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 108 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,

Jeffrey Guthrie, OD
President

Beth Witney
Chief Executive Officer
Contact Information

Ontario Association of Optometrists
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
Ph: 416-597-0008
TF: 1-855-565-4626 (OAO designated contact)

Crain and Schooley Insurance
1600 Carling Ave., Suite 570 Ottawa, ON K1Z 1G3
Ph: 613-722-3383
TF: 1-800-267-7949

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

Canadian Association of Optometrists
243 Argyle Ave.
Ottawa, ON K2P 1B9
Ph: 613-235-7924
TF: 1-888-263-4676
www.opto.ca
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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
   Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Examination (College of Optometrists of Ontario)
3. JOIN THE ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS
4. OBTAIN PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE
5. BECOME AN ONTARIO HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN (OHIP) PROVIDER
6. 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
Step two
Writing the examinations

Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) Written Exam and Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE)

This is the entry-to-practice examination for optometry in Canada and is administered by the OEBC. Detailed information about the exam is available on the OEBC website: www.oebc.ca.

The OEBC written exam and OSCE replaces the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO) as the Canadian standard assessment by which competence is verified.

It is important to read OEBC’s policies and procedures to determine if you are eligible to take the exam.

Eight weeks following each administration, OEBC will mail individual performance results to each candidate. Candidates who have passed will receive two copies of their pass letter, one for submission to the College of Optometrists of Ontario and one for personal records. It is your responsibility to submit this information to the College.

Candidates who did not pass will receive a notification letter with detailed results of the failed component(s). To learn more about the exam results reporting procedures, click here.

If you have any questions about the OEBC exam, please contact representatives at OEBC at:

Optometry Examining Board of Canada
37 Sandiford Drive, Suite 403
Stouffville, Ontario L4A 3Z2
905-642-1373
905-642-3786
exams@oebc.ca
Step two con’t

Writing the examinations

Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Examination

This examination is administered by the College of Optometrists of Ontario six times a year. There are two administrations (one in the spring and fall) that are accompanied by a one-day information seminar. The other four administrations are offered without a seminar.

Information about the date and location for each administration of the Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence exam are located on the College website calendar.

To register for the exam, submit:

- A completed application for a Certificate of Registration
- All required documents
- A cheque for the application fee made payable to the College of Optometrists of Ontario

Once these have been received, you will be registered for the next immediate administration of the Jurisprudence Exam. Please contact the College if you would like to sit at a later administration.

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.

It is a requirement of registration that an applicant successfully complete the Jurisprudence examination within one year (12 months) of applying for registration. If you do not pass the exam within this timeframe you may submit a new application for registration and pay the applicable fee.

The study materials for the exam, Ontario Optometric Jurisprudence Resource Binder, can be accessed here.

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
info@collegeoptom.on.ca
Step three
Join the Ontario Association of Optometrists

Why join the OAO now?

To practice optometry, you will need professional liability insurance. By partnering with HUB, OAO can offer the most comprehensive liability insurance coverage at competitive rates. However, there are more reasons to join OAO:

Phased-in dues
OAO understands the financial realities of starting out after graduation. That is why we offer phased-in dues over five years. New graduate dues for the first year of your OAO membership is $273.

Personalized assistance
Have questions about billing the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)? Need help dealing with a patient or practice management issue? Need advice with a practice start-up? Call: 905-826-3522 (within the GTA) or our toll-free line: 1-800-540-3837. We are ready to help you get the answers you need.

TPA resources
OAO’s Therapeutic Drug Guide is now available as a web app. There are also other resources that will help you with ocular disease treatment and management.

President’s updates
OAO members receive regular email messages from OAO’s President. Keep updated and read what OAO is doing to help your practice. In addition, members can share their thoughts on what they’d like to see happen in optometry with the President at president@optom.on.ca.

Optometry’s voice
OAO is the advocacy body for Ontario’s optometrists. We speak on your behalf to increase optometry’s scope, negotiate OHIP funding agreements, and ensure that your practice can thrive in today’s environment. For over 100 years, we have provided leadership and a vision for the future of optometry.

Real benefits
OAO strives to provide benefits that make a difference to you and your practice. Our interactive website with resource materials can help you understand billing issues related to government programs (such as OHIP and the Ministry of Community of Social Services) and non-OHIP services (in the OAO’s Suggested Schedule of Professional Fees).

Classified ads
Members can view and post ads for work opportunities, locums, equipment sales, practices for sale and much more.

Excellence in education
As an OAO member, you will have access to the best education in the province. Our Annual Symposium offers 60+ hours of stimulating, high-caliber education and a great opportunity to get re-acquainted with colleagues.
Step three con’t
Join the Ontario Association of Optometrists

Click on the following links to download the membership application and consent form to receive electronic communications. As well, make sure to review the new graduate membership dues schedule.

Once you have completed the forms you can submit them by:

Email: info@optom.on.ca
OR
Mail: Ontario Association of Optometrists
20 Adelaide Street East, Box 16
Suite 801 Toronto, ON M5C 2T6
Fax: 905-826-0625

Ready to join?
Step four
Obtain Personal Liability Insurance (PLI)

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.

Click on the appropriate link to:
Apply online
Apply by fax or email
Receive a glossary with terms concerning PLI

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
Step four con’t

OAO members are eligible to participate in all OAO Insurance Program Offerings which include:

Professional Liability Insurance (PLI)

Home and Auto Insurances

Group Benefits: Health, Dental, Life, Long Term Disability, Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) and Travel Insurances.

The OAO Health Spending Account

An effective way to offer better benefits to your employees while staying within your set budget, allowing you to determine the amount you wish to provide to your staff. To contact a representative click here. For information and pricing, or to enroll in the plan, click here.
Step five

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 six

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).
Step six con’t
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 con’t
Obtain practice management software for OHIP billing

Practice management (OHIP billing) software vendors

CabMD
www.cab.md
613-767-8864

eVisionCare
www.evisioncare.com
647-932-7150

Hype! Systems Inc.
www.hypesystems.com
1-800-592-2138

I-File
www.msfc1.com
519-749-0374

Filopto
www.filopto.com
1-888-321-0441

Klinix
www.klinix.com
1-877-728-3199

MDbilling.ca
www.MDbilling.ca
647-933-8181

Ocuco
www.ocuco.ca
1-800-708-1610

OD Office Pro
www.spinnakerware.com
1-855-470-2556

Optosys
www.optosys.ca
514-316-5766

P&P Data Systems Inc.
www.p-pdata.com
1-800-678-6450

Revolution EHR
www.revolutionehr.com
1-877-738-3471

VisionWare
www.visionware.ca
1-800-667-4748

Visual Eyes
www.iijissoftware.com
1-403-314-1322
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.