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Examination Administration Policy and Procedures: Candidate Instructions for the Written Exam & OSCE

Overview of Exam

The new exam will test candidates on the competencies in the *National Competency Profile for Entry-Level Optometry* through the OEBC Written Examination and OSCE.

The OEBC Written Examination is a one day paper and pencil exam. It will use 62 cases to test candidates on the competencies in the *National Competency Profile for Entry-Level Optometry*.

The OSCE is a practical exam. OSCE stands for Objective Structured Clinical Examination. The OSCE uses 16 stations to test candidates on the competencies in the *National Competency Profile for Entry-Level Optometry*.

Candidates for the exams can best prepare by:

- Familiarity with and understanding of the examination blueprint
- Developing knowledge and clinical skills relevant to the competencies in the examination blueprint
- Focusing on the development and integration of clinical skill, clinical reasoning and professional judgement;
- Continuing to stress good communication skills across all content areas, and especially in clinical experience settings.

Blueprint

The exam blueprint is an outline of the exam structure. It informs candidates about what the exam could test and the weighting of each area. The Overview of Blueprint and the Blueprint for both written and OSCE exams can be found on the website under "Preparing for the Exam."

Sample questions are available on the website under "Preparing for the Exam."

The following information describes examination day procedures for candidates and applies to both the Written exam and OSCE.

Written exam and OSCE

Exam Policies

Candidates must read and be familiar with all Exam Policies found on the website.

Adherence to Rules of Conduct

Candidates must follow all instructions given and not violate the Rules of Conduct (under Exam Policies on the website). Any candidate suspected of improper conduct may be subject to legal and/or disciplinary action by OEBC and may result in forfeiture of fees paid, invalidation of scores, suspended access to OEBC exams, revocation of any results and notice may be given to any optometry program or licensure of the applicant.

Scents

All exam sites are scent-free environments. Candidates are to refrain from wearing perfume, scented hairspray, cologne, scented deodorant, aftershave or any other scented products to or at an exam site.

Orientation

A candidate orientation is held for the OSCE exam on Saturday and Sunday prior to each morning and afternoon session. There is no orientation for the written exam.

Candidate Identification

Candidates must bring two pieces of government-issued identification (passport; driver's license) in order to authenticate the candidate's identity. Candidates whose identity cannot be verified through this identification process may be refused entry.

Candidates must bring on exam day for both the written and OSCE:

- A valid (unexpired) Canadian or foreign passport

PLUS one of

- Canadian or US citizenship certificate
- Canadian or US resident card
- Canadian or US Driver's license
- Birth Certificate PLUS one other piece of government issued identification with a photo (e.g. Canadian health card, military card)

On exam day, exam staff will check both pieces of identification to verify your identification. You will not be admitted to the examination unless you provide both pieces of identification and they are a likeness of your current physical appearance. As well, the names on your government-issued photo ID and the exam registration list must match.

Name change

IF YOUR NAME HAS CHANGED we require a properly certified copy of one of the following for each name change. These must be submitted no later than 30 days before the exam.

- Your marriage certificate
- Your change of name certificate

Washrooms

Candidates are asked to use restroom facilities prior to sign in.

Arrival & Sign In

Candidates must arrive at the sign-in area of the exam facility between 30-60 minutes before the orientation start time. The recommended arrival time will be communicated to the candidate in their exam schedule information sent by email in advance of the exam administration.

At sign in, candidates will present their identification to exam staff and remain in a designated area of the exam facility as directed. Candidates will not be permitted to leave after sign in.

Bringing Papers/Notes to the exam: Candidates are **not permitted** to bring materials such as textbooks, papers or study notes into the exam site or to review such materials while waiting to take the exam.

Late Arrival

Important examination instructions are provided during the candidate orientation.

For Written EXAM: Candidates arriving **15 minutes** or more after the exam has started will not be permitted to take the examination.

For OSCE: Candidates arriving **after the start** of the orientation will *not* be permitted to take the examination. The orientation is scheduled approximately 30-45 minutes before the exam begins.

Permissible / Non-permissible Items

Candidates may bring only the following into the examination areas:

- Two pieces of government issued identification
- Sweater
- **Written exam ONLY** Analogue Watch (below) - the watch must be placed and remain on the desk

Analogue watch (permitted)



Digital /computerized watch (NOT permitted)



Candidates CANNOT bring the following into the examination areas:

- **Written exam:** digital or computerized watch (above); **OSCE: NO WATCHES**
- **Optometry equipment and tools**
- Clipboard
- Any computing or transmission device, such as a computer, calculator, mobile device, cell phone, beeper/pager, ipod or other mobile/handheld device.
- Purses, wallets, bags, backpacks, suitcases
- Books, paper and any notes
- Pencil cases, eyewear cases
- Outerwear - see Dress Code
- Food, tobacco
- Visible jewelry

Prohibited materials are to be left outside the examination areas or in a designated waiting area within the exam facility. The exam provider assumes **NO** responsibility for loss or damage to candidates' materials left in these areas. Candidates are encouraged to avoid bringing items of value to the exam.

Prohibited materials brought into the exam or accessed during the examination including during a break may be confiscated. Any devices or materials that may compromise the administration or security of the examination will be confiscated. Confiscated items will be inspected either on site or sent together with a report of the incident to the C.E.O. for inspection, and will be kept until any investigation under the Misconduct policy is completed.

Medication/Food is permitted ONLY if prior permission has been obtained:

Food and water is not permitted in the OSCE exam. OEBC provides water to candidates during the OSCE exam.

Written exam only: All candidates are permitted to bring in *unwrapped* snacks in a small, clear, see-through plastic bag (for example, a sandwich-sized Ziploc bag). Grocery or shopping bags are not permitted. Any food must be clearly visible to administration staff.

Candidates with special medical or dietary needs relating to a medical condition: Candidates who are requesting to bring in medicine/food/medical equipment for either the written exam or OSCE for medical reasons **must request approval** under the [Special Accommodations policy](#). If you are approved to bring food into the OSCE: Food must be consumed outside of the exam station rooms during the rest stations or scheduled break. Requests for use of medication at the exam site will be decided and approved only by the Chief Proctor.

Incidents

OEBC is committed to ensuring that the performance of a candidate is accurately recorded for the purpose of scoring. In exceptional circumstances, if anything has occurred that could reasonably be understood to have detrimentally affected the candidate's performance or evaluation, the candidate has an opportunity to complete an Incident Report. The purpose of filling out the form is to provide any additional information which will ensure that OEBC has an accurate account of a candidate's performance, including identifying any factor which the candidate feels should be taken into account in arriving at the candidate's score. Incident Reports will be considered in the assessment process for candidates who have been unsuccessful in the specific component of the examination for which an Incident Report has been submitted.

A candidate may request an Incident Report from an exam staff. The candidate is responsible for completing the form individually and is not allowed to discuss the exam or the incident report with others before completing the form. The completed form with a description of the issue should be given to exam staff.

A candidate may complete an incident report at the end of a written exam, or, in the OSCE during a rest station, break or at the end of the exam prior to sign out.

Incident report forms that are submitted after candidate sign-out, missing information (e.g. candidate name, station #, etc.) or received at the office after the examination will not be considered.

Departure

At the completion of the examination, the candidate is required to leave the assessment area, retrieve any personal effects and leave the examination facility promptly and without discussion with other candidates. Candidates are not permitted to reenter the waiting area or the examination site.

Exam environment

No exam environment is perfect. There may be variations in room temperatures and extraneous noise.

The following information and procedures apply to the OSCE only.

OSCE Examination

What an OSCE is

The OEBC OSCE is a practical exam. OSCE stands for Objective Structured Clinical Examination. It is a form of practical examination that provides candidates with a consistent exam experience, and provides assessors with objective behavioural criteria for scoring candidate performances.

In an OSCE, candidates move from one room to the next to perform a series of stations. Candidates will be brought to their first station where they will find their instructions for that station on the door. They will hear a signal to enter the room, where they will carry out the instructions of that station. A copy of the instructions is also inside the room. At the end of the station, the candidate will hear a bell or other signal that the station has ended and they should leave the room and walk to the next door where they will find their instructions for that station.

Upon entering the exam room the candidate may introduce themselves to the examiner and standardized patient.

A candidate orientation is held before the candidates begin their assessment. During this, the head proctor will explain the exam day procedures and emergency procedures.

Candidates may wish to review the OEBC videos at www.oebc.ca as a source of information about how OSCE administrations and OSCE stations are run in the OEBC exams.

Equipment

Candidates may be asked to perform techniques such as BIO, gonio, tonometry, SLE. Any equipment, tools and props that may be required for the examination will be supplied by OEBC and candidates are expected to be able to use the provided equipment.

Photos of optometry equipment such as a Binocular Indirect Ophthalmoscope (BIO) and Retinoscope that may be used in the OSCE are in Appendix A as well as in the OSCE administration video at www.oebc.ca.

Exam Day Scheduling and Timing

Approximately 6 to 8 weeks prior to the OSCE administration, candidates will receive their assigned date (Saturday or Sunday) and time (AM or PM) of their OSCE exam.

There are 16 test stations. Eleven of the stations are interactive stations, with an examiner and a Standardized Patient. The remaining five stations are non-interactive and have questions about materials supplied.

There are also 2 rest stations and a break half way through the exam. The total time for the exam is three hours and ten minutes, plus orientation time as well as time to sign in and sign out.

The orientation is held just prior to both morning and afternoon exam sessions. Candidates are responsible for allocating their time within each OSCE station. Each station is 8 minutes long and there are 2 minutes between stations. Candidates will be signaled to begin the assessment at each station. There is a signal at the 6 minute mark to warn candidates there are 2 minutes of assessment time remaining. Candidates will also be signaled at the end of the station and must remain in the examination room until this signal.

A 2 minute period is provided between each station to allow candidates to move to the next examination room and read the instructions. Note that during the 2 minute reading time, candidates cannot read the question sheet for non-interactive stations. At the signal to enter the room, candidates must take a question sheet from the envelope. Candidates may not enter the next station room until the start signal. Talking with other candidates, examiners or standardized patients during this time is not allowed.

Note: Candidates may **not** leave the assigned exam room or any part of the exam area for any reason without the permission of an examiner or exam staff. Candidates who leave the exam area (e.g. to go to the restroom) without permission will not be permitted to re-enter the assessment area or complete the remainder of the exam.

At the end of the station, the Examiner will stop assessing the candidate.

Break

There is a break for examiners approximately half way through the exam. During the break candidates must remain in their station with their chair next to the doorway. Washrooms cannot be used during the scheduled break.

Exam Day Sequestering

Between the morning and afternoon administrations of the OSCE, candidates scheduled in the morning administration will be sequestered, i.e. required to remain in a holding area, until the afternoon examination orientation has started.

Note:

Any personal belongings will be collected and brought to the holding room.

- Washroom breaks will be permitted under escort
- Use of cell phones or other electronic devices is strictly prohibited
- *Failure to comply with these rules is considered disruptive behaviour as defined in the Misconduct policy*

Water

Candidates are not permitted to bring water into the examination. Upon request of an exam staff, water will be provided to candidates in the OSCE.

Washroom

Before the exam: Washroom facilities at the exam site are not accessible to candidates prior to sign in. Candidates may wish to use washrooms in other buildings or prior to coming to the exam.

During the exam: You must be escorted to the washroom by exam staff. Please use the washrooms during either one of your two rest stations after the other candidates have entered their stations. You may use the washroom during a station but no extra time is given.

Answer sheets & Instructions

Instructions will be outside the exam room. Candidates must read the instructions carefully to ensure they do what is asked in the station.

All marked answer sheets and all other testing materials including incident report forms are the property of OEBC. At the completion of a non-interactive station candidates place their answer sheet in the envelope on the door as they leave the station.

Candidates may not remove any materials from or discuss any information about the exam. Any candidate found to have materials or information about the exam will be in violation of the Misconduct policy and subject to any and all penalties within the policy.

Important: Marked answer sheets and all other testing materials including incident report forms are the property of OEBC. Candidates must submit their answer sheets, question books, and all other testing materials to the Chief Proctor or other designated person prior to leaving the exam. Candidates may not remove any materials from the examination room.

Exam Roles

In the interactive stations each candidate is evaluated by an Examiner. *Important:* Examiners are not permitted to dialogue with or provide candidates with advice, counsel, or direction.

The candidate interacts with a standardized patient (SP) who has been trained to present the signs and symptoms of a condition, and respond to candidate questions, statements and actions consistently. Candidates should respond to the standardized patient's affect and behaviour. They should treat the standardized patients as if they are real patients and ensure that no harm comes to them.

The OSCE involves no direct contact on the standardized patient. If there are required tests or procedures in an OSCE station they will be performed on a model.

All stations may be monitored and video or audio recorded for exam security purposes.

Exam staff will be identified before the exam and will assist candidates in movement through the next station.

A Chief Examiner will maintain oversight of the exam administration.

Conflict of Interest

A direct personal or professional relationship (e.g. relative, close friend, current or recent employer) with either the Examiner or the Standardized Patient must be declared by the candidate prior to the commencement of the station or examination. The examiner or SP will also declare such a relationship. The chief examiner or designate evaluates and determines whether a conflict exists. This decision is final.

Dress Code

Outerwear such as coats, ski pants, gloves/mitts, scarves, hats are not permitted in the assessment area.

Candidates dress and grooming must be appropriate to a professional in a health care setting. Candidates may wish to dress in layers as the temperature of examination sites may fluctuate. Clothing with excessive pockets or excessive in size may not be permitted. OEBC will refuse entry or assessment to candidates who, in the opinion of the Chief Examiner or other designated exam staff are inappropriately dressed.

Inappropriate dress would include:

- Jeans, shorts, sleeveless shirts (short-sleeve shirt is acceptable)
- Sandals, flip-flops

- T-shirts with slogans, pictures, statements
- Ripped clothing
- Baseball caps and any other non-religious head covering
- Visible jewelry is not permitted

Clothing with logos/lettering and lab coats are *not* permitted.

Exam Termination

The OSCE exam will be terminated if the candidate is found to be in possession of prohibited materials inside the assessment area, if the candidate has brought unauthorized equipment, if the candidate leaves the assessment area for any reason without permission, or if a candidate is found to be violating the rules of conduct. An exam station will be terminated if a Standardized Patient is injured or if it is determined that the Standardized Patient or Examiner is being placed at risk of injury.

The following information and administration procedures apply to the Written exam.

Written exam

Exam Day Timing and Seating

The written exam is administered on one day and is divided into two parts: 8:30 am to 12:00 pm; 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

After sign in, candidates enter the exam room and must proceed directly without talking to their seats and remain there until the beginning of the examination. Seating in the exam will be pre-assigned.

Candidates do not begin the examination until directed by the Chief Proctor. Full time allotment will be provided in the event of a delayed start.

Note: Candidates may not leave their seat or the examination room for any reason without the permission of a proctor. Candidates who leave the assigned examination room without permission will not be permitted to reenter the assessment area or complete the exam.

Equipment

Calculators (Casio FX 260) will be supplied. All candidates must use the supplied calculators. Each calculator may be used by a single candidate only.

Pencils and erasers are supplied. Candidates will *not* be permitted to bring their own pencils and erasers.

Washroom

Before the exam: Washroom facilities that are on the same floor as the exam room are not available to candidates prior to sign in. Candidates may wish to use washrooms in other areas or prior to coming to the exam.

During the exam: You must be escorted to the washroom by exam staff. You may use the washroom during the exam but no extra time is given.

Water

Bottled water in a clear bottle *with label removed*. Beverages other than water are not permitted.

OEBC is not responsible for damage to examination documents or lost exam time as a result of a candidate's food/water spillages.

Dress Code

Outerwear such as coats, ski pants, gloves/mitts, scarves, hats are not permitted in the assessment area. Visible jewelry is not permitted.

Candidates may wish to dress in layers as the temperature of examination sites may fluctuate. Clothing with excessive pockets or excessive in size may not be permitted. OEBC

will refuse entry or assessment to candidates who, in the opinion of the Chief Proctor are inappropriately dressed.

Inappropriate dress would include:

- Baseball caps and any other non-religious head covering including wearing a hood
- Clothing with excessive pockets or excessive in size

Answer sheets & Instructions

Candidates are individually responsible for correctly and fully completing their answer (bubble) sheets. The Chief Proctor will provide some general direction to the candidates at the beginning of each examination on completing the name and candidate number section of the answer sheets.

Candidates mark only one answer for each question. Questions that have no answer selected or which have two or more selected answers are scored as incorrect. All answers are recorded on the answer sheets. Examination question books are not scored, only answer sheets. Improper answer recording is not grounds for successful appeal.

Important: Marked answer sheets and all other testing materials including incident report forms are the property of OEBC. Candidates must submit their answer sheets, question books, and all other testing materials to the Chief Proctor or other designated person prior to leaving the exam. Candidates may not remove any materials from the examination room.

Roles

A Chief Proctor and the proctor team will maintain oversight of the exam administration and provide exam day instructions. The chief proctor will also explain emergency procedures.

Early Departure

Candidates may exit the examination any time after the midpoint of the examination, except during the last 15 minutes.

Termination

The written exam will be terminated if the candidate is found to be in possession of prohibited materials inside the assessment area, if the candidate leaves the assessment

area for any reason without permission, or if a candidate is found to be violating the rules of conduct (e.g. talking with another candidate during the exam).

Note:

OEBC reserves the right to cancel an exam administration if it has been determined that the security of the assessment has been violated.

OEBC reserves the right to delete from scoring any test item which is found to have been exposed to one or more candidates before the exam administration.

OEBC reserves the right to change the exam application requirements and instructions at any time.

Appendix A: Equipment Images

(Refer also to the OSCE Administration Video at www.oebc.ca)



Retinoscope / Rétinoscope



On/off switch and brightness control
Interrupteur marche/arrêt et réglage
de la luminosité



Side view of OEBC slit lamp showing the location of
magnification knob



Side view of OEBC slit lamp showing the location of
the dimmer knob



An Examiner using OEBC slit lamp demonstrating
the Gonioscopy and tonometry model



Model eye for retinoscopy



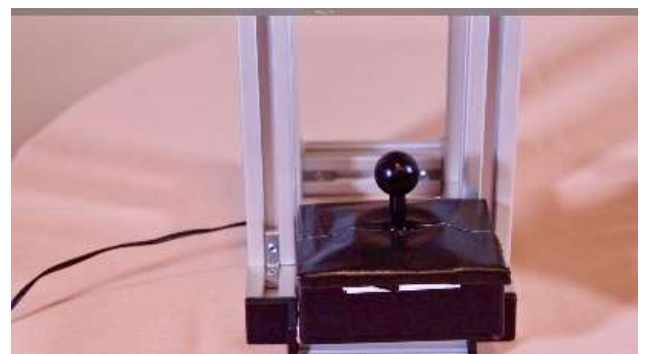
A close up of the retinoscopy model eye



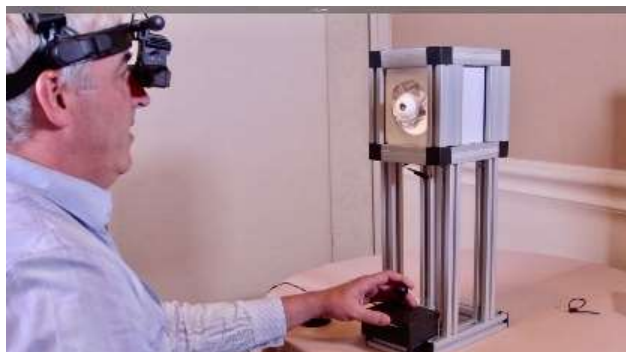
Retinoscopy model eye in action



OEBC's proprietary BIObot



BIObot joystick close up



BIObot- showing the use of the joystick to control the direction of gaze



BIObot simulated eye closeup



Close up of slit lamp mounted Goldmann tonometer.



Close up of supplied trial lens case