Getting Started in Ontario
A guide for new Ontario optometrists
As you prepare for your final examinations, the steps required to practice in Ontario have probably crossed your mind. The process can often be confusing and overwhelming, especially if you are comparing one jurisdiction to another.

The Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO) would like to make getting started in Ontario as easy as possible for you. This handy step-by-step guide will help you start a successful career in optometry with ease.

For over 100 years, OAO has provided personalized assistance to its members at every stage of their professional life. We hope that you will join us as we strengthen and advance the vision for optometry in Ontario.

OAO provides the most comprehensive member support programs in Canada. Unique to OAO is access to an on staff, policy consultant who can answer your questions on a wide range of topics, such as professional liability insurance, OHIP billing, and practice management issues.

If you have any questions feel free to contact OAO at 1-800-540-3837 or 905-826-3522, or visit our website at www.optom.on.ca.

Looking forward to helping you succeed!

Sincerely,

Sheldon Salaba, OD
President

Justin Brown
Chief Executive Officer
Contact information

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20 Adelaide St. E, Box 16, Suite 801 Toronto, ON M5C 2T6
Ph: 905-826-3522
TF: 1-800- 540-3837
www.optom.on.ca

College of Optometrists of Ontario
65 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 900 Toronto, ON M4T 2Y3
Ph.: 416-962-4071
TF: 1-888- 825-2554
www.collegeoptom.on.ca

HUB International HKMB Limited
595 Bay Street, Suite 900, Box 81 Toronto, ON M5G 2E3
TF: 1-855-565-4626 (OAO designated contact)
EMAIL: oao@hubinternational.com

Optometry Examining Board of Canada
37 Sandiford Drive, Suite 403 Stouffville, ON L4A 3Z2
Ph: 905-642-1373
TF: 905-642-3786
www.oebc.ca

Vision Institute of Canada
205 – 4025 Yonge St. Toronto, ON M2P 2E3
Ph: 416-224-2273
http://visioninstitute.optometry.net

National Board of Examiners in Optometry
200 S. College Street, #2010 Charlotte, NC 28202
Ph: 1-800-969-EXAM
www.nbe@optometry.org

Canadian Association of Optometrists
243 Argyle Ave. Ottawa, ON K2P 1B9
Ph: 613-235-7924
TF: 1-888-263-4676
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Steps to practicing in Ontario

1. Apply for a General Certificate of Registration (College of Optometrists of Ontario)

2. Write the Examinations
   - Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC)
   - Written Exam and OSCE or the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO)
   - Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Examination (College of Optometrists of Ontario)

3. Join the Ontario Association of Optometrists

4. Obtain Professional Liability Insurance

5 & 6. Become an Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) Provider

REGISTER FOR MEDICAL CLAIMS ELECTRONIC DATA TRANSFER (MC EDT)
(Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care)

7. Start Practicing
Step One

Apply for a general certificate of registration

To practice optometry in Ontario, you must register for and hold a General Certificate of Registration issued by the College of Optometrists of Ontario. To register, all requirements set by the College must be met.

To complete your application form:
- Print or type all of your answers
- Answer all of the questions that pertain to you
- Sign your application and have it witnessed
- Provide the College with all the requested documents

To submit your completed application form:
- Submit your completed application form, all required documents and a cheque for the application fee made payable to the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
- The cost of the application with 13 per cent HST is $474.60, this includes the fee for writing the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Examination.

If your form is complete and the required documentation has been received, you will be informed of your eligibility to write the Ontario Jurisprudence Examination administered by the College.

For assistance with the registration process, please contact the College at:

65 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 900
Toronto, ON, M4T 2Y3
Ph: 416-962-4071
TF: 1-888-825-2554
Fax: 416-962-4073
info@collegeoptom.ca
www.collegeoptom.on.ca
The College of Optometrists of Ontario has approved the following entry-to-practice exams:

- The Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO) or;
- The Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) written exam and OSCE or;
- National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) Exam.
  (Parts I, II, and III all to be successfully challenged after January 18, 2019)

To be registered as an Ontario optometrist, an applicant must successfully pass one of the exams offered by either OEBC or NBEO. Due to COVID-19, both exam providers have either postponed or rescheduled their exam dates. The College is not able to register an applicant prior to successful completion of one of these exams, given the requirements set out in the registration regulation.

The College has considered alternatives. However, unlike other professions or jurisdictions, the registration regulation does not allow the College to register graduates on an emergency basis or in an intern role. It is also the view of the College that the ETP exam is a critical part of the registration process, one that assures the safety and competence of the applicant prior to registration.

Once exam dates are available, contact the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) for an application to sit the OEBC written exam and OSCE:

Optometry Examining Board of Canada
37 Sandiford Drive, Suite 403 Stouffville, Ontario L4A 3Z2
Phone: 905-642-1373 Email: exams@oebc.ca

Detailed information about the format and content of the exam is available on the OEBC website: http://www.oebc.ca. After the exam, OEBC will send you one original report of your exam results. Either obtain a notarized copy of the original report or take a photocopy for your records and send the original report directly to the College of Optometrists of Ontario. It is your responsibility to submit this information to the College.

Contact the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) for an application to sit for the NBEO Exam:

National Board of Examiners in Optometry
200 S. College Street, #2010, Charlotte, NC 28202, USA
Phone: 800-969-EXAM Email: nbeo@optometry.org

Optometry Examining Board of Canada
37 Sandiford Drive, Suite 403 Stouffville, Ontario L4A 3Z2
Phone: 905-642-1373 Email: exams@oebc.ca
Step Two continued

Writing the examinations

**National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) Exam**

This is the entry-to-practice examination for optometry in the United States. It is also accepted as an alternative entry-to-practice examination in some Canadian jurisdictions, including Ontario.

In order to be accepted for registration in Ontario, all three parts of the NBEO examination (Part I-ABS, Part II-PAM, and Part III-CSE) must be successfully challenged after January 18, 2020. Passing the TMOD component in Part II is required for registration in Ontario.

For exam information and details on test day, scoring, registration, and policies, visit [www.optometry.org](http://www.optometry.org).

**Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Examination**

This examination is administered by the College of Optometrists of Ontario. Please refer to the College calendar for the schedule of upcoming online Jurisprudence exams. As the exam is being offered on a rolling basis, not all applicants will receive the information at the same time.

The College is currently only accepting applications electronically. To register, email Jodyne Pardo to receive a secure link where you can upload required documents. College staff will follow-up with applicants in the future to validate submitted documents (i.e., notarized degree certificates, valid passports, and Vulnerable Sector checks).

Applications are normally open for a maximum of two years from the date the College receives them, however, this period is being extended to accommodate delays experienced by applicants as a result of COVID-19.

Jurisprudence results are reported on a pass/fail basis and sent within four weeks of each exam administration. If you fail the exam, you must arrange to take it again and pay the applicable fee.

For more information, please contact the College of Optometrists of Ontario at:
65 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 900, Toronto, ON M4T 2Y3
Main 416-962-4071 • Toll-Free 1-888-825-2554
Step Three

Join the Ontario Association of Optometrists

The association offers a wide range of benefits and services to members, including:

**Phased in Membership Dues for New Graduates**

It is important to join the OAO as soon as you have received your college license number after successfully passing the Jurisprudence exam. OAO recognizes that new grads may be facing a mountain of education debt and it can be very overwhelming. To help new grads make joining their provincial association more financially manageable and a less stressful transition, OAO offers a phased in dues approach over the first five years after graduation.

OAO membership dues include membership with the national optometric organization, the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO), and a portion of dues is also allocated towards advertising levy fees.

In your first year after graduation to join OAO you only pay 10% of full annual membership dues; in the second year 25%, third year 50%, fourth year 75%, and in your fifth year after graduation you begin paying full annual membership dues.

Another way that OAO contributes to a more manageable financial transition is a special new graduate rate for professional liability insurance, a must have to practice in Ontario. There is more on this valuable member benefit, found later in the guide in Step Four, How to Obtain Professional Liability Insurance (PLI).

**Advocacy**

By joining OAO, you will have a say on changes to the payment model for OHIP-insured services, and other important issues like enhanced scope of practice. We are the only optometric association that can negotiate remuneration in Ontario. And only OAO members have the right to participate in a binding ratification vote when a draft agreement is reached! OAO is currently engaged with the Provincial Gov’t, advocating on behalf of ALL OAO members.

**Marketing and public education**

Along with a province-wide marketing campaign to drive the public to optometrist offices, OAO provides members with social media toolkits and marketing collateral to further promote their practice in the community and online.

**Members-only portal**

Benefit from exclusive member tools and resources, including the OAO TPA App, clinical and practice management guidelines, and critical information regarding patient billing.

**Mentorship program and consultant support**

OAO has a dedicated OD consultant and roster of mentors who share their expertise and provide peer-to-peer support. Whether you have clinical, billing or practice management questions, or are looking for advice on career development, OAO has an expert for you.

**Eye See...Eye Learn ®**

Take part in this exclusive benefit and be recognized as the go-to expert in children’s vision. The Eye See...Eye Learn program is a proven practice builder, attracting young families as well as increasing referrals from doctors and pediatricians.
Your provincial membership with the Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO) entitles you to national membership with the Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO). The national association ALSO offers a full line of benefits and services including but not limited to:

- Jobs4ecps is a niche jobsite dedicated to eye care professionals in Canada
- Marketing4ecps is a full-service digital marketing agency for Optometrists
- Exclusive Private Label Lens program
- Financial Services
- Vision at work, Safety Glasses
Join the Ontario Association of Optometrists

Ready to Join?

Click on the links to download the membership application and consent form to receive electronic communications.

Once you have completed the forms you can submit them by Email: oaoinfo@optom.on.ca

Once received, OAO will contact you for your payment.

OR

Click here to apply online.
The College of Optometrists for Ontario (COO) requires every optometrist have Professional Liability Insurance to practice. The minimum requirement is $2,000,000 per occurrence, and $5,000,000 per year in the aggregate.

Fortunately, one of OAO’s premier member benefits is the OAO Professional Liability Insurance Program (PLI), where you get more for less.

Together, OAO and its insurance broker HUB have developed a 'best in class' Professional Liability Insurance program available exclusively to OAO members.

OAO recognizes the mountain of debt ODs face after graduation. As your provincial association we want to do everything we can to help get you started in Ontario!

SPECIAL RATE FOR NEW GRADS - Graduating ODs can purchase PLI coverage at the $2 million Liability limit from the time they graduate until March 15 of the next annual PLI renewal for the low premium rate of $50.00 (+HST).

Once you have purchased your PLI coverage HUB will send you confirmation, which you can submit to the College for proof of coverage.

HUB International HKMB Limited
595 Bay Street, Suite 900, Box 81
Toronto, ON M5G 2E3
Toll Free: 1-800-232-2024
Direct Local: 416-597-0008

OAO Designated CONTACT for INSURANCE INQUIRIES:
To leave a message for an insurance representative to contact you, use the OAO designated contacts:
Toll Free: 1-855-565-4OAO (4626)
Email: oao@hubinternational.com

Click on the appropriate link to:

Apply online
Apply by email

Use this glossary of terms to help complete your PLI application
Become an Ontario Health Insurance Provider

To obtain an OHIP Billing Number with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

1. You must hold a valid Certificate of Registration with the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
2. You must have an Ontario practice address.
3. You must complete and submit the form, “Application for OHIP Billing Number for Health Professionals” together with supporting documentation and a void cheque for direct deposit.

For OHIP claims office locations and hours of operations, click here.

Step Five

Medical claims electronic data transfer (MC EDT)

All Ontario optometrists must submit their billings by Medical Claims Electronic Data Transfer (MC EDT). It is a secure method of manually uploading and downloading claim submission files and reports online. MC EDT is available seven days a week on a 24 hour basis with the exception of weekly scheduled system maintenance, Sunday mornings between the hours of 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. and Wednesday mornings between the hours of 5 a.m. to 8 a.m.

To set up your MC EDT account and learn how to upload OHIP claims and download reports, click here. For technical support, contact the Service Support Contact Centre (SSCC) at: 1-800 262-6524 Hours of operation: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday – Friday, except holidays E-mail: SSContactCentre.MOH@ontario.ca

Cut-off dates

Claims received by the 5 p.m. on the 18th of the month will typically be processed for payment by the 15th of the following month. When the 18th falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the next business day. Submissions received after the 18th may not be approved until the next monthly processing cycle (i.e. submissions received on Nov 18 will appear on the December Remittance Advice, submissions received after Nov. 18th may not appear until the January Remittance Advice).
Medical claims electronic data transfer (MC EDT)

References:

MC EDT Registration and Enrolment Procedure Summary

Medical Claims Electronic Data Transfer Reference Manual

MC EDT Browser Bookmark Instructions

- Mozilla Firefox
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Google Chrome
- Safari

MC EDT Upload/Download files

- Mozilla Firefox
- Microsoft Internet Explorer
- Google Chrome
- Safari

MC EDT Best Practices

MC EDT Procedure Summaries

- Changing your GO Secure User ID and Email Account
- MC EDT Upload/Download for Designee with Multiple Billing Numbers
- MC EDT Designee Maintenance Procedure Summary
- Overview of First Time Designee Procedures for MC EDT
- Overview of Previously Registered Designee for MC EDT
**Step Six continued**

**Obtain practice management software for OHIP billing**

Practice management (OHIP billing) software vendors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vendor</th>
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<tr>
<td>CabMD</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cab.md">www.cab.md</a></td>
<td>613-767-8864</td>
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<tr>
<td>eVisionCare</td>
<td><a href="http://www.evisioncare.com">www.evisioncare.com</a></td>
<td>647-932-7150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hype! Systems Inc.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.hypesystems.com">www.hypesystems.com</a></td>
<td>1-800-592-2138</td>
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<tr>
<td>I-File</td>
<td><a href="http://www.msfci.com">www.msfci.com</a></td>
<td>519-749-0374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filopto</td>
<td><a href="http://www.filopto.com">www.filopto.com</a></td>
<td>1-888-321-0441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klinix</td>
<td><a href="http://www.klinix.com">www.klinix.com</a></td>
<td>1-877-728-3199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDbilling.ca</td>
<td><a href="http://www.MDbilling.ca">www.MDbilling.ca</a></td>
<td>647-933-8181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocuco</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ocuco.com">www.ocuco.com</a></td>
<td>1-800-708-1610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OD Office Pro</td>
<td><a href="http://www.spinnakerware.com">www.spinnakerware.com</a></td>
<td>1-855-470-2556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optosys</td>
<td><a href="http://www.optosys.ca">www.optosys.ca</a></td>
<td>514-316-5766</td>
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<tr>
<td>P&amp;P Data Systems Inc.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.p-pdata.com">www.p-pdata.com</a></td>
<td>1-800-678-6450</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revolution EHR</td>
<td><a href="http://www.revolutionehr.com">www.revolutionehr.com</a></td>
<td>1-877-738-3471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VisionWare</td>
<td><a href="http://www.visionware.ca">www.visionware.ca</a></td>
<td>1-800-667-4748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Eyes</td>
<td><a href="http://www.iiiisoftware.com">www.iiiisoftware.com</a></td>
<td>1-403-314-1322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Step Seven

Start practicing

After completing the previous steps it is time to find a place to practice. Do not be afraid to ask questions when speaking with practice owners. This is your opportunity to find out the culture and environment of the practice. Below are some useful tips:

Ask:

- What equipment will be provided in the office?
- What is the daily expected number of bookings for a new associate?
- What is the policy for new patients in your practice? Are they booked with a new associate doctor?
- What has taken place in the practice that has led to a new associate being needed?
- What potential role in the practice can I expect in five years? Is there potential for partnership?
- Is the associate required to be present in the clinic if there are no patients booked?

Discuss:

- The work schedule (hours of work, expected number of patients per hour)
- Sick leave and vacation policy
- The breakdown of patient types (self-pay vs. OHIP, cohorts by age)
- Remuneration:
  - Will you be salaried? If so, discuss the base rate per day.
  - Will you be an independent contractor? If so, discuss the percentage of billings earned you will retain.
  - Ownership of records. In the absence of an agreement, College policy indicates that the practice and the owner(s) of the practice retain custodianship of the patient records when the associate leaves the practice. If you and the practice owner decide otherwise, be sure to include the details in a contract.

At OA0, we are dedicated to helping our members provide the highest standard of eye health and vision care for Ontarians while driving the profession of optometry forward at the government, regulatory and public levels. We work to increase awareness and understanding of the role that optometrists play in ensuring the health of patients.

We hope this step-by-step guide provides resources and support for you as you navigate the transition of “Getting Started in Ontario”.

To become and OA0 member, go to the OA0 website and select “Become a member - Join Now” under the Doctor tab.