

The OEBC Written Examination and OSCE Blueprint

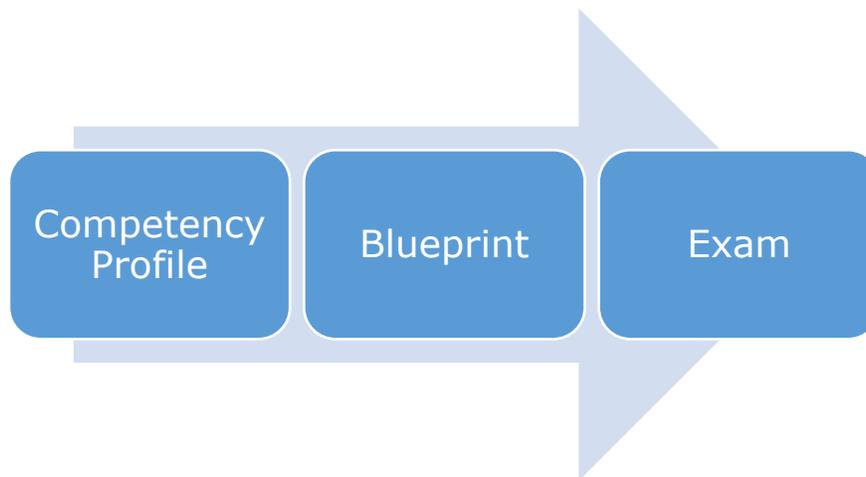
Purpose and Function of the Blueprint

A blueprint reflects the overall knowledge, skills and behaviours required of a professional and guides the development of assessments. It ensures that elements considered important for safe and effective patient care and health care in Canada are represented on examinations.

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. It also guides OEBC in designing exams that are comparable from one time to the next, giving all candidates equal opportunity to show whether or not they have the competencies that are necessary to practise optometry safely and effectively in Canada. The overall process ensures that an examination drawn from the question bank does, in fact, evaluate the knowledge, skills, and abilities relevant to optometry practice.

The process of examination design depends on sampling from all the possible activities represented by the competencies. OEBC selects cases for the Written Examination and stations for the OSCE to match the Blueprint requirements. Some items from the Blueprint are not covered on every exam; however, OEBC balances each exam for conditions and skills assessed.

How the Blueprint was Developed



The blueprint is grounded in optometric competencies. Optometrists across Canada participated in a survey in 2015 to establish the competencies. The *National Competency Profile for Entry-Level Optometry* (on the [OEBC](#) website) is the result of this survey, and outlines the competencies required for the practice of optometry.

The competency profile looked at importance, frequency-of-use, and entry-to-practice relevance of each competency. The exam blueprint is developed from this information. Although some aspects of the scope of practice of the Canadian optometrist may differ among jurisdictions and workplaces, the core competencies expected of optometrists at entry to practice are the same. In all settings, when providing patient care, the optometrist works in collaboration with the patient, and other health care professionals in order to achieve the best possible health outcomes for the patient.

The role of the optometrist in the Canadian health care system has evolved. Optometrists' required knowledge and skills at entry to practice have also evolved, in order to fulfill their expanded scope of practice and meet patients' needs. The blueprint therefore includes the practice areas

Communication, Professionalism and **Patient Centred Care** in addition to the traditional clinical areas of **Assessment, Diagnosis and Planning, Patient Management,** and **Practice Management.**

Organization of the Blueprint

The Blueprint for the Written Examination and the OSCE contains the same basic elements:

- **Practice Areas** – broad groupings of competencies related to a “bucket” of job activities.
- **Competencies** – significant job-related knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and judgments required for competent performance (i.e., safe and effective practice). They provide an overview of what an Optometrist must be able to do at entry to practice, without supervision, when the need arises. Each Written Examination question and OSCE station is linked to specific competency(ies).
- **Indicators** – examples of behaviours that are observable in, and guide the development of, the written examination and OSCE. These are representative of the competency and may be updated from time to time.
- Note that each written case and each OSCE station has a primary competency and is assigned to the blueprint accordingly, however elements from other competencies may appear in these written cases and OSCE stations, reflective of the integrated nature of practice.

The Blueprint for the Written Examination and OSCE differs in two important ways:

- Each of the Written Examination and OSCE contains some Practice Areas, Competencies and Indicators that are unique to that examination format; that is, the Written Examination will test some things that are not on the OSCE, and the OSCE will test some things that are not on the Written Examination. When both assess the same competencies, they will often assess different aspects or elements of the same competency.
- The weighting for each Area of Practice changes from the Written Examination to the OSCE to reflect the different emphasis of each form of assessment.

How to Use the Blueprint

The Blueprint is one of several resources available to help candidates prepare for the examination. It can serve as a guide for what is expected on each component, and in what proportions. Candidates should review the blueprint for each component thoroughly to determine whether or not they possess the listed competencies and are ready to practise Optometry independently. Candidates who identify a gap in knowledge, skills or behaviours should develop a plan to address these gaps before taking the exam.