

What is Paraoptometric Certification?

This program has been developed by a respected panel of American Optometric Association paraoptometric and optometrists, created to educate and continue educating as the field of optometric assisting grows.

Modern optometry demands that paraoptometrics accept a key role in the practice. They must receive continuing education and training in order to fill this role. Paraoptometrics serve only to enhance the profession of optometry, as well as the individual practices that employ them. Education and recognition is, and always will be, integral to the success of all involved.

Why Become Certified?

The Paraoptometric Certification Program can provide a formal declaration of education and skill achievement in the field of paraoptometry. Increasing your knowledge of paraoptometry will give you the opportunity to improve your job satisfaction and your working relationships with your doctor, your peers, and the patients you serve.

By becoming a certified paraoptometric, you obtain the skills to become a part of the clinical team. Optometrists respect the skills of a certified paraoptometric. Additionally, this program is inexpensive, and candidates can complete the program with minimal assistance from the optometrist.

Why Should I Employ a Certified Paraoptometric?

The Paraoptometric Certification Program optimizes your staff allowing you to make the most efficient use of time and operate at your highest level. A Certified Paraoptometric reinforces your professional image, enhances patient satisfaction, and increases the potential for additional referrals to your practice.

A Certified Paraoptometric demonstrates a commitment to the practice of paraoptometry, resulting in an increased level of competence and performance.

General Information on AOA Paraoptometric Certification

The Certified Paraoptometric Examinations are prepared and administered by the American Optometric Association, Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (**CPC**) with the assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation. The purpose of the examinations are to ensure a level of knowledge to perform the functions of a Certified Paraoptometric at each appropriate level. Those who have successfully completed the appropriate examination will be certified with the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification as a **Certified Paraoptometric (CPO), Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA), or Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT)**.

Objectives of Certification

Paraoptometric Certification provides a formal declaration of education and skill achievement in the field of paraoptometry by:

- Formally recognizing individuals who meet all requirements of the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification of the American Optometric Association;
- Encouraging continued growth of the paraoptometric;
- Establishing and measuring the level of knowledge required for certification of paraoptometrics; and
- Promoting a standard of requisite knowledge required for certification; thereby assisting the employer, public, and members of the health professions in the assessment of paraoptometrics.

Eligibility Requirements

Certified Paraoptometric (CPO) - To sit for the Certified Paraoptometric Examination, the candidate must possess:

- A minimum of a high school diploma or its equivalent and
- A minimum of six months experience mentored by a peer.

Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA) - To sit for the Certified Paraoptometric Assistant Examination, the candidate:

- Must have earned the CPO title and verify a minimum of six months additional employment in the eye care field as a Certified Paraoptometric (CPO)
- Graduates or students currently enrolled and in good standing* in their last semester of study of an American Optometric Association Paraoptometric Section-approved optometric assistant program are eligible to sit for the examination directly without meeting the above mentioned eligibility criteria. Graduates of approved optometric assistant programs must have completed and graduated within the last three years.

**Students will be required to submit verification of successful completion of the program before their test results are released to them. The examination fee will not be refunded to students who do not complete their program.*

- Experience

A. Proof of five years or more of experience. Employer must attest to this experience by completing the **CPOA Reference Form**.

B. You may substitute advanced current certifications from American Board of Opticianry (ABO); National Contact Lens Examiners (NCLE); Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO). Documentation will be requested.

NOTE: CPC certification examinations are designed for paraoptometrics who are trained and experienced and currently work in the optometric field. Candidates who do not meet the experience requirements may not be eligible for the certification level they are applying for.

Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT) - To sit for the Certified Paraoptometric Technician Examination, the candidate:

- Must have earned the CPOA title and verify a minimum of six months additional employment in the eye care field as a Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA).
- Graduates or students currently enrolled and in good standing* in their last semester of study of an Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE)-approved optometric technician program are eligible to sit for the examination directly without meeting the above mentioned eligibility criteria.

*Students are required to submit verification of successful completion of the program before their test results are released to them. The examination fee will not be refunded to students who do not complete their program.

NOTE: Candidates must pass both the CPOT written and practical examinations to be considered a Certified Paraoptometric Technician.
