COA Commission on Opticianry Accreditation

EVALUATOR'S WORKSHOP

Welcome to the COA's Evaluator's workshop. That is pronounced "C O A", not "co'-a".

Contact information:
Commission on Opticianry Accreditation (COA)

Director of Accreditation
Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
229 East 85th Street #194
New York, NY, 10028
director@COAccreditation.com
315-742-8066

Contents

On this slide is the contents of this workshop. If this is your first time through, please read it from beginning to end. If you are looking for particular information, you are welcome to go directly to the section you are interested in.

The Commission's main documents are all available on-line at http://COAccreditation.com You are welcome to go there and peruse the documents. Of particular interest will be:
1. The *Essentials* for the 2-year degree and for the 1-year certificate program;
2. The *Accreditation Guide*, which applies to both;
3. The *Self Study Guide* particularly if you are an Opticianry Program Director;
4. The *Evaluator's Checklist* which is the document that the onsite team will use during the onsite visit;
5. The Commission's *Policies and Procedures*; and
6. The Commission's *By-Laws*.

Introduction to the COA

- Accredits two-year Opticianry Degree programs
- Accredits one-year Ophthalmic Laboratory Certificate Programs
- Formed in 1979
- Recognized by the US Department of Education 1985 - 2006
- Recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) 2010

SCOPE of accreditation for the Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
The COA accredits two-year opticianry degree programs and one-year ophthalmic laboratory technology certificate programs.

OBJECTIVES
The Opticianry profession cooperates to establish, maintain, and promote standards of quality for educational Opticianry Programs and provide recognition for those educational programs that meet or exceed the minimum standards specified in these *Essentials.*

These *Essentials* are to be used in the development and self-evaluation of Opticianry Programs. The evaluation of a program's compliance is accomplished by site team visits. Lists of accredited programs are published for the information of the public, prospective students, and employers.
http://COAccreditation.com/programs.shtml

Self-Study Guide, http://COAccreditation.com/self-study-guide.pdf   page 1.

RECOGNITION
The US Department of Education no longer recognizes programmatic agencies that require their programs to be in accredited institutions, because the Department of Education now performs only the role of gate-keeper for federal funding of students, programs, and institutions, and for most funding the institutional accreditation is the link used. CHEA, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, is a national body that has taken over the process of providing peer review and quality assurance for accrediting agencies that are no longer eligible for US ED recognition.

Introduction to the COA

- Twelve Commissioners
  - 4 appointed by NAO
  - 4 appointed by OAA
  - 2 appointed by NFOS
  - 2 public members elected by sitting Commissioners
- Commissioners serve three year terms
- Commissioners may serve two consecutive terms

The commission is comprised of twelve Commissioners.

Four of the twelve Commissioners are appointed by the National Academy of Opticianry (NAO) [website: http://www.nao.org/], four by the Opticians Association of America (OAA) [website: http://www.oaa.org/], and two by the National Federation of Opticianry Schools (NFOS) [website: http://nfos.org/].

The other two Commissioners represent the public. These two Commissioners cannot be Opticians or work in the Optical field. They are nominated by the current Commissioners, and elected at the semi-annual meeting that occurs before the appointment becomes effective.

The appointments are for three years. Each Commissioner may serve two consecutive terms. No Commissioner may be appointed for a third term without a minimum of one year off after the end of the second term. When a Commissioner has to resign before his or her term expires, the appointing agency names a replacement. If the remaining term is more than one year then the remaining term is considered to be the replacement's first term. If the remaining term is one year or less then the replacement may be appointed for two more full terms.

In other words, the maximum contiguous time that a person may serve on the Commission is seven years, and the most common is six years.

Introduction to the COA

- Purpose of Accreditation:
  - Identify programs meeting established standards of educational quality
  - Self-evaluation
  - Peer review
  - Graduates more likely to be allowed to sit for boards in other states.

There are several reasons why a program will choose to go through the accreditation process.

•Counselors, employers, educators, federal and state government officials (including state licensure boards), and professional associations rely on the accredited status of the program as an index of the quality of graduates.

•Accreditation constitutes an expression of confidence in the policies and procedures of the accredited program.

•The accreditation process involves an external source of stimulation to improve the overall quality of the program through the use of the Self-Study Report and through periodic evaluations by an outside agency.

•Accreditation assures high standards and educational quality through adherence to established standards, criteria, and policies.

Accreditation Guide, page 10

Introduction to the COA

- Value of accreditation:
  - Public recognition of the specialized program
  - Assurance for students that program meets standards

The process is costly in both money and time.

- The self-study takes several months to write and typically requires input from the Program Director, the teaching faculty, support personnel, and several members of the institution's administration.

- The onsite visit takes 2-3 days for the Program Director and time during those days for the program faculty, support personnel, and administration.

- Airfare, hotels, and meals for the visiting team members are born by the program / institution. This can run to $3,000 or more for one visit, depending on the number of days and the distance that the team members travel to visit the program.

Contents

First we will look at the major categories of the standards that the programs have to meet in order to be accredited.

There are two documents that are collectively referred to as "The *Essentials*."

1. The first document is *Essentials for an Accredited Two-Year Degree Program for Opticianry*, and can be found at http://COAccreditation.com/essentials-dispensing.pdf

2. The second document is *Essentials of a One-Year Certificate Program for Ophthalmic Laboratory* and can be found at http://COAccreditation.com/essentials-laboratory.pdf

Everything that we will discuss in this presentation is true of both programs, and the sections that will be discussed in the next several slides are in both documents. However, most of the quotes will be from the 2-year Degree program requirements.

The *Essentials* begins with a description of the profession, including a list of competencies that the Commission considers to be minimum skills and knowledge for an entry-level licensed optician.

After the description of the profession, the requirements for the program begin. (*Essentials*, page 5)

SECTION I describes the type of institution that the COA considers acceptable to offer an opticianry program. These institutions may be:

        1. colleges or universities

        2. community or junior colleges

        3. postsecondary, vocational-technical schools, or institutes

        4. military schools

        5. Proprietary schools

The institution offering the program must be accredited by an organization recognized by an appropriate governmental agency (e.g. the U.S. Department of Education), or the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

Accredited programs must meet the same requirements when instruction is offered through distance delivery.

To accredit a new program, the program must have graduated at least one class of students. If the application is made during the first or second year of the program and the onsite visit occurs in the year following that graduation, the first class of students is eligible for retroactive accreditation.

If an unaccredited program has been in existence for several years and applies for accreditation, accreditation may be retroactive to the graduating class immediately prior to the accreditation date.

(*Essentials*, page 6.)

The *Essentials*

- **SECTION** II Mission, Goals, and Learning Objectives
  - The program must have clearly stated:
    - Mission
    - Goals
    - Learning objectives
  - These items must be:
    - Published
    - Reviewed annually

SECTION II is concerned with the Mission, Goals, and Learning Objectives of the program.

"Goals refer to those long-range purposes or aims, which the program must sustain year after year. Goals define those end results to be achieved. Goals taken collectively constitute the mission of the program. Learning objectives refer to those relatively short-term conditions to be achieved within a given period of time, which is measurable evidence of progress toward achievement of the program's goals. The Mission, Goals, and Learning Objectives must be published and available to the students."

The program mission must be appropriate to Opticianry or Ophthalmic laboratory. A mission is normally one-two sentences.

The program goals must be published and available to students. They should include the elimination of hazardous waste and reduction of non-hazardous waste, and compliance with federal and state environmental regulations.

For a degree program, one goal must be the successful completion of the NOCE exam (ABO certification) and the NCLE examination, if applicable in the state.

Goals are normally more specific than the mission, but are still a listing of the expected results of the program and the educational experience.

Learning objectives are a more detailed listing of the skills and knowledge that must be mastered by the student in order to meet the goals of the program. They must be competency based.

The program must demonstrate that the mission, goals, and learning objectives are reviewed on a regular basis, and that there are systems in place to allow for evaluation of the results of the program. The program must be able to demonstrate that the learning objectives and goals are being met. For the degree programs, this requires that the program track:

1. program completion;
2. job placement;
3. National Opticianry Competency Examination (ABO) pass rates;
4. NCLE, in states where contact lens fitting is included in the definition of the scope of practice for Opticians; and
5. state licensure pass rates, in states where opticians are licensed.

(*Essentials*, pages 7 - 8 [Degree] or page 7 [Laboratory].)

The *Essentials*

- **SECTION** III Curriculum
  - The structured curriculum must contain:
    - Professionally related content
    - General education content
    - A clinical practice program (internship or externship)
    - A laboratory experience
  - Graduate competencies must be specified.

SECTION III deals with the professional and general education content that the students will be exposed to.

Part A lists the professional related content that the program must contain, and also lists the general educational content.

For the degree in Opticianry, the professional content is:
1. Assessment of the Visual System
2. Business Management
3. Contact Lens Clinical Experience (Internship or Externship)
4. Contact Lens Fitting
5. Contact Lens Modification
6. Contact Lens Theory
7. Dispensing Clinical Experience (Internship or Externship)
8. Dispensing Theory
9. Fabrication Techniques
10. Geometric Optics
11. Ocular Anatomy, Physiology, and Pathology
12. Ophthalmic Materials
13. Ophthalmic Terminology
14. Ophthalmic Optics
15. Opticianry Sales Techniques
16. Patient/customer/client Relationships
17. Prescription Analysis
18. Production & Quality Control Methods
19. Professional Ethics
20. Relationships with Eyecare Professionals and Laboratory Personnel
21. Safety and Environmental Health
22. Scope of Practice
23. Spectacle Fitting and Adjusting
24. State and National Opticianry Regulations

The onsite evaluators must determine which courses contain each of these subjects. It helps a lot if, in the self-study, the Program Director lists the subjects above and indicates the course number where the content is found. Then the onsite team members only need to verify that the content is there, instead of looking for each subject in the course outlines.

The word "content" is used instead of "course" because the COA does not require each of these subjects to be a whole course; this is particularly important in the general education content areas, which are:
1. Behavioral Science
2. Computer Technology
3. English
4. Mathematics
5. Science

These content areas must be in the curriculum, but not necessarily separate courses. For example, the first several weeks of the Optical Theory I course might cover the math skills that the students will need. The anatomy of the eye course may be an Opticianry course, but it can count as a science course.

Part A also indicates that there must be a clinical practice program. It does not state that this clinical practice has to be on campus.

Parts B – D deal with tests, classroom presentations, and textbooks/handouts.

Parts E – F discuss the clinic and laboratory experiences.

Part G discusses Graduate Competencies. There is a list of skills that must be presented to the students, and there must be a way to demonstrate that the students have mastered these skills. Again, it helps if the self-study lists the competencies and indicates what course tests for mastery of each.

(*Essentials*, pages 9 - 12 [Degree] or pages 8 - 10 [Laboratory].)

The *Essentials*

- SECTION IV Resources
  - Program Director
  - Instructors
  - Financial support from Institution
  - Facilities (classrooms, labs, clinics, library)
  - Advisory Committee

SECTION IV is about the program resources.

Part A is the requirements for the Program Director:

"In addition to serving on a full-time appointment, the Program Director must possess the following:
- A Bachelors Degree;
- At least 3 years experience in the field of ophthalmic optics; and
- All credentials for which the students are being prepared in the program, or hold comparable credentials that demonstrate at least equivalent training and preparation."

The institution is also required to notify the Commission within 30 days of any change in Program Director.

Part B is the requirements for the instructors in the program:
- " The faculty (instructors) must be individually qualified by education and experience, must be effective in teaching the subjects assigned, and must meet the standards required by the institution.
- Teaching faculty for spectacle dispensing must be certified by the American Board of Opticianry or equivalent (e.g. licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist) and licensed (where applicable) in the state in which the program is located.
- Teaching faculty for contact lens fitting must be certified by the National Contact Lens Examiners or equivalent (e.g. licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist) and licensed (where applicable) in the state in which the program is located."

Those are the major requirements, there are also requirements about the instructors responsibilities and professional development.

Part C is about the financial resources available to the program. There must be a budget that is adequate to support the program.

Part D is about the facilities available to the program, including the laboratory, clinic(s), classrooms, library, and offices.

Part E is about audiovisual materials, and computer and internet access.

Part F is about safety and environmental issues.

Part G is about the Advisory Committee. The committee must meet at a minimum annually . It is recommended that there be "at least nine members …. [consisting] of Opticians, Optometrists, Ophthalmologists, and laboratory manufacturing representatives. Full-time faculty and institution administration are ex-officio members." There must be at least one current student on the committee, and no more than two public members. It is recommended that the committee members be certified by ABO, NCLE, and state licensed, were appropriate.

(*Essentials*, pages 13 - 17 [Degree] or pages 11 - 14 [Laboratory].)

The *Essentials*

- **SECTION V** Students
  - Information provided to current and prospective students
  - Admissions requirements
  - Health services
  - Guidance counseling
  - Records
  - Grievance and appeals procedures

SECTION V is about the students in the program.

Part A contains a list of items that must be available to students, including the entrance and graduation requirements; grading policies; tuition, scholarship and financial aid information; state licensing information; etc. There must be a recruitment policy.

Part B concerns admissions requirements. There must be well defined and published admissions criteria. Candidates for admission to the program must be high school graduates or the equivalent.

Parts C, D, E and F are concerned with basic institutional policies, insuring that health services, records, academic guidance, and grievance policies are in place.

(*Essentials*, pages 18 - 20 [Degree] or pages 15 - 17 [Laboratory].)

The *Essentials*

- **SECTION** VI Operational Policies
  - Advertising, fees, recruitment
- **SECTION** VII Continuing Program Evaluation
  - Graduate and employer surveys
  - Review of self-evaluation
- **SECTION** VIII Maintaining Accreditation
  - Annual report
  - Withdrawal of accreditation

SECTION VI, Operational policies, discusses other institutional policies such as advertising, fees, recruitment, nondiscriminatory policies, and the publication of appropriate policies.

SECTION VII, Program evaluation, requires that the program or institution conduct periodic self-evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

"The evaluation should include assessment of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student faculty satisfaction.

……..

The continuing program self-evaluation must include a system for internal and external curriculum validation, evaluation by current students, follow-up studies of alumni, and a dedicated employer survey of graduates. The program must secure sufficient qualitative information to demonstrate an ongoing system of evaluation consistent with the goals of the program.

The Advisory Committee may facilitate program development, evaluation, support, planning, and coordination by periodic evaluation of the program's functions and of its success in achieving its stated learning objectives.

A list of program graduates must be maintained. The results on the National Opticianry Competency Examination administered by the American Board of Opticianry, the National Contact Lens Examination, and state licensure examinations (if applicable) must also be documented, and reviewed periodically to evaluate effectiveness of the program. The maintenance and documentation of the employment records of recent graduates of the program must be one aspect of program evaluation. "

SECTION VIII Maintaining Accreditation discusses the annual report and the procedure and circumstances where the Commission may withdraw accreditation from a program.

(*Essentials*, pages 21 – 24 [Degree] or pages 18 – 21 [Laboratory].)

The **Essentials**

- Example of an item that is in COMPLIANCE with the requirements of the **_Essentials_**:

REQUIREMENT: Section IV Part D:

"A library must be readily accessible and contain an adequate supply of current books, scientific references, periodicals, and other materials related to the curriculum. . . . The library holdings must contain sufficient reference material to facilitate required student and faculty study and research."

The program is almost completely Internet driven. The library contains a large number of computers available to the students that access the Internet and also access health and science databases that contain Optical and Opticianry related material.

During the onsite visit the team will be determining if each "must" statement is met by the program. There are three classifications: compliant, potential compliant, and noncompliant.

For example:

Essentials SECTION IV part D, page 15-16

> 3. Library
>
> A library **must** be readily accessible and provide access for students to current and relevant materials; to include, but not be limited to: online resources, current books, scientific references, periodicals, and other materials related to the curriculum.
>
> The library holdings **must** contain sufficient traditional and/or online reference material to facilitate required student and faculty study and research. The faculty **must** have input in the selection of Opticianry reference materials. A listing of the Opticianry material **must** be available to the students. Opticianry reference material **must** be accessible in terms of location and hours of operation.

A program is almost completely Internet driven. The library contains a large number of computers available to the students that access the Internet and also access health and science databases that contain Optical and Opticianry related material.

Although there are few or no books and magazines, the students are not on campus to use them, and the library provides access for the students to databases that are not normally accessible to the general public. This meets the spirit of the requirements in the _Essentials_ for this item, and would be considered 'compliant'.

The *Essentials*

- Example of an item that is in POTENTIAL COMPLIANCE with the requirements of the *Essentials*:

REQUIREMENT: Section II part C:

"The program **must** have clearly stated competency-based learning objectives, which are appropriate for Opticianry."

The program has a set of objectives for each course, but not one comprehensive list for the whole program. The list of about 200 course objectives, comprised of the objectives for the individual course, was presented as the program's learning objectives.

This requirement is on page 7 of the *Essentials*.

This is a potential compliance because it would not take long for the program personnel to take all of the course objectives, make one document, and summarize them into a manageable list of program objectives.

The Evaluator's Handbook defines

"Potential Compliance: Deficiency(s) in meeting the provision(s) of the *Essentials* that the institution/program is capable of correcting within a reasonable period of time."
http://COAccreditation.com/Evaluators-Handbook.pdf page 5.

As a general rule of thumb, if the requirement is somewhat met and the program will be able to correct the deficiency within six months, then it can be considered a potential compliance instead of a non compliance.

The *Essentials*

- Example of an item that is in NON COMPLIANCE with the requirements of the *Essentials*:

REQUIREMENT: Section IV Part G.

"An Advisory Committee must be formed …. The Advisory Committee should consist of at least nine members and should consist of Opticians, Optometrists, Ophthalmologists, and laboratory manufacturing representatives. Full-time faculty and institution administration are ex-officio members. "

The program has a committee made up of the program instructors, the institution's advising personnel, and the admissions officer. This committee meets biannually to review the program outcomes and survey data.

Non compliance, on the other hand, is "Noncompliance: Failure to comply with the provisions of the *Essentials.*" http://COAccreditation.com/Evaluators-Handbook.pdf   page 5.

There is no time period here, it does not matter if it will be quick and easy to fix or take a major inter-institutional revision: if it simply 'is not there', it is a noncompliance.

SECTION IV Part G says:

An Advisory Committee **must** be formed with a clearly defined role and function, and a detailed description of that role and function must be distributed to all members. Members **must** be appointed in accordance with institutional policy.

1. Qualifications

It is recommended that the Advisory Committee members be certified by the American Board of Opticianry, National Contact Lens Examiners or state licensed, if required by the state, or could have other appropriate ophthalmic qualifications. No more than two of the committee members may represent the other non-ophthalmic allied health professions or the public. Student representation on the committee is **required**.
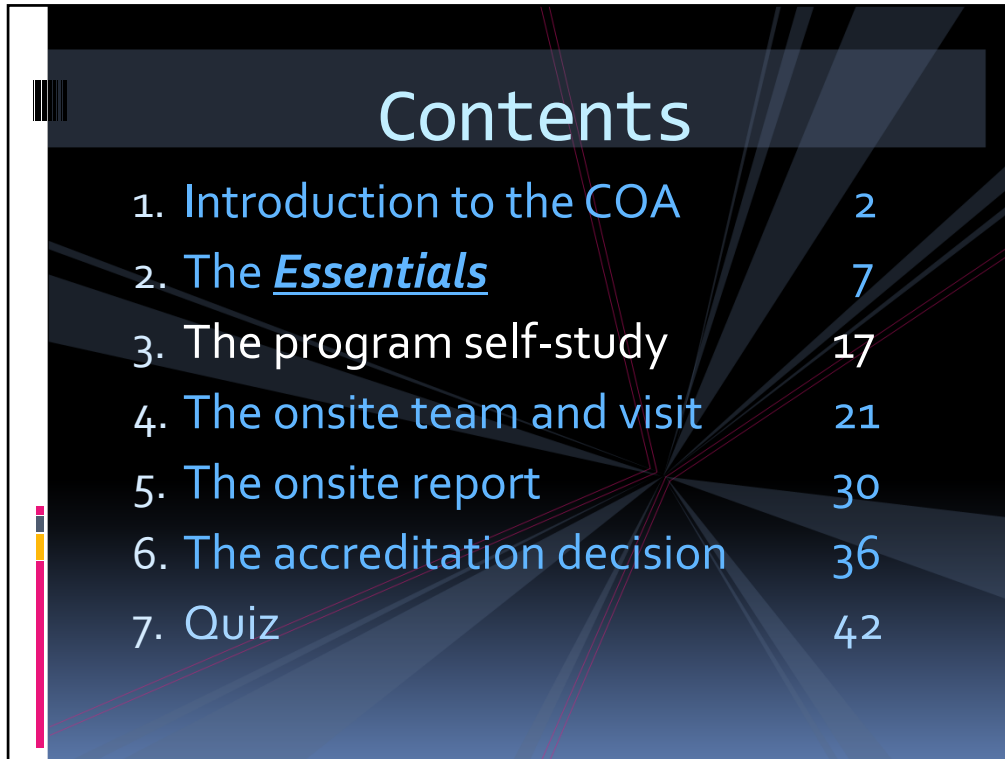
It is recommended that the Advisory Committee consist of at least nine members and consist of Opticians, Optometrists, Ophthalmologists, and laboratory manufacturing representatives. Full-time faculty and institution administration are ex-officio members.

2. Responsibilities

The committee **must** at a minimum annually . For each meeting an agenda **must** be distributed in advance and the minutes recorded and maintained. Minutes **must** include list of attendees and absentees, and their affiliations.

http://COAccreditation.com/essentials-dispensing.pdf   pages 16-17

In this case, the internal reviews that are required in other places in the *Essentials* have been done by this group of people, and this is important. But there IS no group meeting the definition of the Advisory Committee as defined by the second paragraph under part 1, making this a noncompliance.

Contents

The major work involved in the accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation, for the program, is the self-study. This is a major document, and is prepared before the onsite visit occurs.

'The *Self-Study Report* must contain the following elements:

Each section of the *Essentials* must be addressed with explanations and appropriate exhibits.

The report must contain a self analysis assessing the program's strengths and limitations (weaknesses) in light of the *Essentials.* This must include concrete plans to remedy any deficiencies.

The report must contain a self analysis in which the program states the program's and/or housing institution's own educational goals and objectives and analyzes the degree to which they have been achieved.

The report must contain detailed comments on innovations or unique aspects of the program, if any, with an analysis of their effects on the overall program."

Accreditation Guide, http://COAccreditation.com/accreditation-guide-dispensing.pdf   page 20

The program self-study

- Program applies for initial or reaffirmation of accreditation.
- Three-person onsite team is chosen.
- Two or three day onsite date is chosen.
- The Program Director, with the assistance of faculty and institution administration, prepares a self-study, which is due six weeks before the visit.

For a new program, there will probably have been some discussions between the Program Director and the Commission's Director before the formal process begins. The program or institution may send a formal letter indicating the intent to apply for accreditation during the first or second year of the program. The Commission will not conduct the full process with the program until after at least one "class" of students have graduated, but the process itself should be started before that time.

For either a new program or for a currently accredited program, the formal process begins with the application. This application may be found on the Commission website, http://COAccreditation.com/application-dispensing.pdf or http://COAccreditation.com/application-laboratory.pdf   It is suggested that this application be submitted at least six months before the proposed onsite visit.

Once the application is received by the Director, a team will be chosen to visit the program. This team is created by the Director of Accreditation, with consultation and approval of the Chair of the Commission. The team must meet the requirements to be mentioned in slide 22. The date and team members will be communicated to the institution and the Program Director as soon as it is finalized. Typically, an initial accreditation visit will be three days, a Monday – Wednesday, and a reaffirmation of accreditation will be two days, Monday – Tuesday.

The Director will invoice the reaccreditation fee at the time that the program is notified of the dates and team members. The fee is $500 for an initial accreditation and $250 for a reaffirmation of accreditation. This fee is due six weeks before the onsite visit, at the same date that the self-study is due.

As soon as the application has been submitted, the Program Director, with the assistance of the faculty and other institutional personnel, should begin preparing the self-study. It can easily take most of a semester to prepare this document.

The program self-study

- The self study is in two parts:
  1. Dialog, normally 30-60 pages, following the outline of the *Essentials*, gives the program / institution responses to each of the requirements

  Section I Institution
  A. (cut/paste here the requirements of part A of section I.)

  The Opticianry program is offered by XYZ Community College in Abc, ST. XYZ CC is accredited by Middle States Regional Accrediting Agency. XYZ CC was initially accredited in 1956, and the most recent reaffirmation of accreditation occurred in 2007. *See Exhibit I.A.* for a copy of the most recent accreditation letter from MSRAA.

Examples of what may be included in the dialogue and for exhibits in the self-study can be found in the *Self Study Guide*, http://COAccreditation.com/self-study-guide.pdf

For example, for SECTION III:

Part C: Classroom Presentations, Discussions, and Demonstrations

These tools must be consistent with mission, goals, and learning objectives. All educational activities and courses must provide timely evaluation of student's academic progress.

SELF-STUDY REPORT SUGGESTIONS Describe educational methods used in classroom presentations, discussions, and demonstrations.

SUGGESTED EXHIBITS

Provide 2 or 3 samples of classroom presentations, discussions, or demonstrations.
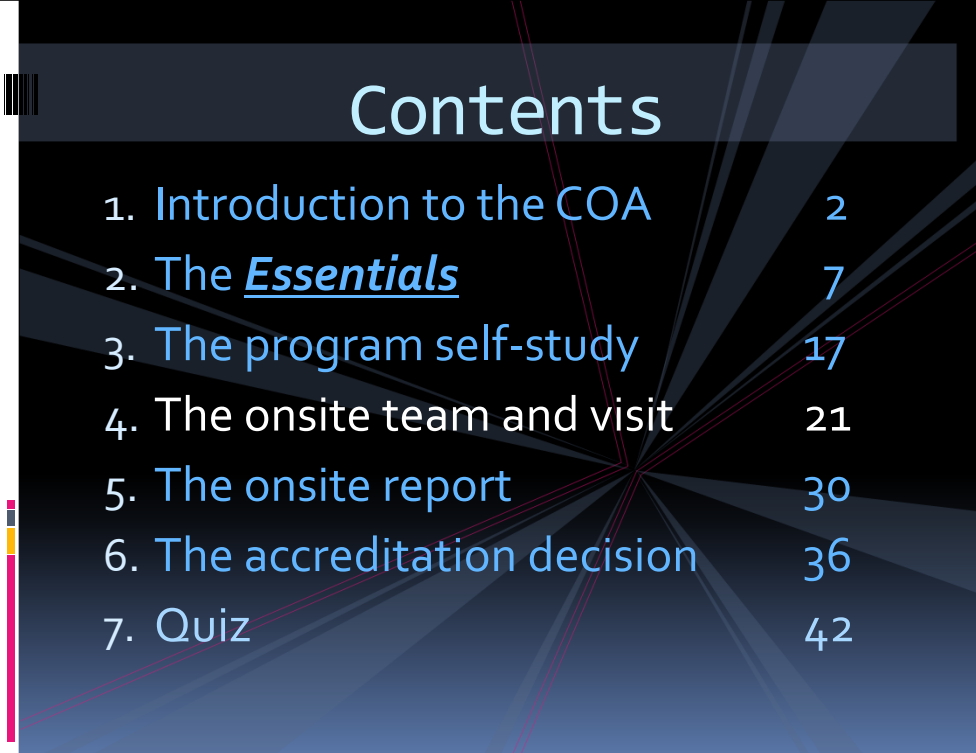
The program self-study

- The self study is in two parts:
  2. Exhibits, containing the documentation to back up the statements made in the dialogue.

     The Exhibits may be copies of letters (accreditation by an institutional accreditation body), or copies of a course syllabus, or examples of tests or surveys, etc.

     The exhibits should follow the order of the sections in the dialogue, and be referenced in the dialogue.

Typically, the exhibit is a 3" three ring binder, plus the institution student handbook and an opticianry handbook if there is one.

When preparing the exhibit binder, please put items in the order of the sections that refer to them and place tabs to make it easy for the onsite team members to find them.

Contents

So, the Program Director has submitted the application for accreditation (for a program seeking accreditation for the first time) or for reaffirmation of accreditation (for a program that is currently accredited but approaching the end of the term of the accreditation).

The onsite team and visit

- The onsite team is chosen by the COA Director and Chairperson.
- The team consists of:
  - A Commissioner (or a very recently retired Commissioner)
  - An Opticianry Educator
  - A practicing Optician

In the application the Program Director indicates three possible dates for the onsite that will work for the program. School must be in session (this cannot occur during spring break, for example) and it is not a good idea to have it the week of midterm exams, or the last week before finals, or the week that the state licensing boards are to be administered in the program facilities, for example.

Now the Director, in consultation with the Chair of the Commission, contacts prospective onsite team members with the possible dates. The team must contain:

1. A commissioner.
2. An opticianry educator.
3. A practicing optician.

One person can be two of these: for example, the Commissioner, unless he/she is a public member, will probably be either an opticianry educator or a practicing optician. So there may be two Commissioners, or two educators, or two practicing opticians.

There can be a maximum of two Commissioners on the team. There must be at least one person who is not currently appointed to the Commission.

The Director will then choose the dates based on finding a team that meets the requirements and who are all able to go on that date. The Director mails a formal letter to the institution CEO/President indicating the dates of the visit, the names and affiliations of the onsite team, and a short biography for each team member. A copy of this letter goes to the Program Director.

The institution / Program Director has the right to indicate if any of the team members is not acceptable for some reason, and if so the Director will find another to take that person's place. If there is some conflict of interest found by the institution, the program / institution is responsible for so indicating in a timely manner.

The onsite team and visit

- **The institution is responsible for all costs incurred by the onsite team.**
  - Hotel is usually arranged and paid for directly by the school.
  - Airfare or other transportation is refunded by the COA and then billed to the school.
  - Meals are either paid for directly by the school, or refunded by the COA and then billed to the school.

The team members make their own travel arrangements, whether by air, car or train. The Program Director makes hotel reservations for Sunday – Monday nights (or through Tuesday night for a three day visit). Normally the school pays for the hotel directly. Each team member submits to the COA a reimbursement form for all reasonable costs of the visit. The COA reimburses the team members, and then bills the school, and the school then reimburses the COA. So, the school pays all costs of the visit.

Items like in-room movies, dry cleaning, and any form of alcohol are not reimbursable.

If the team member chooses to drive, that person is responsible for obtaining a quote for coach airfare more than two weeks before the travel, and the mileage reimbursement is limited to that amount.

The onsite team and visit

- The team members individually review the self-study and exhibits during the six weeks before the visit.
- The team arrives at the hotel on Sunday before the onsite visit.
- There is an initial meeting of the team on Sunday afternoon or evening.

About the same time the team members receive the self-study from the program (four weeks before the visit) the Director of Accreditation will mail a packet of information to the team members. This packet includes the _Evaluator's Check List_ (http://COAccreditation.com/Evaluators-Checklist.pdf), and a copy of the onsite report from the previous accreditation visit. During the four weeks before the visit, each team member is to read the self-study in conjunction with the check list, and pencil in any place that needs clarification, more data, etc.

Travel to the onsite on the Sunday before the visit should be planned so that the team is there by the late afternoon. This way the team can get together for several hours and go through the checklist and the self study together. If everyone has gone through the process before the visit, this should only take 2-3 hours. At this time the team Chair creates a list of items to discuss with the Program Director on Monday morning immediately after the in-briefing.

The onsite team and visit

- On Monday morning the team arrives at the school.
- There is an in-briefing with the Program Director and the school administration where the team members introduce themselves.
- There is a meeting between the team and the Program Director to discuss the self-study and any items that need to be provided.

At the in-briefing, the team Chair introduces the individuals on the team to the program and administration present, explains the purpose of the Commission and the visit, and answers any preliminary questions that may arise.

Then the team meets with only the Program Director to go over the preliminary items that were identified the evening before as requiring more data / exhibits, etc., and to make any changes necessary to the agenda for the two-three days of the visit.

The onsite team and visit

- Over the course of the visit the team meets with and sees:
  - Administration;
  - Opticianry faculty;
  - Fist and second year students;
  - Advising committee;
  - Admissions, guidance, library personnel;
  - Clinic (eyeglass and contact lens);
  - Laboratory.

Here is a typical 2-day onsite agenda:

SAMPLE 2-DAY AGENDA FOR SITE VISIT

DAY 1

8:00 am – 8:30 am	Travel from Hotel to Campus
8:30 am – 9:00 am	In-Briefing: with Program Director and School Administration
9:00 am – 9:30 am	Discussion of Self Study with Opticianry Faculty
9:30 am – 10:30 am	Tour of Opticianry facility
10:30 am – 11:00 am	Observe Contact Lens Clinic
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Meet with 2nd year on-campus students
12:00 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch with Opticianry faculty & Faculty conference
1:30 pm – 2:00 pm	Observe Eyeglass Clinic
2:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Tour Learning Resource Center (Library), Advising Center and Admissions
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Tour Student Life, Adjunct office and Academic Support Center
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Onsite Team Conference
5:00 pm	Travel to Hotel

DAY 2

8:00 am – 8:30 am	Travel from Hotel to Campus
8:30 am – 9:30 am	Administration Conference
9:30 am – 10:00 am	Tour Library, any other areas not already seen
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Observe Optical class lecture
10:30 am – 11:30 am	Meet with 1st year on-campus students
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Lunch with Advisory Committee & Opticianry Faculty
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	Advisory Committee Conference
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Observe Optical Laboratory Clinical
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm	Onsite Team executive Session
3:30 pm	Out-briefing: with Program Director and School Administration
4:00 pm	Travel to airport

The onsite team and visit

- On the final day of the visit the team meets with the Program Director, the administration, and any other personnel invited by the Program Director to summarize the finding of the team. These findings are cataloged as:
  - Program strengths and innovations
  - Non Compliances
  - Potential Compliances
  - Recommendations

The team may stay together for the whole visit, or it may break up and one or two people tour or visit with different people. For example, the team chair may ask the other two members to visit with the guidance counselors while he/she visits with the admissions counselors.

On Monday evening the team typically gets together again to go through the checklist to determine what can be checked off and what still needs to be seen on Tuesday. At this time, the team will also start creating the list of strengths and recommendations, and to document any potential compliances and noncompliances.

On the last day of the visit the team will typically have an executive session after lunch to finalize the summary, which is the list of strengths, recommendations, non compliances and potential compliances. Then, about fifteen minutes before the out-briefing, the team meets with the Program Director to go over the list, so that there will not be any surprises for the Program Director in the presence of his/her administration. This briefing is not intended for discussion of items unless there was some easily corrected miscommunication.

The out-briefing once again involves the administration of the school, and is used just to list the summary items. This is not the time for discussion, it is the time to give the program and the administration a preview of what will be in the report. This allows the program to use the several weeks between the time of the visit and the receipt of the formal report to begin dealing with any items that were not in compliance with the *Essentials*.

The onsite team and visit

- Confidentiality:
  - Do not discuss the program, self-study, or visit outside the team and the Commission.
  - All materials should be destroyed after the visit (except for team chair / Commissioner).

Before the onsite occurs, during the Sunday executive session, all team members should sign the Agreement of Confidentiality:

"***AGREEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY***

I, the undersigned, hereby agree and understand that due to my position on the _____ onsite team that I:

• Shall not make copies and/or distribute any information related to COA accredited Opticianry Programs or Ophthalmic Laboratory Technology Programs.

• Shall not reveal confidential examination information, statistics to include reliability, validity, or pass fail rates.

• Shall not disclose confidential information related to complaints against programs, complaints against COA, appeals and other actions deliberated by COA committees and/or Commissioners.

• Shall not disclose any written or oral information that has been identified as being confidential.

I understand that my signature constitutes binding acceptance of these conditions. Executive Committee may make exception to this agreement upon prior approval."
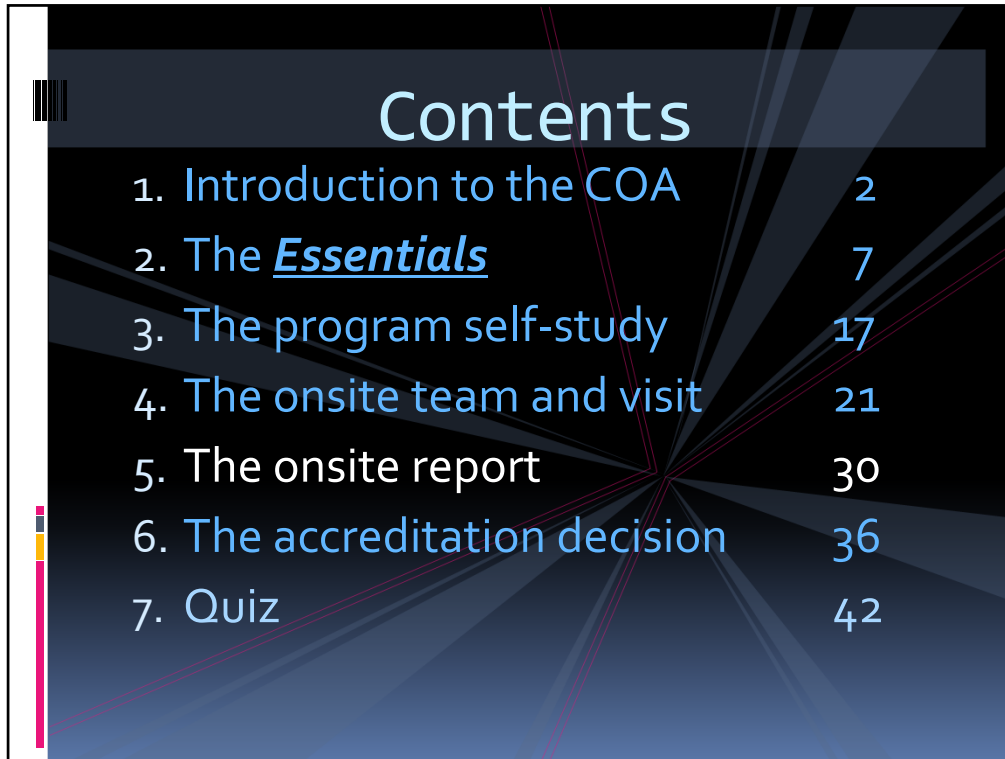
The team members who are not responsible for writing the onsite report or reporting to the Commissioners on the program should destroy their copies of the onsite materials at the end of the visit. Many team members choose to leave their materials with the Program Director at the end of the out-briefing.

The onsite team and visit

- Conflict of Interest:
  - No individual socializing with program / institutional personnel during the visit.
  - No person connected with the program now or in the past may be on the team, including:
    - Former student
    - Formerly (or currently) on the program's Advisory Committee
    - Residing in the state of the program.

All team members will also sign an agreement to avoid conflict of interest before the visit.

An example of a conflict of interest might be the Program Director and the team chair going to dinner together on Monday evening, without the presence of the rest of the team. Since lunches are typically the team members and the program faculty, it is usually considered OK for the whole team to go to dinner together with the Program Director and / or program faculty.

Contents

After the visit has occurred, the team chair is responsible for writing the onsite report. As this is the culmination of a process that is costly to the program in time and money, and was also costly to the team members in time, this report should be done completely and carefully. Many onsite chair have the meat of the report done before the visit occurs.

The onsite report

- The team Chairperson is responsible for writing the onsite report.
- The report is usually 10-20 pages.
- The report can repeat a lot of the material from the self-study. Cut/paste is fine.
- A person who is not familiar with the program should be able to read the report and have a good idea what the program is like.

If a person from the US Department of Education or from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation were to be handed this onsite report and read it through, that person should be able to say that they have gained a good understanding of the program from just this one report.

Frequently the person writing the report will take information directly from the self-study dialogue for this report. It does not need the backup or lengthy explanations that are in the self-study, but should summarize much of that data.

The onsite report

- The report is in two parts:
  1. Main part is dialogue, in the organization of the **_Essentials_**, and including the strengths, non compliances, compliances, and recommendations.
  2. The summary includes just the strengths, non compliances, compliances, and recommendations.
  3. The team makes a recommendation on accreditation for the program. This recommendation DOES NOT go to the school.

After the dialogue of the report, there will be a summary containing just the findings (strengths, recommendations, non compliances and potential compliances) for use in the Commission meeting where the program will be presented and evaluated.

Finally, the team makes a recommendation on accreditation status and term of accreditation (2 – 6 years, depending on the number and severity of items found to not be compliant). This recommendation will NOT be passed on to the program with the report. The team's recommendation will be what the Commissioner presenting the program to the Commission meeting will use for the accreditation recommendation.

The onsite report

- Each section ends with an indication of which parts of that section are in compliance with the **_Essentials_**, which are in potential compliance, and which are in noncompliance.

The report should be organized in the same sections as the _Essentials_, and the findings (strengths, recommendations, non compliances and potential compliances) should be inserted in the sections where they are found.

Each section ends with the statement:

"**_SUMMARY:_** **The program is found to be substantially compliant with Sections IV x-x, x of the _Essentials_. The program is found to be in potential compliance with Section IV x of the _Essentials_ and in non compliance with Section IV x of the _Essentials._**"

The onsite report

- The report is due in the COA office no more than 30 days after the visit.
- The team members sign a cover sheet for the report before leaving the onsite.
- The COA Director distributes the report to the team and requests confirmation that all agree with the report.
- The report is due to the program no more than 60 days after the visit.

Before the onsite visit ends all of the team members sign cover sheets for the report which will have been provided to the team chair by the Director of Accreditation.

The chair sends the completed report, the signed cover sheets, all questionnaires filled out by students, faculty, and advisory committee members, and the team member's check lists to the Director of Accreditation for the Commission's permanent files. All of this material is due in the Commission office no more than 30 days after the visit.

The Director sends a copy of the report to the team members, and each team member indicates to the Director that the report is correct, or requests changes to it.
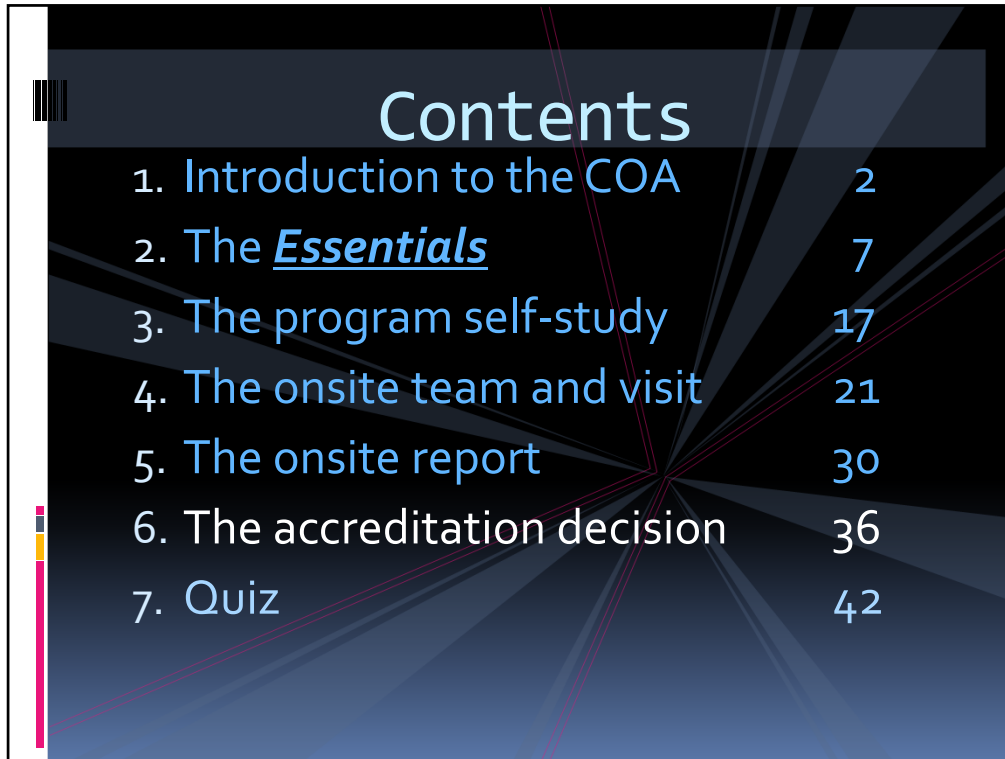
Once all members of the team are in agreement on the report, it is sent to the institution CEO/President and to the Program Director. The report is due to the institution no more than 60 days after the visit.

The onsite report

- The program responds to the report no more than 30 days from receipt.
- The program responds to each non compliance and potential compliance, indicating what has been done or will be done to come into compliance with the ***Essentials***.

The program has 30 days after receiving the report from the COA office to respond to it. Each potential compliance and noncompliance MUST be addressed in the response. This document plus the summary document from the report will be presented to the Commissioner's at the next scheduled semi-annual meeting.

The program has the choice of also responding to recommendations.

Contents

At the next scheduled semi-annual meeting, the program is 'presented' to the Commissioners by the chair of the team or by the Commissioner who attended the onsite if that person was not the chair.

The accreditation decision

- At the next semi-annual meeting of the Commission, the Commissioner who attended the onsite presents the program to the other Commissioners. The summary report and the program reply are discussed.

The Commissioners review each potential compliance and noncompliance, and in discussion decide if each individual item is now in compliance with the _Essentials_. The onsite team's recommendations, if they are addressed in the response, will also be discussed.

The accreditation decision

- The Commissioner who attended the onsite makes the team's recommendation on accreditation. The Commissioners discuss the recommendation and vote on an accreditation status and term.

The Commissioner presenting the program to the Commissioner's now reads the team's recommendation and makes a motion that the recommendation be accepted. The Commissioners discuss the recommendation and accept or modify it. The actual decision to accredit or not, and for what term if the program is accredited, is made by the Commissioners.

The accreditation decision

- The Director of Accreditation notifies the Institution CEO or President of the decision of the Commissioners.
- The letter indicates any outstanding issues, and may request a progress report in 6 months or in one year.

After the semi-annual meeting the Director notifies the institution CEO/President and the Program Director of the decision of the Commissioners. If there are outstanding issues (potential compliances or noncompliances that are not yet in compliance) then the Commissioners will have indicated that the program must submit a progress report in 6 months or in a year addressing just those issues. This would be in addition to any annual report that the program is required to submit.
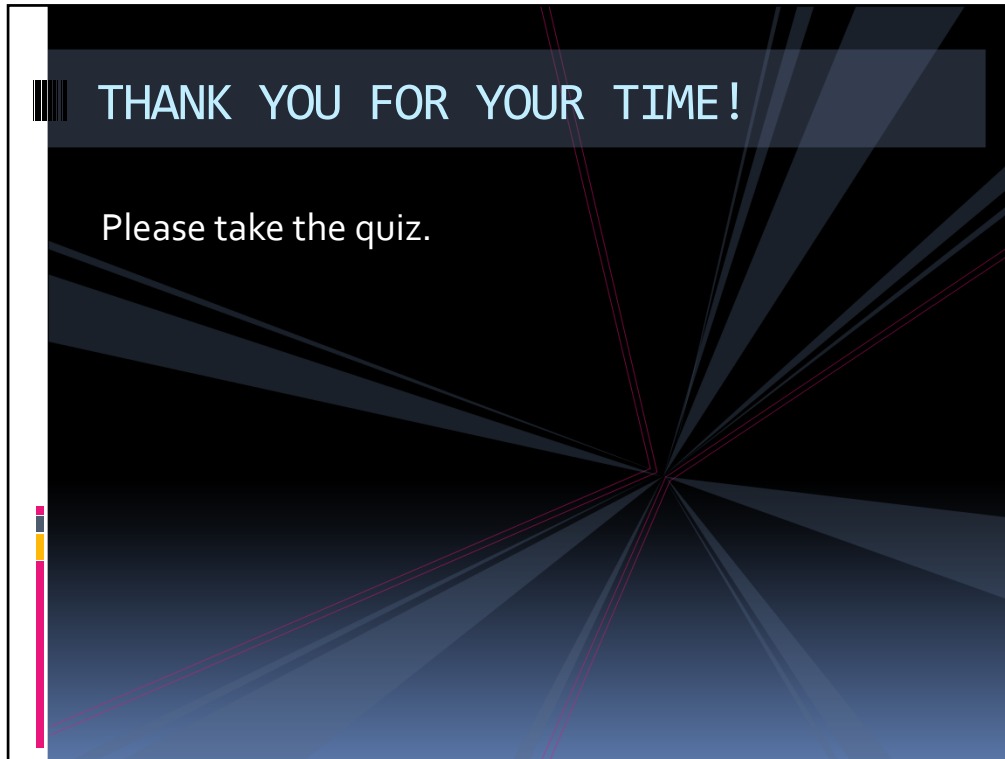
Questions about the process?

Commission on Opticianry Accreditation (COA)

Director of Accreditation

229 East 85th Street #194

New York, NY, 10028

http://COAccreditation.com

315-742-8066

Please contact the Director of Accreditation with any questions or comments that you have about the Commission or this workshop.

Director of Accreditation
Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
229 East 85th Street #194
New York, NY, 10028
director@COAccreditation.com
315-742-8066

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Please take the quiz.

Please take the quiz. There are 15 questions. You will e-mail (or mail) your answers to the Director of Accreditation, who will let you know how you did and record that you completed this workshop. There is no "pass" or "fail" for this course. You will be confirmed as having taken the Workshop once you complete and e-mail the quiz.

director@COAccreditation.com

 or

Director of Accreditation
Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
229 East 85th Street #194
New York, NY, 10028
director@COAccreditation.com
315-742-8066

Thank you for your time!

Contents

Please take a piece of paper and number it 1 through 15. You are welcome to go back into the presentation as you take the quiz to find the answers. There is no time limit.

Some of the questions do not have answers in the presentation, you have to think about them in the context of the material here.

When you have answered all of the questions put your name and address on your answer sheet and mail it to me. Or, start an e-mail (this is the preferred method), put your name and address at the top of the e-mail and then enter the question numbers and your answers. In either case, you do not need to type the questions, I know what they are! Just give me your answers. I will mail or e-mail you back to tell you how you did.

Please do not share the answers with anyone else. The point of the exercise is to know or find the answers and to think about the exercises.

When I receive your answers I will record that you "attended" the workshop. Thank you for your time!
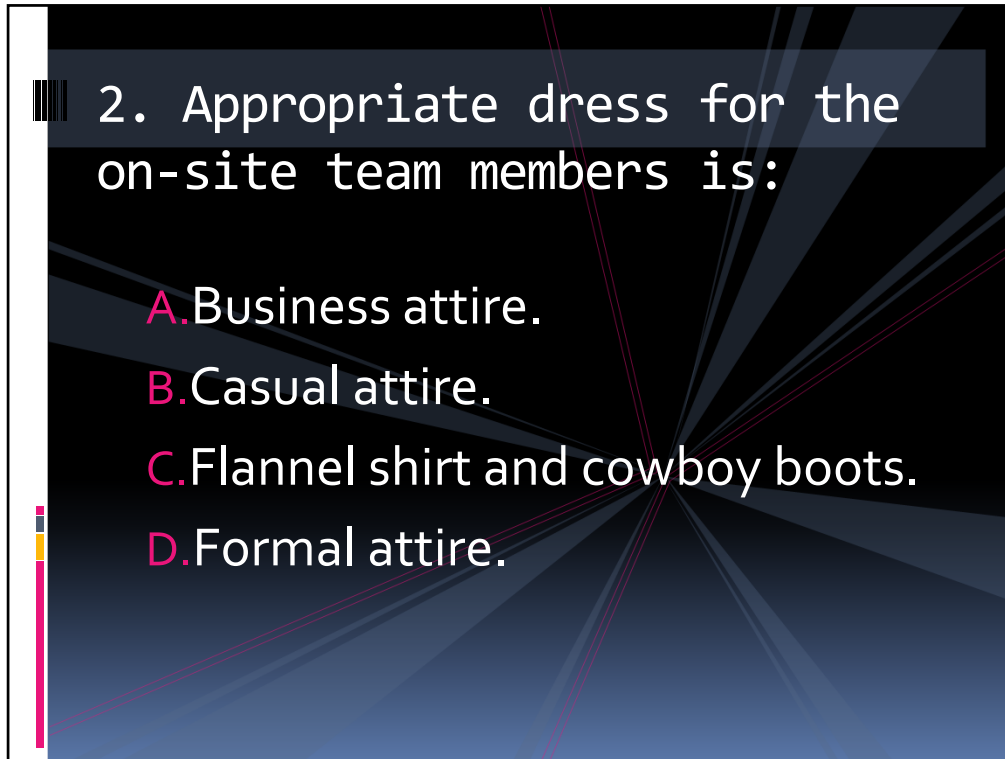
director@COAccreditation.com

or

Director of Accreditation
Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
229 East 85th Street #194
New York, NY, 10028
director@COAccreditation.com
315-742-8066

1. Who determines the accreditation status and term of accreditation for a program?

A. The on-site team members.
B. The Director of Accreditation.
C. The program personnel.
D. The Commission.

2. Appropriate dress for the on-site team members is:

A. Business attire.

B. Casual attire.

C. Flannel shirt and cowboy boots.

D. Formal attire.

2. Appropriate dress for the on-site team members is: (the presentation did not tell you this. Make an educated guess. You will learn the right answer when I respond to your answers.)

A. Business attire.
B. Casual attire.
C. Flannel shirt and cowboy boots.
D. Formal attire.

3. The on-site report is due in the commission office

A. When it gets there.

B. When the team members have all read and approved it.

C. Within 30 days of the on-site visit.

D. Within 60 days of the on-site visit.

3. The on-site report is due in the commission office

A. When it gets there.
B. When the team members have all read and approved it.
C. Within 30 days of the on-site visit.
D. Within 60 days of the on-site visit.
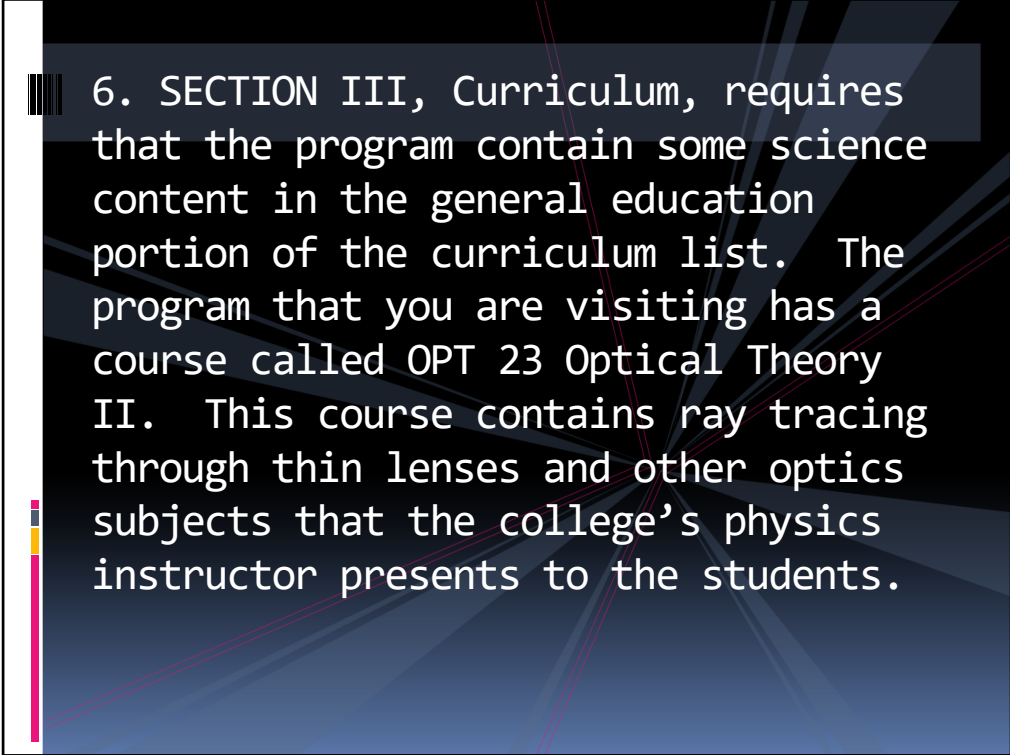
4. Who chooses the people who will be on the on-site team?

A. The Program Director.
B. The Commissioners vote on it.
C. The Director of Accreditation and the COA Chairperson.
D. The Advisory Committee.

5. The program's self-study is due to the COA office and to the on-site team members

A. The week (7 days) before the on-site visit.

B. Four weeks (30 days) before the on-site visit.

C. The semester before the on-site visit.

D. At the in-briefing on the first Monday of the visit.

5. The program's self-study is due to the COA office and to the on-site team members

A. The week (7 days) before the on-site visit.
B. Four weeks (30 days) before the on-site visit.
C. The semester before the on-site visit.
D. At the in-briefing on the first Monday of the visit.

6. SECTION III, Curriculum, requires that the program contain some science content in the general education portion of the curriculum list. The program that you are visiting has a course called OPT 23 Optical Theory II. This course contains ray tracing through thin lenses and other optics subjects that the college's physics instructor presents to the students.

6. SECTION III, Curriculum, requires that the program contain some science content in the general education portion of the curriculum list. The program that you are visiting has a course called OPT 23 Optical Theory II. This course contains ray tracing through thin lenses and other optics subjects that the college's physics instructor presents to the students.

   A. This content satisfies the science content requirement for general education content.

   B. This content does not satisfy the science content requirement because it is not listed in the physics section of the college catalog.

   C. This content does not satisfy the science content requirement because the optics content is not the whole course.

   D. This content satisfies the science content requirement because it is taught by the college's physics instructor, but would not satisfy that content if it were taught by an opticianry instructor.

7. You are visiting a program where the advisory committee is comprised of three area Opticians who all graduated from the program, a person who manages a local wholesale lab and who also graduated from the program, a current student, and two opticians who also teach one course each in the program. (SECTION IV part G)

7. You are visiting a program where the advisory committee is comprised of three area Opticians who all graduated from the program, a person who manages a local wholesale lab and who also graduated from the program, a current student, and two opticians who also teach one course each in the program. (SECTION IV part G)

    A. The advisory committee does not meet the requirements of the Essentials because all members are currently connected with the program or have been connected with the program in the past.

    B. The advisory committee does not meet the requirements of the Essentials because there is no Optometrist or Ophthalmologist on the committee.

    C. Both A. and B. are true.

    D. The advisory committee meets the requirements of the Essentials, but the two part time teachers are ex-officio members.
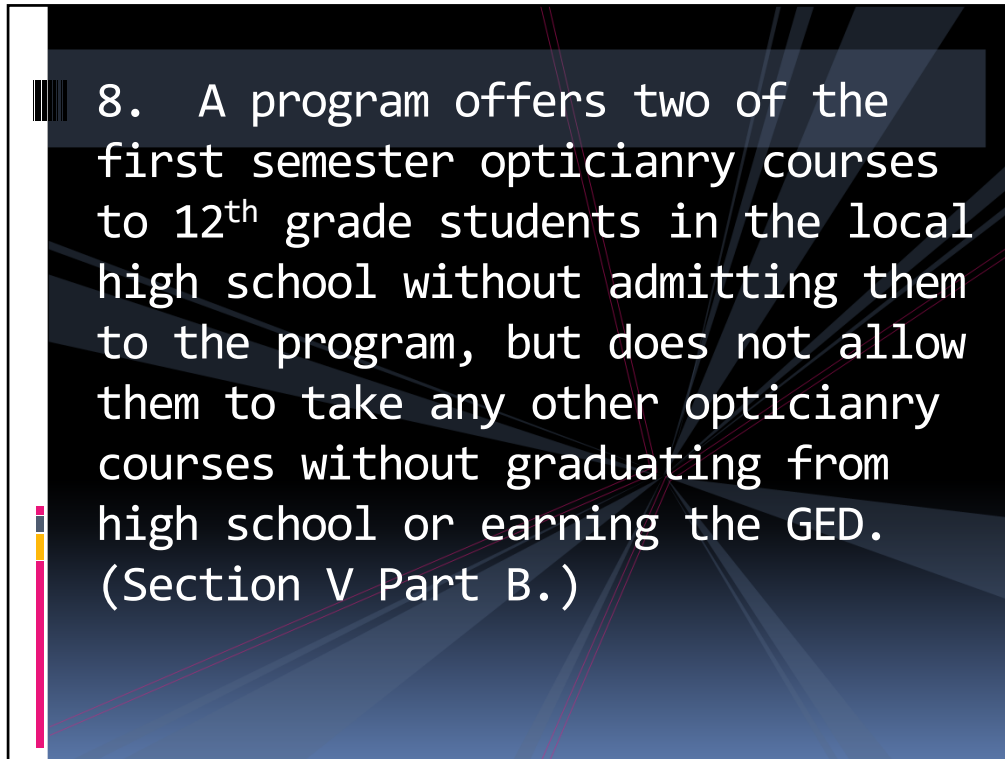
8. A program offers two of the first semester opticianry courses to 12th grade students in the local high school without admitting them to the program, but does not allow them to take any other opticianry courses without graduating from high school or earning the GED. (Section V Part B.)

8. A program offers two of the first semester opticianry courses to 12th grade students in the local high school without admitting them to the program, but does not allow them to take any other opticianry courses without graduating from high school or earning the GED. (Section V Part B.)

A. This does not meet the requirements of the Essentials because all students in the program must be HS graduates or the equivalent.

B. This meets the requirements of the Essentials.

C. This does not meet the requirements of the Essentials because the institution's admissions policy is not followed.

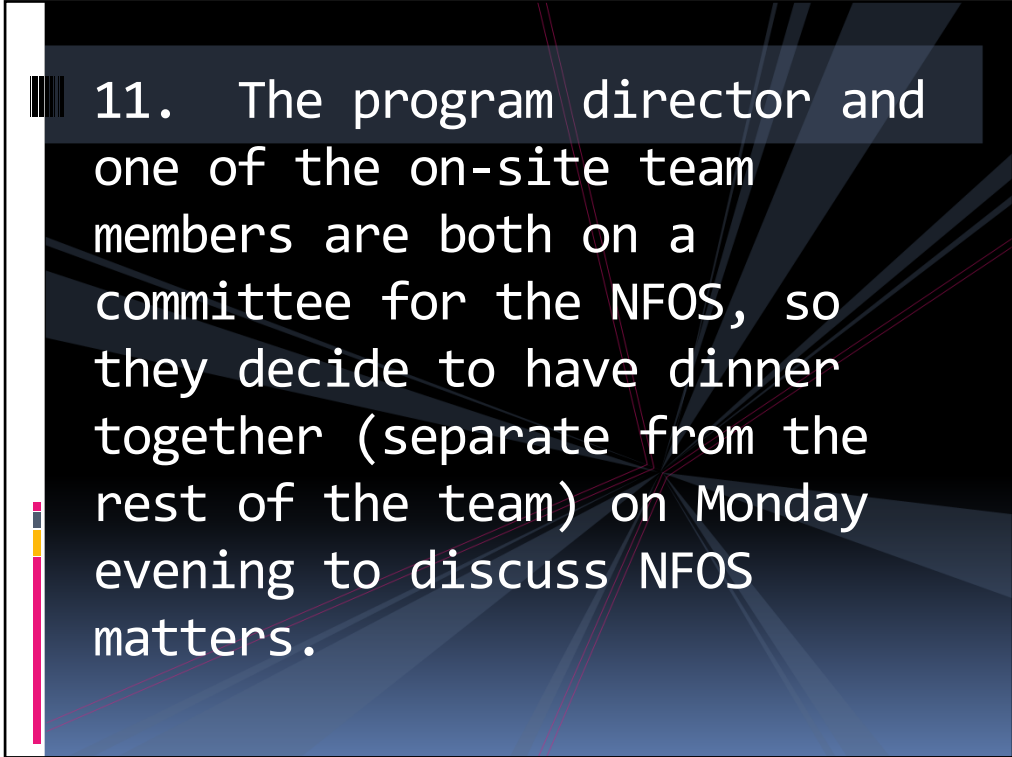D. The Essentials does not address the issue of HS or the equivalent.

9. A program surveys the students who are about to graduate in terms of their comfort level with the skills in the graduate competencies. The program also surveys the off-campus clinical site managers in terms of their impression of the student's abilities on entering the profession when they graduate from the program. The program tracks ABO pass rate, because the students take it at the end of their third semester. This information is regularly reviewed by the institution, the program personnel, and the advisory committee, as part of program self-evaluation. The program does not track the students after they have graduated. Because of this policy, it does not have NCLE pass rates (if the graduate chooses to take it) or state licensing rates, nor does it survey employers of graduates. (SECTION VII. Part B.)

    A. This does not meet the requirements of the Essentials because evaluation is required from alumni and employer surveys.

    B. This does not meet the requirement of the Essentials because a list of program graduates must be maintained.

    C. This does not meet the requirement of the Essentials, but the program only needs to contact ABO/NCLE to get NCLE pass rates to comply.

    D. This meets the requirements of the Essential because the program does have a system of self-evaluation that includes internal and external validation.
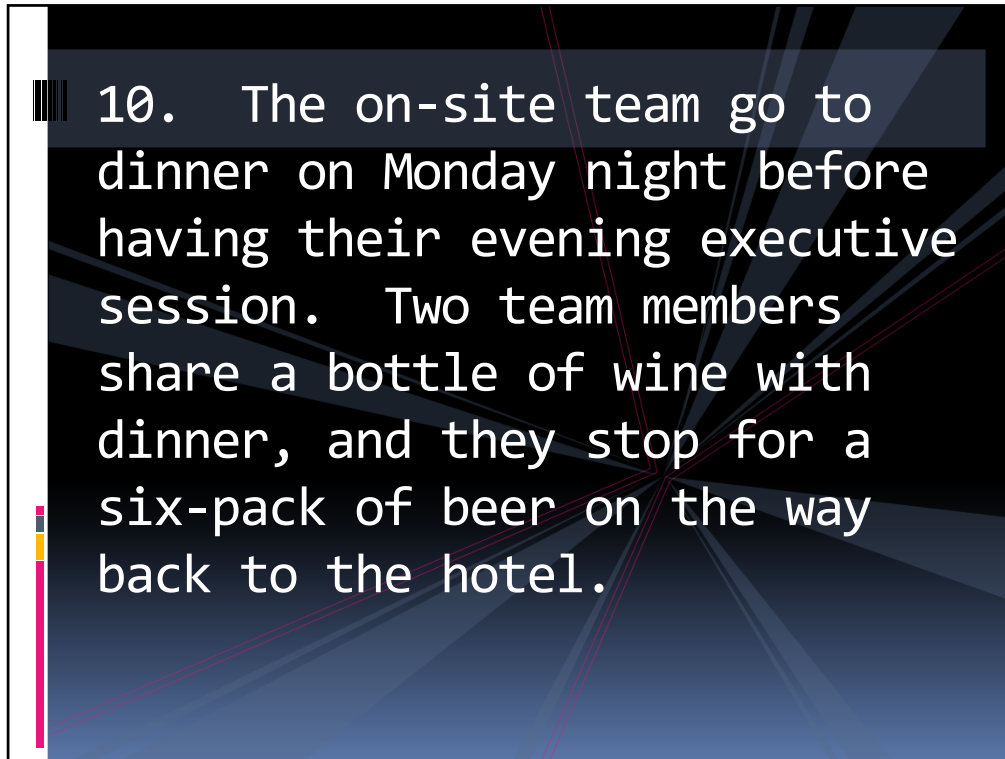
10. The on-site team go to dinner on Monday night before having their evening executive session. Two team members share a bottle of wine with dinner, and they stop for a six-pack of beer on the way back to the hotel.

10. The on-site team go to dinner on Monday night before having their evening executive session. Two team members share a bottle of wine with dinner, and they stop for a six-pack of beer on the way back to the hotel.

A. The cost of the wine and beer is not reimbursable.

B. The cost of the wine with dinner is reimbursable since it is part of the dinner, but not the beer.

C.   Both the wine and the beer are reimbursable, since they are not 'hard liquor'.

D. The consumption of alcohol is not permitted during the entire timeframe of the on-site visit.

11.   The program director and one of the on-site team members are both on a committee for the NFOS, so they decide to have dinner together (separate from the rest of the team) on Monday evening to discuss NFOS matters.
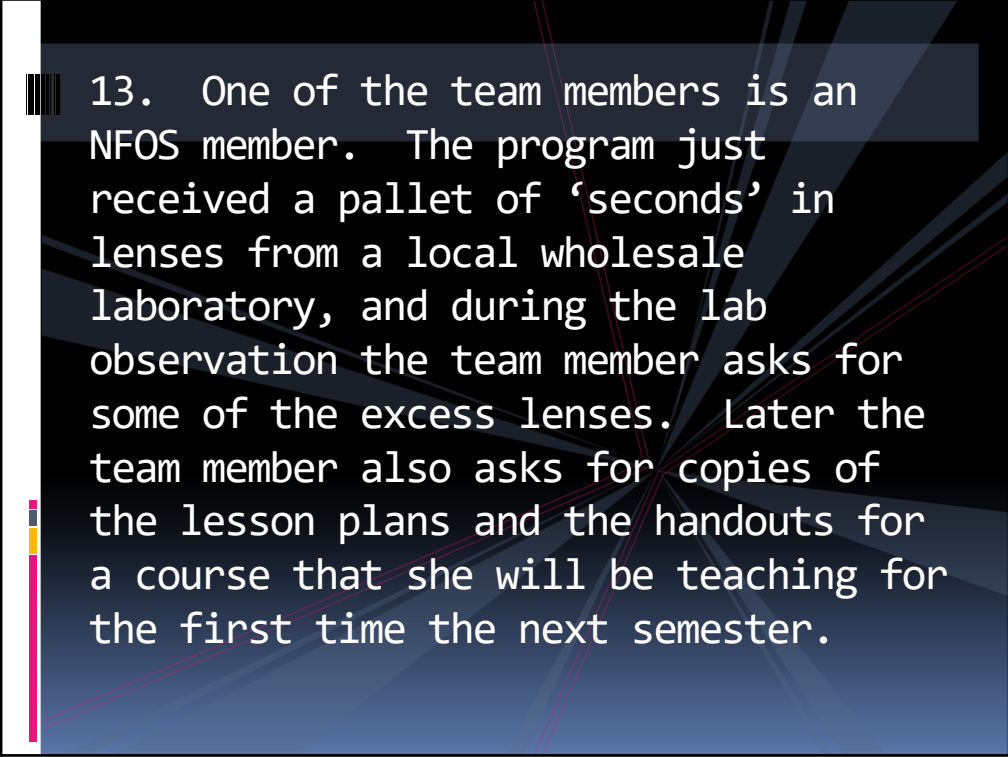
11. The program director and one of the on-site team members are both on a committee for the NFOS, so they decide to have dinner together (separate from the rest of the team) on Monday evening to discuss NFOS matters.

    A. Since they will be discussing NFOS business and not the on-site, this is acceptable.

    B. Since this is in the middle of the on-site visit, there is an appearance of a conflict of interest, and this should not be done.
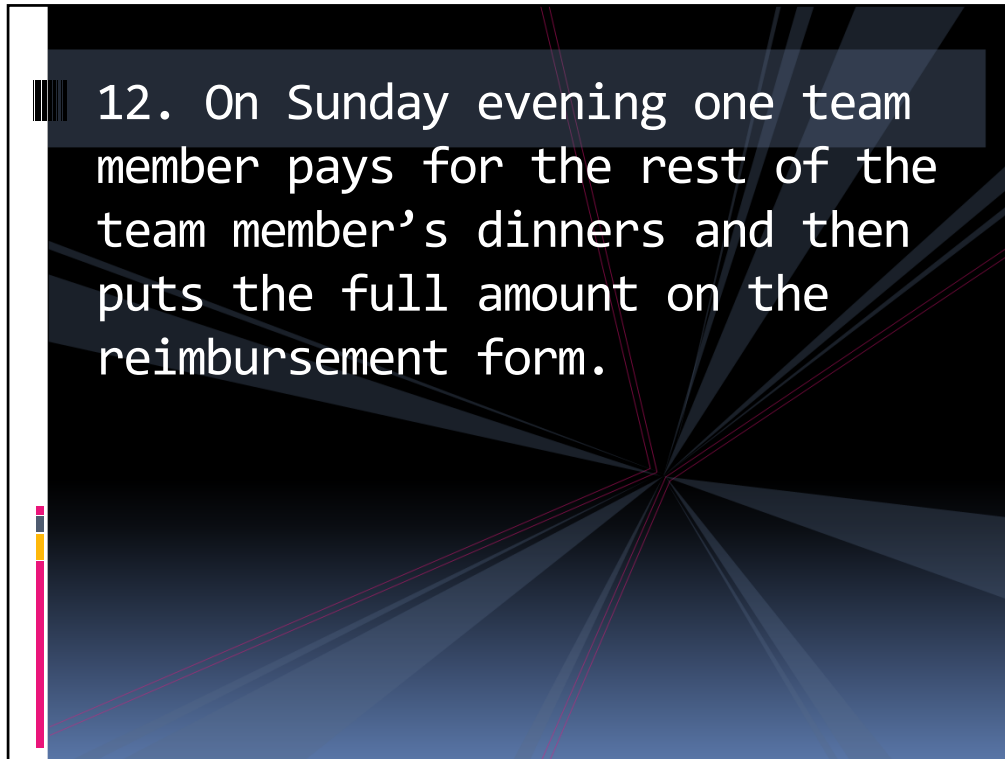
12. On Sunday evening one team member pays for the rest of the team member's dinners and then puts the full amount on the reimbursement form.

12. On Sunday evening one team member pays for the rest of the team member's dinners and then puts the full amount on her reimbursement form.

   A. This is fine as long as it is documented and no other person's meal who is not on the on-site team is on the receipt.

   B. The receipt must be cut into three pieces with the individual meals totaled for each individual reimbursement form.

   C. This is OK if the person paying is the Chair of the team but not if the person is another member of the team.

   D. This is OK if the person paying is a sitting Commissioner but not if the person paying is a non-Commissioner.

13. One of the team members is an NFOS member. The program just received a pallet of 'seconds' in lenses from a local wholesale laboratory, and during the lab observation the team member asks for some of the excess lenses. Later the team member also asks for copies of the lesson plans and the handouts for a course that she will be teaching for the first time the next semester.

13. One of the team members is an NFOS member. The program just received a pallet of 'seconds' in lenses from a local wholesale laboratory, and during the lab observation the team member asks for some of the excess lenses. Later the team member also asks for copies of the lesson plans and the handouts for a course that she will be teaching for the first time the next semester.

   A. This would have been OK if the questions were asked when the Program Director was driving her to the airport after the out-briefing.

   B. The question about the lenses was OK since it was a manufacturer donation, but not the one about lesson plans.

   C. The question about the lesson plans was OK since the requestor is a member of the NFOS, but not the question about the lenses.

   D. This is not OK. It could be seen as a conflict of interest.
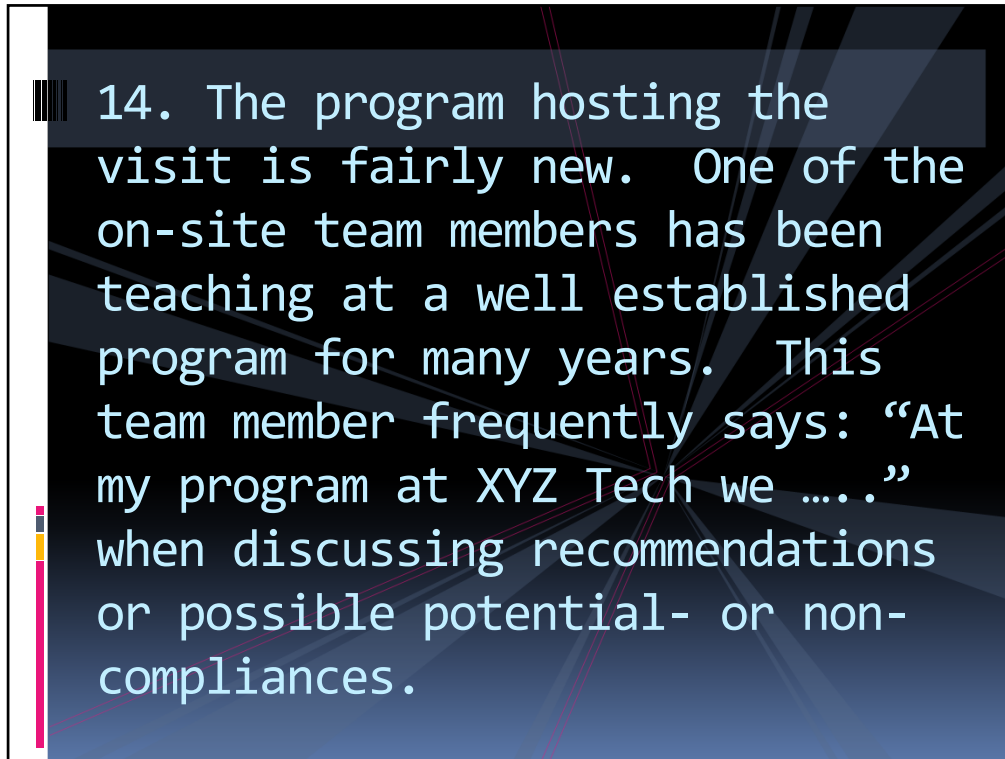
14. The program hosting the visit is fairly new. One of the on-site team members has been teaching at a well established program for many years. This team member frequently says: "At my program at XYZ Tech we ….." when discussing recommendations or possible potential- or non-compliances.

14. The program hosting the visit is fairly new. One of the on-site team members has been teaching at a well established program for many years. This team member frequently says: "At my program at XYZ Tech we ….." when discussing recommendations or possible potential- or non-compliances.

A. This is OK if only the other team members hear the comments.

B. This is OK if the Program Director asks for suggestions.

C. This is OK because the team member is being helpful.

D. This is not OK because the purpose of the visit is to determine if the program meets the *Essentials*, not to create a copy of the (admittedly excellent) program at XYZ Tech. A private conversation about these suggestions long after the visit is over, if initiated by the Program Director, would be fine.
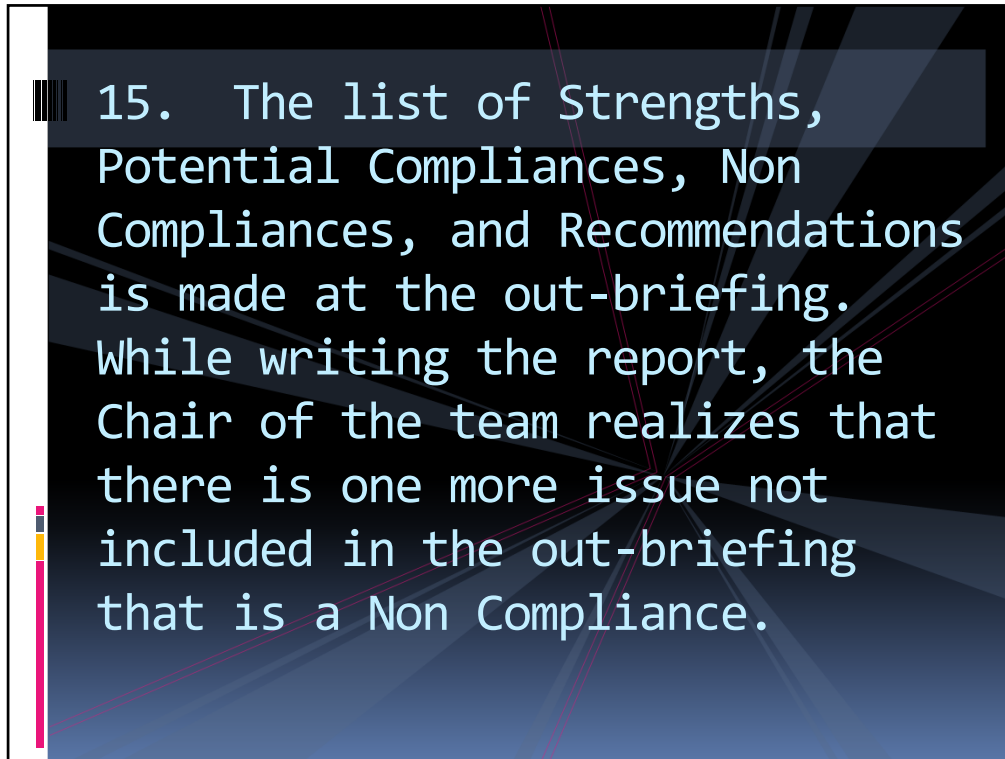
15. The list of Strengths, Potential Compliances, Non Compliances, and Recommendations is made at the out-briefing. While writing the report, the Chair of the team realizes that there is one more issue not included in the out-briefing that is a Non Compliance.

15. The list of Strengths, Potential Compliances, Non Compliances, and Recommendations is made at the out-briefing. The next weekend, while writing the report, the Chair of the team realizes that there is one more issue not included in the out-briefing that is a Non Compliance.

    A. The new Non-Compliance should be included in the report.

    B. The new Non-Compliance should not be included in the report.

    C. The team Chair should discuss the new Non-Compliance on the telephone or via e-mail with the Program Director, and then include it in the report.

    D. The team Chair should discuss the new Non-Compliance on the telephone or via e-mail with the other team members; if all agree, then discuss it on the telephone or via e-mail with the Program Director and include it in the report.

Thank You!

When I receive your answers I will record that you "attended" the workshop. Thank you for your time!

director@COAccreditation.com

or

Director of Accreditation

229 East 85th Street, #194

New York, NY, 10028

315-742-8066

Put your name and address on your answer sheet and mail it to me. Or, start an e-mail (this is the preferred method), put your name and address at the top of the e-mail and then enter the question numbers and your answers. In either case, you do not need to type the questions, I know what they are! Just give me your answers. I will mail or e-mail you back to tell you how you did. Please do not share the answers with anyone else. The point of the exercise is to know the answers and to think about the exercises.

When I receive your answers I will record that you "attended" the workshop. Thank you for your time!

director@COAccreditation.com

or

Director of Accreditation
Commission on Opticianry Accreditation
229 East 85th Street #194
New York, NY, 10028
director@COAccreditation.com
315-742-8066