Optometrists

Pathway to Registration for Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) in New Brunswick

Optometrists are regulated professionals in New Brunswick (NB). Registration with the New Brunswick Association of Optometrists (NBAO)—the regulatory authority—is required to practise and use the title "Doctor" or the abbreviation "Dr.", the initials "O.D.", or the designation "Certified Therapeutic Optometrist" as outlined in the New Brunswick Optometry Act and bylaws.

Optometrists examine eyes to assess and diagnose ocular diseases and disorders. They prescribe and fit eyeglasses and contact lenses and recommend treatments such as exercises to correct vision problems or ocular disorders. Certified Therapeutic Optometrists may prescribe, administer and use pharmaceutical agents applicable to eye-related conditions. They work in private practice, clinics, community health centres, rehabilitation centres, the optical industry, government, and universities.[1]

For work opportunities and other information, visit NBHealthJobs.com or NBjobs.ca.

STEPS TO REGISTRATION

PART 1: COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Before applying to NBAO, candidates completing the registration process in English must first complete the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC) credential assessment process. Candidates completing in French must apply trough the Ordre des optométristes du Québec (OOQ) and complete their process before applying to transfer to NB. This factsheet details the FORAC pathway.

Step 1 - Language Proficiency: Applicants whose optometry program was completed in English are not required to complete a language proficiency test. All others must submit language test results that meet FORAC benchmarks.

Step 2 – Academic Credential Assessment: The minimum educational requirement to practice in NB is completion of an Optometry Program accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE). All other applicants must demonstrate equivalence by completing the FORAC application (Form 5) with required documentation[2], including language test results if applicable, and a WES ICAP report. Current FORAC fees can be found here, and WES fees here.

Step 3 – Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGOEE): After successful credential assessment, applicants must pass the IGOEE administered by the Touchstone Institute. This four-part exam is offered once or twice per year, based on demand, and includes two remote virtual components, and two in-person clinical components completed in Toronto. Applicants who pass may proceed to the National OEBC exam (Step 5), while those who do not meet the minimum standard must complete additional training (Step 4). Current fees can be found here.

[1] National Occupational Classification (NOC) definition.
[2] All documents must be in English and translated by a certified translator is necessary.

Step 4 – Advanced Standing Optometry Preparatory Program (ASOPP): The University of Waterloo ASOPP begins with a spring term session, after which candidates enter the third year of the four-year Doctor of Optometry program. A limited number of seats are available each year (six at time of writing). Current fees can be found here.

Step 5 – Canadian Board Exam: The Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC) examination is a mandatory entry to practice requirement for all Optometrists in Canada. It is offered in the spring and fall and consists of two components: a one-day written exam completed remotely, and an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) held in Hamilton, Waterloo, or Montreal. Registration is completed through the OEBC website during designated registration periods. Current fees can be found here.

PART 2: REGISTRATION WITH THE NEW BRUNSWICK REGULATORY BODY

Step 6 – Licensure: To apply for licensure with NBAO, applicants must request an application package by emailing nbao@nbao.ca. Completed applications with the supporting documentation detailed in Section 7(2) of the bylaws, as well as the application fee and the therapeutic pharmaceutical agent (TPA) licence fee, if applicable, must be submitted. The jurisprudence exam, written in NBAO offices in Fredericton, must be completed before a licence is issued. Current fees can be found here.

Navigation Services: To obtain assistance through the process, connect with your health professions navigator at NBHealthJobs.com.

REGISTRATION COSTS AND TIMELINE[3]

Total fees to become a licenced Optometrist vary by individual circumstances. Applicants who do not require ASOPP can expect fees of approximately $14,190 CAD, while those requiring ASOPP can expect fees of approximately $234,600 CAD. Timelines typically range from one to two years without ASOPP and three to four years with ASOPP and may vary depending on application timing relative to IGOEE and OEBC examination schedules.

Pre-arrival: You may complete the FORAC credential assessment process before arriving in Canada.

WORKING IN NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

To work legally in Canada, you must be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, or hold a valid work permit. For immigration assistance, visit Immigration New Brunswick.

[3] Fee and timeline estimates are as of January 2026 and are subject to change. Individual situations may increase costs and timelines—some examples include: document translation, international couriers, travel and living related to education and exams, etc.