

CEO

Canadian Examiners in Optometry



ECO

Examinateurs Canadiens en Optométrie

Annual Report

2012 –2013

CEO-ECO Board of Directors

January 9, 2014

The following report is presented at the Annual General Meeting of the Members of Canadian Examiners in Optometry on February 2, 2014 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.



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1.0 Mission and Mandates

1.1 Published Mission and Mandates

Canadian Examiners in Optometry – Les Examinateurs Canadiens en Optométrie (CEO-ECO) serves the collaborative needs of Canada's optometric regulators by administering entry-to-practice competence assessments as well as prior learning assessments to non-ACOE graduates. Additionally, CEO-ECO publishes the descriptions of the profession of optometry as practiced in Canada through the Competence Based Performance Standards (2005) and Features of Quality Practice.

CEO-ECO's mandates include providing services to Canada's provincial and territorial optometry regulators by:

- Researching and publishing the fundamental attributes and competencies necessary to practice optometry in Canada, on the scope of Canadian optometric practice and on the nature of quality practice
- Maintaining and administering the Canadian Assessment of Competence in Optometry (CACO)
- Maintaining and administering the Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Maintaining and administering the Indicator of Current Learning in Optometry (suspended activity)

1.2 Renewal of Mission and Mandates

CEO-ECO continues to see the need for a clear mission and mandates supported by its members to facilitate future planning. In April 2013, CEO-ECO embarked on a strategic planning process that included a consultative review of its mission and mandates. The board participated in a facilitated strategic planning meeting on September 26, 2013 in which it reviewed stakeholder feedback and developed a high-level plan for the future.

2.0 Governance

2.1 Governance Structure

CEO-ECO is a federally-incorporated, not-for-profit corporation without share capital and exempt from income taxes. It is governed by a board of directors elected by its members, the ten provincial optometry regulatory bodies in Canada. The board is accountable for CEO-ECO's development and delivery of assessment services for its members and fulfills this accountability through the annual member meeting, audited financial statements and published examination reports and other communications.



2.2 Board of Directors

The board had ten (10) directors in 2012-13 as set by the board in September 2012 and ratified by members in January 2013. CEO-ECO's bylaw requires that it have between three and ten directors.

Directors are elected from nominees put forward by a nominating committee, which consists of three individuals elected annually by the members and CEO-ECO's president as chair. In spring 2013, the nominating committee recommended three individuals for election to replace three directors whose terms were ending on September 2013. Drs. Léo Breton and Arnold Brown retired as directors effective September 30 2013 and Dr. Laura Montgomery offered to serve another term.

By acclamation, incumbent Dr. Laura Montgomery as well as Drs. Joyce Barbour and Lawrence MacAulay were elected to serve from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2016. CEO-ECO welcomed its newly elected directors at the Annual General Meeting of the Board of Directors on September 27, 2013 and the president thanked all directors for continuing to fulfill the board's governance responsibilities.

The election was carried out in accordance with bylaw. All new directors participated in board and governance training.

CEO-ECO publishes all election results and its board composition at www.ceo-eco.org (see CEO / CEO Structure / Board of Directors). In 2012-13, the directors and their location of practice and term-end date were:

Director	Location of Practice	End of Term	Director in 2012-13
Dr. Bernard Cyr	Grand Falls, NB	30 September 2014	Yes
Dr. Lisa Hounsell Clarke	St. John's, NL	30 September 2015	Yes
Dr. Brett Kinney, Secretary	Middleton, NS	30 September 2014	Yes
Dr. Margaret Penny	Calgary, AB	30 September 2014	Yes
Dr. Lorne Ryall	Beausejour, MB	30 September 2014	Yes
Dr. Mark Teeple	Arkona, ON	30 September 2014	Yes
Dr. Léo Breton	Laval, QC	30 September 2015	Yes
Dr. Arnold Brown	Saint John, NB	30 September 2013	Yes
Dr. Laura Montgomery	Regina, SK	30 September 2016	Yes
Dr. Joyce Barbour	Ottawa, ON	30 September 2016	No
Dr. Lawrence MacAulay	Armstrong, BC	30 September 2016	No

In 2012-13, the executive committee consisted of Drs. Bernard Cyr as President, Mark Teeple as Treasurer, Brett Kinney as Secretary and Dr. Margaret Penny as a member of executive committee. The election of officers for 2013-14 was conducted at the annual meeting of the board on September 27, 2013 as follows: Dr. Margaret Penny, President; Dr. Mark Teeple, Treasurer; Dr. Joyce Barbour, Secretary.

2.3 Committees

The board of directors directs a number of committees with specific mandates to advise the board and assume administrative responsibilities for CEO-ECO's activities. In 2012-13, the committees were:



Committee	Members	
CACO	Dr. Lorne Ryall (chair) Dr. Jonathan Arnel Dr. Clare Halleran	Dr. Joseph Mittelman Dr. Joyce Barbour Dr. Geneviève Raby
Nominating	Dr. Bernard Cyr (chair) Dr. Mark Burke	Dr. Louiselle St. Amand Dr. Justin Boulay
Questions	Dr. Margaret Penny (chair) Dr. Ralph Chou	Dr. Louise Myshak Dr. Andrew Webber
Review	Dr. Laura Montgomery (chair) Dr. Denis Champagne Dr. Lisa Hounsell Clarke	Dr. Lori Jaffray Dr. Ralph Chou Dr. Trudy Metcalfe
PLA	Dr. Arnold Brown (chair)	Dr. Bernard Cyr
CACO Eligibility Re-establishment Panel	Dr. Brent Allen (chair) Dr. David White Dr. Kevin Engel	Dr. Patrick Kean Dr. Freddie Chow Dr. Bernard Cyr
Publications (inactive in 2012-13)	Dr. Léo Breton (chair) Dr. Caroline Faucher* Dr. Brett Kinney	Dr. Daniel Boissy Dr. Patricia (Patty) Hrynchak* Dr. Dominique Gordon

*Members of the NCP-O steering committee

2.4 Member Meetings

The Annual General Meeting of the Members of Canadian Examiners in Optometry as required by bylaw was held on January 26, 2013 in Toronto. The business matters of the meeting included election of a nominating committee for 2013-14, presentation of the annual report, presentation of the auditor's report, receiving member direction to review and secure an auditor for 2012-13 financial statement reporting, and ratifying the number of directors to serve on the board for 2013 – 2014 at ten (10). The members were also provided with other information including the CACO Summary Report, an update on phase II of updating the CACO structure and CEO-ECO's Governance structure.

At the January 26, 2013 member AGM, the members also approved the development of a national competency profile for the profession of optometry in Canada (NCP-O) as follows: a development plan proposed by a national steering committee and continuance of this committee to oversee and carry out the development plan, that CEO-ECO handle project administration and be the funding partner with the government and/or other approved funding contributors and the proposed stakeholder engagement plan. The



members also set honorariums for the steering committee¹ and subsequent to the meeting, provided individual letters indicating support and a commitment of \$10/registrant for each of two years² that were submitted with the grant application. The grant application was revised and resubmitted in July to accommodate new government forms.

2.5 Board and Executive Committee Meetings

In 2012-13, the board held three meetings either by teleconference or electronically and held its annual general meeting in Toronto, Ontario on September 27, 2013. The executive committee held ten (10) teleconference meetings. In addition, the board participated in a strategic planning orientation session on June 11, 2013 and a planning meeting on September 26, 2013. The purpose of these meetings was to address governance, strategic planning, policy and operational matters.

2.6 Auditor's Report

An independent auditing firm completed the 2012-13 financial audit following CEO-ECO's September 30th year-end.

In 2012-13, CEO-ECO's statement of operations (appended to this report) reflects an operating surplus of \$259,660 for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The majority of revenue is from candidate fees for the CACO or PLA examinations. In 2012-13, regulators contributed \$86,153 to help development aspects of CEO-ECO assessment services. The operating surplus is attributed to higher candidate revenues and lower operating expenses than anticipated. Fees for assessment services are based on projected candidate registrations. In 2012-13, registrations for the CACO and for the PLA were higher which resulted in higher than anticipated revenues. This combined with lower expenses in question development and staffing contributed to the operating surplus. The surplus will support re-establishment of operating and capital reserves depleted in 2011-12 and 2010-11 and serve the board's risk management and longer-term activities, such as maintaining relevant examination blueprints, necessary to sustain defensible examinations.

[NB: CEO-ECO's 2012-13 audited financial statements were approved by the board on December 11, 2013 and are presented at a subsequent meeting of the members].

¹ Honorariums would have to be funded by through member contributions as the government will not fund.

² The letter from the College of Optometrists of Ontario was amended to defer approval until grant funding approval.



3.0 CEO-ECO Assessment Services and Operations

3.1 CACO Development and Delivery

3.1.1 CACO Administrations

CEO-ECO offers a sustainable, responsibly priced entry-to-practice assessment that is valid, reliable, bilingual and relevant to Canadian practice and supports provincial optometry regulators in registration processes.

The CACO administered in 2012-13 was specified by the Table of Specifications in the CACO Guide published on CEO-ECO's website. The direct relationship between the CACO and the attributes and competencies needed for Canadian practice validates the requirement that optometrists pass the CACO and demonstrate entry-to-practice competence before registration.

The board of directors approves the dates and locations for administration of the CACO annually. In 2012-13, the CACO was administered according to its published schedule³³. Table 1 identifies the CACO administrations that were held, categorized by month and location of administration, and the month in which candidate reports were issued. "CACO" refers to availability of all components of the CACO.

Table 1: CACO Administrations Schedule Summary 2012-13

	October 2012	April 2013	May 2013
Waterloo	n/a	CACO skills components	CACO
Montreal	CACO	n/a	CACO
Reporting	December	June	July

Note: unless where noted, all components were available for assessment

CEO-ECO's board sets fees to cover costs of developing and delivering the entry to practice examination for the profession. Fees for CEO-ECO's assessment services are published on its website. CACO fees for administrations held in 2012-13 were set in May 2012 and effective with the October 2012 administration, as follows:

³³ CACO administrations are shown beginning in October because CEO-ECO's fiscal year begins October 1.



CACO Fees October 2012 – May 2013

CACO	\$3175.00
CACO - Written Components only	\$1400.00
CACO - Skills (Practical) Components only	\$1775.00
Ocular Therapeutics only	\$675.00
Reassessments:	
Ocular Therapeutics	\$675.00
Synthesis	\$975.00
Any one of the four Clinical Skills Components	\$825.00
Review of Results (refunded if successful)	\$350.00
CACO Eligibility Re-establishment Request	\$300.00
Cancellation Fee	\$300.00
NSF fee	\$25.00

3.1.2 CACO Statistics

Information about CACO performance statistics is available in the published CACO Summary Report 2012-13.

3.1.3 CACO Reporting

CEO-ECO achieved its commitment to deliver candidate reports for all administrations within eight (8) weeks of the administrations.

3.1.4 CACO Eligibility Re-establishment Policy and Panel

The CACO Eligibility Re-Establishment Panel was established in 2011-12 and operates according to board-approved terms of reference. The Panel is responsible for development and oversight of a policy by which candidates can be evaluated to determine eligibility to sit the CACO in its entirety after failing a component(s) of the CACO three times. The Panel considered and administered a total of five (5) requests for eligibility re-establishment from October 2012 to September 2013⁴.

⁴ This refers to requests to which the Panel considered and responded in the current fiscal year and excludes any requests initiated in a previous fiscal year(s).



3.2 PLA Development and Delivery

3.2.1 PLA Administrations

CEO-ECO has developed and delivered a written examination for international optometry candidates since 2005. The written Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) assesses individuals who are trained internationally in current optometric knowledge according to PLA table of specifications published on CEO-ECO's website.

In 2012-13, CEO-ECO delivered the PLA in English in Waterloo to candidates referred by the International Optometric Bridging Program and the College of Optometrists of Ontario and delivered the PLA in English and French in Montreal to candidates referred by the Ordre des Optométristes du Québec. CEO-ECO is not involved in the process of approving candidates for (initial credentialing) or subsequent attempts of the PLA.

The PLA was administered in February 2013 to a total of 59 individuals, 56 in English and 3 in French and administered in September 2013 to a total of 50 individuals, 47 in English and 3 in French. Table 2 identifies the number of candidates who wrote the PLA, by date and location of administration.

In 2012-13, the fee for the written PLA was \$1200.

3.2.2 PLA Reporting

CEO-ECO achieved its commitment to deliver candidate reports within six (6) weeks of the February administration and within eight (8) weeks of the September administration. These reporting timelines are available on CEO-ECO's website under "PLA."

Table 2: PLA Candidate Numbers in 2012-13

PLA Administrations 2012-13	Waterloo	Montreal		Total
February 2013	55	English	1	59 (56 E, 3 F)
		French	3	
September 2013	44	English	3	50 (47 E, 3 F)
		French	3	

3.3 Operations

In addition to developing and delivering the CACO and PLA, CEO-ECO undertook a number of projects in support of governance, strategic planning, operations and special projects, as follows:

Auditing and accounting. CEO-ECO's board adopted the Accounting Standards for Not-For-Profit Organizations effective 2012-13. Also, CEO-ECO secured a new auditing firm and implemented a new accounting structure with the goal of greater reporting transparency.



Strategic plan. CEO-ECO's executive committee oversaw the development of a strategic plan in 2012-13 beginning with the consultant hiring process including a public request for proposals, review of proposals, interviews and the selection of the consultant. The chosen consultant facilitated a board orientation, worked collaboratively with CEO-ECO to develop the stakeholder research methods and content, conducted the research, and facilitated the development of a 3-5 year strategic plan at a board meeting on September 26, 2013. This was an opportunity for CEO-ECO to evaluate the organization's mission and development of strategies that will guide CEO-ECO's short and longer-term decision-making.

[NB: The strategic plan developed at the board and staff strategic planning meeting was further refined and approved by the board on December 11, 2013].

By-law and the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. With the assistance of appropriate strategic consultation and legal counsel, a by-law task committee of CEO-ECO prepared a new by-law to comply with the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (CNCA) which requires that all federal not-for-profit corporations apply for a 'certificate of continuance' before October 17, 2014. The CNCA has changed the status of NFP corporations from being limited to those things conferred by the original Canada Corporations Act to being conferred with the "rights, powers and privileges of a natural person," as has been the case for "for-profit" corporations. The new by-law is based upon the model bylaw provided by the Federal Government, and will be a key governance tool for CEO-ECO. (Note: The draft bylaw was approved by the board on December 11, 2013 and will be presented to the members for approval at the next AGM).

National competency profile – optometry. In January 2013, CEO-ECO was asked by members to be the project administrator for the development of a national competency profile for optometry (NCP-O). In a 2-day meeting on January 10-11, 2013⁵ that was funded by the College of Optometrists of Ontario, coordinated by CEO-ECO and facilitated by a competency consultant, a national steering committee created the NCP development plan which will guide the preparation of a new competency profile including measurable performance indicators. The committee included five regulator-nominees and two CEO-nominees, who are academics at the two Canadian schools of optometry. Based on this plan, CEO-ECO in consultation with the committee prepared and submitted a grant application to Human Resources and Development Skills Canada's Foreign Qualification Recognition Program (FQRP) to fund the execution of the plan. Funding is intended to cover the cost of the competency consultant, project management and administration and travel and meeting costs. Project and funding status updates were provided regularly to the members and CORA. Should the project receive funding, the steering committee providing optometry subject matter expertise and CEO-ECO will be the funding partner and project administrator.

Question development and selection. CEO-ECO's questions committee met in July 2013 and drafted a multi-year question development plan for the CACO and PLA in 2013-14 and beyond. The plan was refined in August and September and identifies an annual question development schedule and a strategy that groups writing teams and the development of questions by examination sections. The goal is to enable better resource planning and production of questions for both the CACO and the PLA item banks.

ICLO. The ICLO was developed and offered originally as an assessment of competence for practitioners. On September 27, 2013, the board approved continuing to suspend activity related to the Indicator of Current Learning in Optometry to focus on other mandates.

Human resources. Effective October 1 2013, the board modified the chief staff position to full from part-time.

⁵ This project is identified in CEO-ECO's financial statements under the section "Special Projects."



As well, CEO-ECO updated CACO administration policies and procedures primarily to protect the integrity and security of the CACO:

CACO rules of conduct & administration procedures. Prior to the spring 2013 administrations, the CACO and executive committees outlined permissible behaviour during an administration and updated the existing cheating policy to state the implications of non-permissible behaviour. The rules of conduct outline requirements for confidentiality and violation of these rules can lead to the penalties described in the cheating policy. For example, cheating has been expanded to situations where a candidate discusses content of the exam with an optometry student in the same or lower years who has not yet challenged the exam. The administrative procedures outline all exam-day procedures including how late arrivals will be handled, carrying of equipment into the exam room and the prohibited use of cell phones.

CACO eligibility program completion. CEO-ECO clarified the *CACO Eligibility Program Completion* policy to require the completion of both CACO written and skills as the first attempt prior to re-taking a failed component and to clarify a maximum of three (3) attempts for any component. Effective with the October 2013 administration, the completion policy also restricts the advance-written option to candidates entering fourth year and therefore is available in October only. These updates were necessary to preserve examination integrity and the original intent of the policies. The update did not alter who is eligible to take the CACO, which is set by the members. CEO-ECO has prepared a question-and-answer document with further information that is available on the request of any stakeholder.

CACO reporting. Effective with the April 2013 administration, CEO-ECO transitioned from scaled to raw score reporting with provision of a “pass letter” for candidates who passed the CACO or its components and a detailed performance report with raw scores for “fail” candidates only. The fail report identified the number of questions answered correctly out of the total number of scored questions. Accompanying each fail report was a candidate letter and other materials such as policies specific to the candidate’s circumstances to provide future registration guidance.

CACO cancellation & refunds. On September 27, 2013 the board approved a change to the *CACO Cancellations & Refunds* policy that instituted a cancellation deadline date two weeks following the close of registrations for each administration. The former policy provided for a full refund less administrative fee upon withdrawal up to 45 days before the exam, which allowed a longer cancellation period for some candidates and at which time CEO-ECO had already incurred expenses related to the administration. In making its decision, the board considered two distinct options and other Canadian entry-examination cancellation policies.

CACO (written) administration locations. On September 27, 2013, the board formalized simultaneous administrations of the CACO by approving dual fall (October) CACO written administrations in both Waterloo and Montreal. This will provide candidates with the opportunity to challenge the CACO written portion during their final academic year at either location. The CACO skills will continue to alternate between the two locations.

CACO eligibility re-establishment. On September 27, 2013, the board approved the CERP Panel’s proposed administrative amendments to the *CACO Eligibility Re-establishment* policy, specifically provision of four submission deadlines each year, added detail to the application procedures and provision of an applicant (CERP) request template. The updates added structure to the application process and clarified application procedures for candidates. There was no impact to the minimum education requirements that had been developed with member input in 2011-12; The updated policy was published on CEO-ECO’s website in English and French under CACO / Registration / Eligibility and effective with the October 2013 CACO administration. The updated policy and procedures were included in appropriate October 2013 candidate report mailings.



Other changes. Other changes include the board's clarification of the CACO registration policy to note more explicitly that registration deferrals are not permitted, the decision to supply additional equipment to candidates for the CACO skills effective October 2013 and the addition of a second reviewer to question translation for the CACO and PLA.

3.4 Communication & Publications

CEO-ECO maintains all public examination and corporate information on its website at www.ceo-eco.org. The 2011-12 Annual Report of the Board and the 2011-12 CACO Summary Report were posted following presentation at the annual meeting of the members in January 2013. The board approved the 2012-13 CACO Summary Report on September 27, 2013. In addition, the CACO Guide which includes the CACO Table of Specifications⁶, the PLA Table of Specifications and the Competency Based Performance Standards (CBPS) were maintained on the website without change. All examination policies are available in English and French on the website for candidates and other stakeholders. [NB: The 2012-13 CACO Summary Report was provided to the members on November 7, 2013]

3.5 Stakeholder Events and Engagement

In 2012-13, CEO-ECO representatives attended as invited guests and provided reports to the January and September 2013 meetings of Canadian Optometric Regulatory Authorities (CORA). In addition, CEO-ECO presented by invitation at two meetings of the Council of College of Optometrists of Ontario and in May 2013, the board sent information to the members about the assessment of competence in optometry in Canada and the implications of accepting a non-Canadian entry-to-practice examination. Also, CEO-ECO represented the National Competency Profile project in discussions with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and provided members with regular updates on the project. CEO-ECO believes that mutually respectful dialogue is important to the operations of CEO-ECO, to the success of the profession, and to the benefit of the Canadian public.

CEO-ECO is grateful for its directors, past directors, committee chairs and members, volunteer optometrists and staff who have been dedicated and committed to carrying out CEO-ECO's mandates and therefore supported protection of the public interest and the profession in Canada.

3.6 Indicator of Current Learning in Optometry (ICLO)

The ICLO committee was inactive in 2012-13 as CEO-ECO concentrated on other priorities. The ICLO has not been offered for several years.

⁶ Also commonly known as an examination blueprint

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3.7 AIT and Common Professional Qualifications

The situation allowing candidates to register in BC or Quebec without taking the CACO remains an unresolved matter. CEO-ECO has made necessary adjustments in its operations and fees for sustainability. CEO-ECO believes that the Canadian Regulators and Canadian public are best served should COBC return to requiring that applicants for registration take the CACO. This would help ensure common entry-to-practice qualifications within the profession.

In Quebec, the EOUM has incorporated the CACO into school curriculum to facilitate EOUM student registration for the CACO in lieu of a school-developed optometry program exit examination. The CACO is an accepted but not an exclusive entry-examination requirement for registration with the OOQ in Quebec.

3.8 Corporate Office Location

CEO-ECO's corporate office is in Stouffville, in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario.

This annual report of the board of directors is respectfully presented to the members of CEO-ECO at the annual general meeting on February 2, 2014

RADVANY JURINA CLEARY

ASSOCIATES LLP

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

CANADIAN EXAMINERS IN OPTOMETRY

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

	2013	2012 Unaudited (Note 1)
REVENUE		
CACO fees	\$ 888,591	\$ 601,790
PLA fees	132,300	52,800
Member contributions	86,153	45,975
Investment income	2,784	5,657
Other income		1,655
	<u>1,109,828</u>	<u>707,877</u>
EXPENSES		
Amortization	5,084	3,086
Bank charges	659	746
Board and committee governance	30,299	15,291
Examination administration	230,859	176,549
Examination development	80,269	125,144
Consulting	162,888	182,588
Insurance	7,604	6,668
Office administration	27,817	29,343
Printing and mailing	18,082	15,013
Professional services	28,571	10,638
Rent and occupancy	18,206	17,174
Research and project consulting	28,650	
Salaries and benefits	202,412	202,482
Telephone and communication	13,424	7,703
	<u>854,824</u>	<u>792,425</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE (DEFICIENCY) OVER EXPENSES BEFORE SPECIAL PROJECT	255,004	(84,548)
SPECIAL PROJECT (Note 8)		
Revenue	25,000	
Expenses	(20,344)	
	<u>4,656</u>	<u> </u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE (DEFICIENCY) OVER EXPENSES	<u>\$ 259,660</u>	<u>\$ (84,548)</u>