

**Motion: That the American Optometric Association House of Delegates endorses the concept of general Board Certification and Maintenance of Certification for Optometry and authorizes the AOA to participate in the development, formation, implementation and governance of the American Board of Optometry (ABO) and that the American Optometric Association House of Delegates recommends that the American Board of Optometry (ABO) adopt the following founding principles and develop a process for Board Certification and Maintenance of Certification based predominantly on the draft model proposal below:**

**Founding Principles:**

1. The certificate conferred by the American Board of Optometry may be used for credentialing purposes only. Certification does not confer legal qualification, privilege, or license to practice optometry. The ABO will not in any way interfere with nor limit the professional activities of any duly licensed optometrist who is not certified by the ABO.
2. The ABO will create multiple pathways to achieve board certification.
3. The ABO will oversee a process for general board certification of optometry and will not interfere with other established optometric sub-specialty certifications such as Fellowship in the College of Optometrists in Vision Development, Fellowship in the Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association, and Diplomate programs of the American Academy of Optometry.
4. The composition of the ABO should reflect that board certification and maintenance of certification for optometry has been established by the profession as a means of demonstrating ongoing clinical competence independent of established licensing and regulatory boards.
5. The AOA reserves the right to withdraw its endorsement and support of the ABO at any time.

**DRAFT MODEL**  
**American Board of Optometry (ABO)**  
**Governance**

The new board will be called the American Board of Optometry. It will be an independent not-for-profit corporation with seven members, consisting of one (1) Public Member and representatives nominated by the following organizations:

American Academy of Optometry (1)

American Optometric Association (2)

American Optometric Student Association (1, an OD licensed <5 years)

Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (1)

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (1)

Each member of the board will serve a maximum of two 3-year terms with a staggered initial appointment. Organizations will submit a slate of three nominees per position for selection of replacement board members.

**DRAFT MODEL**  
**American Board of Optometry (ABO)**  
**Initial Board Certification Process**

**STEP ONE: Initial Application to the American Board of Optometry.**

**A Candidate for Board Certification must submit the Eligibility Application, Application Fee, and evidence of the following Initial Qualifying Requirements:**

- Graduate of School or College of Optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE).
- Possession of an active license to practice therapeutic optometry in a State, District of Columbia, U.S. Commonwealth or Territory.
- Clearance of Search of National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) & Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB) [*Note: Closed cases and infractions that have been reported to the NPDB and/or HIPDB that do not prevent an optometrist from holding an unrestricted license should not be an impediment to Board Certification.*]
- Statement of adherence to American Board of Optometry Code of Ethics

Upon confirmation of the requirements, the American Board of Optometry will confer that the candidate is **Board Eligible/Active Candidate** for a period of one year.

Candidates may renew their **Board Eligible/Active Candidate Status** for up to three years total by submitting of proof of completion of **50 points** progress toward completion of Post-Graduate Educational Requirements by the end of each year of board eligibility.

**STEP TWO: Application for the Board Certification Examination**

**A Board Eligible Optometrist must submit the Certification Application and evidence of the completion *within the previous three years* of the following Licensure and Educational Requirements:**

- Three years active licensure (\*See Exceptions)
- 150 Points of Post Graduate Educational Requirements

## **Post Graduate Educational Requirements:**

A minimum of 150 points after initial licensure establishes eligibility for the examination. These must be attained within the three years immediately prior to the examination and can be attained by the following experiences. Note that these categories have minimum or maximum points permitted.

### **1. Residency**

Certificate of Completion of an ACOE-accredited optometry residency is worth 150 points toward the requirement if within three years of completion of the residency, or 100 points if between 3-10 years of completion of the residency. \*In addition, the three-year active licensure general requirement is waived. *[Note: For those who apply within a three-year window from the date on which the American Board of Optometry accepts applications, an ACOE-accredited Residency will count 150 points regardless of when completed.]*

### **2. Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry**

Certificate of Fellowship (Clinical) in the American Academy of Optometry (AAO) is worth 50 points toward the requirement if within 10 years of completion of Fellowship. \*In addition, the three-year active licensure general requirement is reduced to 1 year. *[Note: For those who apply within a three-year window from the date on which the American Board of Optometry accepts applications, a Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry (Clinical) will count 50 points regardless of when completed.]*

### **3. Experience in Practice**

For those who apply within a three-year window from the date on which the American Board of Optometry accepts applications, a maximum of 150 Experience in Practice Points will be accrued equal to 5 points per year of active licensure.

### **4. Fellowship in the College of Optometrists in Vision Development.** *For those who apply within a three-year window from the date on which the American Board of Optometry accepts applications, a Fellowship in the College of Optometrists in Vision Development will be worth 50 points toward initial board certification in optometry.*

**OTHER:**

**Category I Education: *A Minimum of 50% of Points must be Category I.***

A. Continuing Education conferences, meetings or workshops carrying ABO-authorized credit (such as State, District of Columbia, U.S. Commonwealth or Territory board approved or COPE-approved credit.) *[Note: Continuing Education with Examination, CEE, is acceptable but not required, and will be credited with 2 points per hour of education.]*

**Category II Education: *A Maximum of 50% of Points can be Category II. A maximum of 20% of the total points can be from any lettered sub-category.***

A. Educational activities (such as papers and poster presentations, scientific sessions and grand rounds) provided by schools and colleges of optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE), and medical schools approved by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

B. Distance learning courses, both interactive and non-interactive, with examinations that qualify for ABO-authorized credit (such as State, District of Columbia, U.S. Commonwealth or Territory board approved or COPE-approved credit.) upon completion. (Examples include electronic media, audio/video tapes, and journals.)

C. Educational or scientific portions of hospital meetings, local optometric or medical society meetings, or grand rounds not approved by COPE or the state board.

D. Other ABO-authorized performance in practice activities (other than SAMs or PPMs) such as web-based quality improvement modules, record review, peer evaluation, documented point of care learning, etc.

E. An educational program of a university or college having a defined curriculum, designated faculty, and accreditation from a recognized institutional accrediting organization or an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, that is designed to enhance a participant's instructional, research, administrative, or clinical

knowledge and skills necessary for the participant to succeed as an educator, administrator, or practitioner in optometry.

#### F. Scholarly Activities

- Members of teams who develop assessment tools, including Self-Assessment Module (SAM) and Performance In Practice Modules (PPM) knowledge development for Initial and Maintenance of Certification for Optometrists, item developers for the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO), members of graduate thesis committees or AAO oral examination committees.
- Teaching healthcare students or healthcare professionals.
- Review of manuscripts for publication in a peer-reviewed optometry, medical or scientific journal.
- Publication of a clinical, review or research article in a peer reviewed optometry, medical or scientific journal.

#### **Category III Education (FOR MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION ONLY, not initial board certification)**

A. Completion of Self-Assessment Modules (SAMs) and Performance In Practice Modules (PPMs) designed to enhance knowledge and skills significant to the practice of optometry.

***NOTE: All points are subject to final approval of the American Board of Optometry.***

#### **STEP THREE: Completion of the Board Certification Examination**

**A Board Eligible/Active Candidate Optometrist should pass the Examination within 12 months of submitting the Application for the Board Certification Examination.**

#### **Board Certification Examination**

The Examination is an Enhanced Patient Assessment and Management-like (PAM-like) examination(s) with areas of emphasis

- Possible Examination Topics:

Refractive Status / Sensory Processes / Oculomotor Processes:

- Ametropia
- Ophthalmic optics
- Contact lenses
- Low vision
- Binocular Vision / Perceptual anomalies

Disease / Trauma:

- Lids / lashes / lacrimal system / ocular adnexa / orbit
- Conjunctiva / cornea / refractive surgery
- Lens / cataract / IOL / pre- and post-operative care
- Episclera / sclera / uvea
- Vitreous / retina
- Optic nerve / neuro-ophthalmic pathways
- Glaucoma
- Emergencies
- Systemic health

- The candidates will choose three of the bulleted topics to weight their examination toward their areas of interest.

**Upon successful completion of the Board Certification Examination, the American Board of Optometry will confer *Board Certified* status to the optometrist for a period of 10 years.**

**DRAFT MODEL**  
**American Board of Optometry (ABO)**  
**Maintenance of Certification Process**

Maintenance of Certification (MOC) in Optometry is a four step process:

1. Professional Standing
  - Current, valid, therapeutic license
2. Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment
  - Education (e.g., CE) and self-assessment (e.g., SAMs)
3. Practice Performance Assessment
  - Demonstrate ability to assess the quality of care provided compared to peers and national benchmarks and apply best evidence or consensus recommendations to improve care using follow-up assessments (e.g., PPMs)
4. Cognitive Expertise (PAM-like examination)
  - Demonstrate through examination the fundamental practice-related and practice environment-related knowledge to provide quality of care

MOC introduces to optometry two new concepts that are used for MOC programs in medicine, Self-Assessment Modules and Performance in Practice Modules.

1. Self-Assessment Modules (SAMs)
  - a. Provide in-depth assessment of current knowledge in specific content areas
  - b. Consist of 2 parts:
    - i. A 60 item knowledge assessment, with direct links to supporting references and critiques, and
    - ii. A clinical simulation that focuses on patient management
  - c. Completed over the Internet, usually in 1-4 hours
2. Performance In Practice Modules (PPMs)
  - a. Comprised of a quality improvement activity which takes place over a 3- to 6-month period
  - b. Incorporates a practice assessment questionnaire related to a specific diagnostic code or set of codes selected by the optometrist



- c. Practice pattern is evaluated:
  - i. Select patient records based on specific diagnostic codes
  - ii. Enter data on various clinical measures
  - iii. Receive immediate feedback on how responses compare with peers
  - iv. The program will suggest interventions to affect clinical outcomes

The Ten-Year MOC process is divided into three 3-year stages and a recertification examination year. In each of Stages I, II and III, Board Certified Optometrists must complete 150 total points within the three years, including 2 SAMs (worth 15 points each) and 1 PPM (worth 50 points) and 70 total points over the three years from other educational activities, at least 50% from Category I Education. All Stage III requirements must be completed to be eligible for the re-certification examination. The Board Certified Optometrist may apply for recertification examination in either the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> year of the certification cycle.