



Commission on Opticianry Accreditation (COA)

# EVALUATOR'S WORKSHOP



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# 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)

# 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



# 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.
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# Introduction to the COA

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

- SECTION I Institution

- The program may be housed in:

1. colleges or universities

2. community or junior colleges

3. postsecondary, vocational-technical schools, or institutes

4. military schools

5. proprietary schools

- The Institution must be accredited by the appropriate state or regional accrediting agency

# 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

# 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.



# The Essentials

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



# The Essentials

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



# 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

# 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.

# 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.

# 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 semi-annually to review the program outcomes and survey data.



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# 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.
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# 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.

# 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.



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# 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

# 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 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.

# 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.

# The onsite team and visit

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

# 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 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).

# 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.



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# 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.
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# 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.



# 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 onsite report

- The report is due in the COA office no more than 45 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 90 days after the visit.
- 



# The onsite report

- The program responds to the report no more than 45 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*.
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# 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.
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# 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.
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# 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.
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# Questions about the process?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Please take the quiz.

