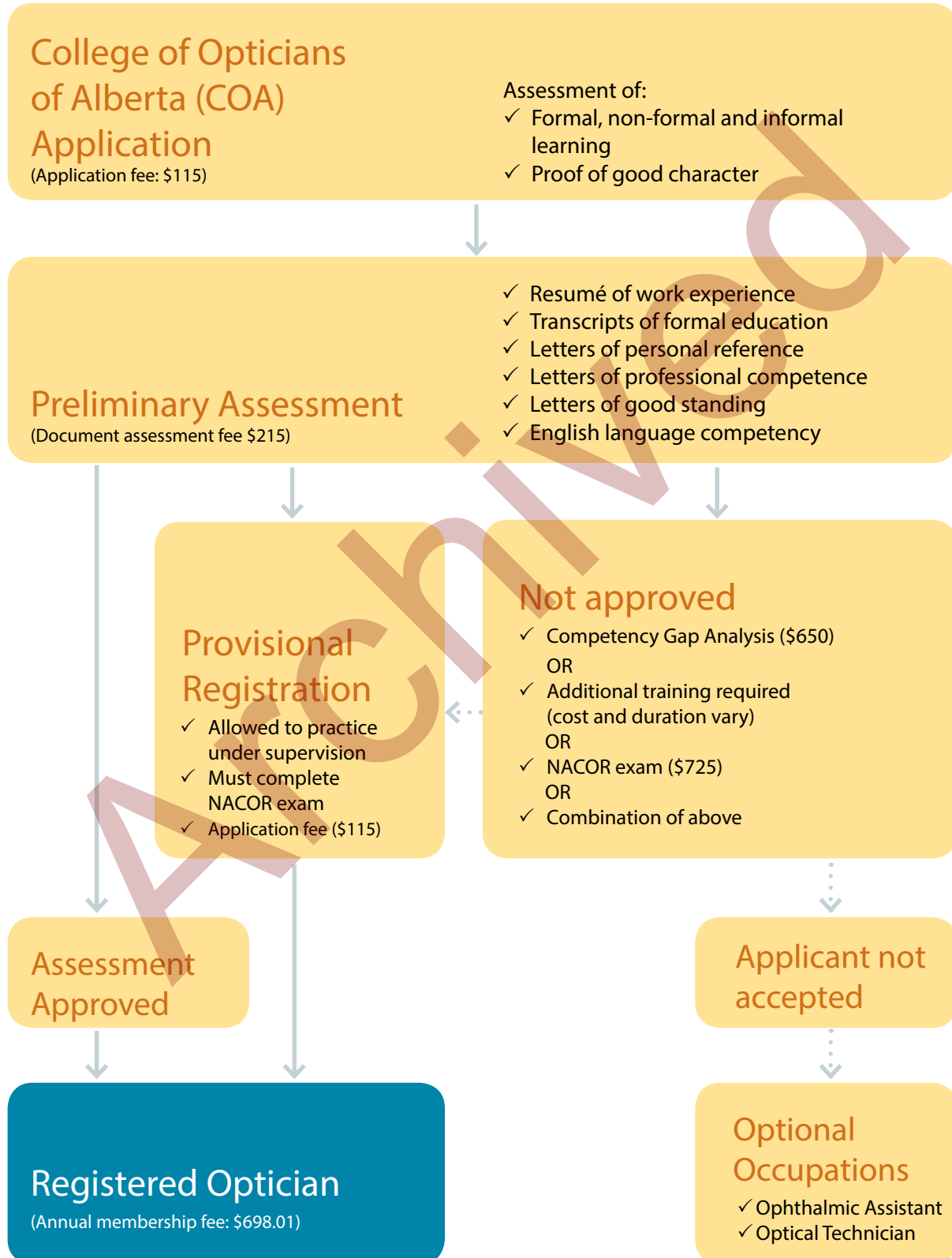


Optician

Registration Process



Optician

Registration Process

Description of Occupation

Opticians fit and adjust eyeglasses, low vision aids and other optical products according to prescriptions. They dispense these products using written prescriptions or by duplicating existing optical products.

Opticians work with customers to help them select and fit frames for eyeglasses and other optical products. When needed, they refer customers to other health care professionals. They promote eye health and the correct use of optical products. They also assemble eyeglasses and prepare work orders for technicians who grind lenses. With extra training, Opticians can also fit customers for contact lenses.

Obtaining Registration in Alberta

Opticians must be licensed with the College of Opticians of Alberta (COA) to practice in Alberta and use the title of Registered Optician (RO). To register with the COA, you must:

- Fill out the COA **Registration Package**. Include two current passport-sized photos.
- Complete a Preliminary Assessment to show that you have the knowledge, skills, experience and abilities required to work as an Optician in Alberta.
- Complete any competency gaps, as determined by COA.
- Provide proof of good character and liability insurance.

Links to the Registration Package and other resources are at the end of this document.

Residency Requirement

You can start the registration process prior to moving to Canada. However, to receive an Optician Practice Permit you must be:

- A Canadian citizen
- OR
- A permanent resident of Canada
- OR
- Authorized under the Immigration Act (Canada) to engage in the practice of Opticianry.

Requirements

Internationally educated Opticians must meet the following requirements:

1. *Academic Credentials*

In Alberta, registered Opticians typically have completed technical training courses from COA-accredited or approved programs. However, COA recognizes that learning does not always take place in the classroom. When evaluating your application, COA may consider:

- **Formal Learning:** Gained through credit-based opticianry programs or courses.
- **Non-Formal Learning:** Gained through participation in non-credit courses, workplace training or workshops.

- Informal and Experiential Learning: Gained through life experience, workplace tasks, self-study, volunteer activities and other activities.

2. **Good Character**

You must declare yourself to be a person of good character. The declaration (Form 1 of the Registration Package) must be notarized.

You may be required to provide details of any conviction for a criminal offence or an offence related to the practice of opticianry, including professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

3. **Preliminary Assessment**

Once your Registration Package has been accepted, COA will conduct a Preliminary Assessment. The assessment evaluates whether you have the knowledge, skills, experience and ability to work as an Optician in Alberta. You will be asked to provide the following documentation:

- A resumé of your work experience.
- Transcripts of any formal education. If the transcript is not in English, you must have it translated.
- Letters of personal reference.
- Letters of professional competence.
- Letters of good standing.

Note:

- You may be contacted by COA for an interview to review your application and discuss any gaps in your learning.
- You may be asked to complete a Competency Gap Analysis. This is an online tool used to assess your competency and identify any gaps in your learning.

After conducting the Preliminary Assessment, COA will do one (1) of the following:

- Approve your registration; or
- Require you to complete additional training; or
- Require you to challenge the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR) examination; or
- Require you to obtain additional training and challenge the NACOR examination; or
- Register you as a Provisional Optician prior to challenging the NACOR examination. This allows you to practice, under supervision, until you can write the exam.

You will be entitled to registration when you complete any steps required by COA, pay applicable fees and fulfill all other registration requirements.

Examinations

You may be required to write the National Optical Sciences 1 - Eyeglass Examination delivered by the National Association of Canadian Optician Regulators (NACOR). The exam is performance based. You will be required to solve problems in a clinical situation.

- The passing mark for the National Optical Science 1 exam is 61 per cent.
- Examinations are typically held twice a year in June and February.
- Testing centres are located in Alberta.
- To apply for examination, contact NACOR.

English Language

You must demonstrate an ability to communicate (read, write and speak) in English. The Competency Gap Analysis and NACOR exam are in English.

Liability Insurance

Provisional Opticians and Registered Opticians must carry liability insurance of one million (\$1,000,000) Canadian dollars. Insurance can be through your employer, or you can purchase coverage from the Opticians Association of Canada.

Payment

The following fees may apply for internationally educated applicants. All fees are in Canadian dollars. Fees are subject to change. See association websites for the most up-to-date fees.

COA Fees	
Registered Optician or Provisional Optician Application Fee	\$115.00
Document Assessment Fee	\$215.00
Competency Gap Analysis Fee	\$650.00
Annual Membership Fee	\$698.01
NACOR Fees	
NACOR Examination Fee	\$725.00

Average Earnings

The overall average earnings for all Opticians, according to the Alberta 2013 Wage and Salary survey:

Average hours worked per week	38.4
Average wage per hour	\$19.58
Average salary per year	\$39,243

Employment Options

You can also consider working in Alberta in related occupations such as Ophthalmic Assistant or Optical Technician.

For more information about additional employment options, go to the following website:

[Alberta Learning Information Service \(ALIS\) Occupational Profiles — Optician \(www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo\)](http://www.alis.alberta.ca/occinfo).

Contact Information

College of Opticians of Alberta
201, 2528 Ellwood Drive SW
Edmonton, Alberta T6X 0A9
Telephone: 780-429-2694 or (Toll free 1-800-263-6026)
Fax: 780-426-5576 (Toll free 1-800-584-6896)
Email: coa@opticians.ab.ca
Website: www.opticians.ab.ca

National Association of Canadian Opticianry Regulators
2711-83 Garry Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4J9
Telephone: 204-949-1950 (Toll free 1-866-949-1950)
Fax: 204-949-9153
Email: exam@nacor.ca
Website: www.nacor.ca

Resources

This information is an overview of the registration process. For the most current information on Optician registration visit the COA website at www.opticians.ab.ca.

Application Forms and Information:

[COA Application Process and Registration Package](#)
[COA Provisional Optician Permit](#)
[NACOR Exam Application Form](#)

Examinations

[NACOR Exam Information](#)