

## Examination Content Areas

The content of JCAHPO’s multiple-choice exams is based on a job task analysis survey. Job incumbents and sponsoring ophthalmologists complete a survey, which identifies the tasks performed most often and of greatest importance. These tasks become the examination outline. This makes the content outline an excellent examination preparation tool.

## Examination Specifications

The multiple-choice exam is a series of statements or questions followed by four possible answers. One answer is the single-best response; the others are distractors. While some distractors may be partly correct, there is only one BEST answer. The number of questions and the time allowed to take the exam vary according to the level of examination.

- All examinations are delivered in English
- Add ½ hour to the exam time for review of a tutorial explaining how to maneuver through the computer exam.
- In addition to scored items, all candidates receive between 10-25 pilot questions. While they are not identified or scored, these questions are being pilot tested for possible inclusion in future examinations.

Examination Level	Number of Scored Questions	Examination Time
COA/CCOA	200	3 hours
COT	200	3 hours
COMT	200	3 hours
Ophthalmic Surgical Assisting	60	1 hour
ROUB	170	3 hours
CDOS	175	3 hours

## Examination Construction and Scoring

JCAHPO exams are developed by the JCAHPO Certification Committee, which includes ophthalmologists and certified OMP. A variety of reference materials are used to create examination questions, which are chosen from a pool of items based on the exam specifications and content outlines.

All examinations are criterion-referenced. This means that each candidate passes or fails based on their performance, which is judged against an objective standard and not on the performance of others on the same exam.

The passing score is the minimum number of questions that must be answered correctly. Scoring is statistically adjusted to ensure that all those who pass meet the same standards of competence, regardless of which form of examination they took.

A modified Angoff procedure is used to establish each passing score. In this commonly accepted psychometric procedure, content experts estimate the probability of each question being answered correctly by a person who meets the minimum eligibility requirements. For this reason, passing scores are not released.

## Preparation Strategies

JCAHPO exams are designed to cover the knowledge and skills needed by ophthalmic medical personnel in varied settings and/or geographic locations. They are more inclusive than the tests you took in school. Here are some tips to help you prepare for the exam:

- 1 **Read the content outline thoroughly.** The exam will include questions from every content area, and also may include questions from sub-categories within those content areas. Mark any topics that are unfamiliar to you. Do some extra reading in those areas or consider attending a class or seminar.
- 2 **Use many study sources,** since JCAHPO does not rely on one single reference source in the design of its exams. Review and refresh your knowledge, especially in those areas you marked when you reviewed the content outline. Read for learning and comprehension, not just to memorize.
- 3 **Before the exam, find the test center** and locate parking areas. Knowing where to go will reduce your stress on test day.
- 4 **Get plenty of rest** the night before the exam. Late-night cramming only tires you out.
- 5 **Focus on doing your personal best;** your score is not affected by anyone else's.

## Retaking the Multiple-choice Examinations

If you do not pass the exam the first time, a re-test application is automatically included with the Notification of Results letter. You have 12 months from your initial examination date to complete all multiple-choice re-tests. Once the re-test application is processed, you will have 90 days in which to schedule and complete the exam.

If you decide not to apply to re-test within 12 months of the initial exam or fail to complete the exam within the 90-day eligibility period, then the complete application process begins again, with eligibility, supporting documentation, and required fees.

If you do not pass the initial exam, you may re-test two more times within the 12-months from the initial exam date. If you still do not pass, a waiting period of 12 months from the date of your first exam is required. You will need to submit a new application with eligibility, supporting documentation, and required fees.

## Sample Items/Answers

1. The number 75 in the lens prescription

-5.00 + 1.50 X 75 is the:

- a. Power of sphere
- b. Axis of cylinder
- c. Interpupillary distance
- d. Vertex distance

2. The abbreviation prn stands for:

- a. Every day
- b. After meals
- c. As needed
- d. At bedtime

3. An A-scan is used to measure the:

- a. Corneal thickness
- b. Scleral rigidity
- c. Rod and cone function
- d. Eye's axial length

4. What extraocular muscles rotate the eyes into right gaze:

- a. RLR and LMR
- b. RIO and LSR
- c. RMR and LMR
- d. RSO and LIR

5. Which of the following is an opacification of the lens:

- a. Cataract
- b. Leukocoria
- c. Pinguecula
- d. Coloboma

Answers:  
1. b; 2. c; 3. d; 4. a; 5. a

## COT Skill Evaluation

Upon successful completion of the COT multiple-choice examination, you may apply to take the Skill Evaluation. Successful completion of the Skill Evaluation must occur within 24 months of application for the COT multiple-choice examination.

## Skill Areas for the COT Skill Evaluation

Candidates will be asked to demonstrate their skill in each of the following seven areas:

- Clinical Optics/Lensometry - Demonstrate the ability to perform non-automated lensometry to determine the strength of the distance correction and the bifocal or trifocal add.
- Visual Fields - Demonstrate the ability to perform an automated visual field on a specified automated visual field test as determined by JCAHPO.
- Ocular Motility - Demonstrate the ability to detect a phoria or tropia, and identify the direction of the deviation using appropriate cover tests.
- Contact Lens/Keratometry - Demonstrate the ability to perform keratometry.
- Clinical Optics/Retinoscopy - Demonstrate the ability to perform retinoscopy.
- Clinical Optics/Refinement - Demonstrate the ability to perform refinement.
- Tonometry - Demonstrate the ability to perform applanation tonometry.

## Skill Tests and Specifications

You will have two hours (120 minutes) to complete all seven tasks: lensometry, visual fields, ocular motility, keratometry, retinoscopy, refinement and tonometry. There is no time limit on each of the individual tasks. Lensometry, retinoscopy, and refinement are offered in plus (+) and minus (-) cylinder.

## Practice Skill Evaluation

You can take the Skill Evaluation on a practice basis for an additional fee. The practice test will not be considered a formal attempt, but if you pass all components, you may count it toward COT certification; however, no refund for the examination package fee will be issued. If all areas are not passed, you will need to take the full Skill Evaluation. Contact the Certification Department for more information about this option.

## Skill Evaluation Construction and Scoring

The seven skills included in the test are those most commonly performed by Certified Ophthalmic Technicians (COTs), according to a job task analysis survey of working technicians and sponsoring ophthalmologists.

The Skill Evaluation scoring system is based on performance steps and is evaluated by how well the candidate performs each task. The system includes these elements:

- Each skill is scored independently.
- Each skill is scored on two components: technique and accuracy of results.  
**Note:** Only technique is scored for Visual Fields since you are not required to report results for this skill. To determine the technique score, each skill is divided into steps. Each step is assigned a weighted value based upon its level of importance to the overall process, as determined by the panel of subject matter experts. Points are assigned for correct responses based upon the weighted value of the step. A minimum has been established for achieving a “satisfactory” score. If this established minimum is not met, a “non-satisfactory” score will be assigned.
- To evaluate the accuracy of results, the panel of subject matter experts has established tolerance ranges for each of the required categories. To receive a “satisfactory” score on accuracy of results, all required results must fall within the tolerance ranges. Otherwise, a “non-satisfactory” score will be assigned.

A “satisfactory” score in both technique and accuracy of results is required to pass each individual skill, except Automated Visual Fields, which is scored on technique only. A passing score in all seven-skill areas is needed to successfully complete the Skill Evaluation.

## Preparation Strategies

The COT Skill Evaluation confirmation letter contains a CD tutorial and a procedural checklist. The checklist details the steps necessary to perform each task. The following steps may assist you in preparing for the Skill Evaluation:

- 1 **Review the tutorial** carefully for critical information on the mechanics of the computer-based Skill Evaluation. The tutorial allows you the opportunity to manipulate some of the dials and controls on the simulated equipment. While the tutorial is not intended to teach how to perform the tasks, it will assist you in becoming familiar with how to maneuver through the exam and record results.
- 2 **Practice.** Become proficient at performing the skills tested and using the equipment upon which these skills are performed.
- 3 **Understand the theory** behind the task in order to build your confidence and help you make on-the-spot decisions during the evaluation.
- 4 **Review the procedural checklist** for a detailed list of steps and the preferred order in which to perform them.
- 5 **Use CDs, DVDs or videos** to learn more about the skills. Take notes and study them in preparation.
- 6 **Ask your employer** for opportunities to practice the skills on actual equipment in your work setting.
- 7 Before the Skill Evaluation, **find the test center** locate parking areas. Knowing where to go will reduce your stress on test day.
- 8 **Get plenty of rest** the night before the exam. Late-night cramming only tires you out.
- 9 **Focus on doing your personal best;** your score is not affected by anyone else's.

## Retaking the Skill Evaluation

There are three possible outcomes to the initial attempt of the Skill Evaluation:

- 1 *You successfully complete all seven-skill areas.* In this case, you are awarded the COT credential, and no re-testing is necessary.
- 2 *You successfully complete some, but not all, of the seven skill areas.* In this case, you have received a “conditional” pass. You will have the opportunity to re-test in the areas you did not successfully complete provided that you are within the 24-month time period from the date your initial multiple-choice application was approved.
- 3 *You do not successfully complete any of the seven skill areas.* In this case, you must reapply and repeat the entire Skill Evaluation at a future session, provided that you are within the 24-month time period from the date your initial multiple-choice application was approved.

All candidates (initial or conditioned) are given 120 minutes (2 hours) to complete the Skill Evaluation and must wait a minimum of six weeks before retesting. If a re-test is not successful, you will be expected to repeat only the areas in which you were not successful. A candidate may retest up to five times as long as you remain within the 24-month time period stated above. If you do not pass within the 24-month time period, or after six attempts, a new COT multiple-choice exam application needs to be submitted with eligibility, supporting documentation, and required fees.

## Recertification Credits

Number of Credits Required per each 36-month Cycle:			
Credential	Total Number of Credits Required	Minimum Number of Group A Credits Required	Maximum Number of Group B Credits Permitted
COT	27	18	9

## Scheduling the Examination

### • Examination Test Centers

JCAHPO's computerized exams are administered by a professional testing service at hundreds of conveniently located test centers throughout the U.S. and Canada. A list of test center locations is included with this handbook on page 36; however, the list is subject to change without notice.

### • Confirmation Letter

Candidates approved for eligibility will receive a letter-confirming acceptance of the exam application. The confirmation letter will provide a toll-free number and other scheduling information. You have 90 days in which to schedule the exam with JCAHPO's testing vendor.

*JCAHPO does not control test site availability or exam scheduling.* To avoid scheduling complications, please schedule your examination shortly after receiving the confirmation letter. The testing service will provide each candidate with a confirmation number that must be presented when you arrive at the test center on the day of your exam.

If you fail to schedule your exam within the 90-day eligibility period, you will forfeit your application fee. A new application will need to be submitted, including all fees.

### • Eligibility Extensions, Appointment Changes, and Fee Refunds

JCAHPO's policies regarding scheduling, canceling, and changing appointments are:

1. If you fail to schedule an appointment within the eligibility period indicated in your confirmation letter, you will forfeit your application fee. A new application and examination fee are required to reapply for the examination.
2. Requests to cancel an application, before you have scheduled an appointment with the testing service, must be received in writing before the end of your 90-day eligibility period. A processing fee is retained.
3. To cancel a scheduled exam appointment, you must call JCAHPO's testing service at the toll-free telephone number you received with your acceptance letter no later than 12:00 noon Eastern time, two business days prior to your scheduled appointment.

*For example:*

If your appointment is scheduled for	You must call the testing service by 12 noon Eastern time on
Monday	Friday
Thursday	Tuesday

4. If you cancel within the allowed time period, you may either reschedule with the testing center or request a refund in writing from JCAHPO. All requests for refunds must be received before the end of your 90-day eligibility period and a processing fee is retained. No refunds will be issued for cancellations that do not conform to the above policy.
5. If you fail to appear for the examination or arrive at the test center more than 15 minutes late for your appointment, you will not be tested and you must pay a no-show fee prior to rescheduling your exam.
6. If you are not admitted to the test center for failure to provide proper identification, you will be charged a no-show fee, which must be paid prior to rescheduling your exam.
7. If you are unable to take the examination within the eligibility period indicated in your acceptance letter, you may apply for a one-time 30-day eligibility extension by submitting a written request and paying an extension fee (see the fee schedule included on pages 41-42). The written request must be received by the end of the 90-day eligibility period.
8. If you are unable to take the examination and cannot cancel or reschedule within the required time period due to a personal emergency, you may request consideration to reschedule the examination without paying an additional fee by contacting JCAHPO in writing within 15 days of the scheduled testing session. A description of the emergency must be included in the written request, and supporting documentation (for example, a doctor's excuse) must accompany the request. Rescheduling without an additional fee will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Taking the Examination

JCAHPO and its testing service have strict procedures to make sure that every test is given under the same standardized procedures for everyone. For the best testing experience, please familiarize yourself with these procedures before you take the exam.

## Computer-Administered Examinations

### • Identification Requirements for Admission to the Test Center

To be admitted for testing, you will need to present two forms of identification, as well as the confirmation number you received when you scheduled the exam. One form of identification must be a government-issued ID with photo and signature (driver's license, passport, state ID card, etc.) The second form of ID must contain at least your signature (credit card, ATM card, student ID card, etc.) The name on both forms of ID must match the name on your exam application and your confirmation letter. If the names do not match, you may not be admitted for testing.

1. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for your scheduled appointment time, you may not be admitted to the testing center and you may be charged a no-show fee.
2. After your identity has been confirmed (see Identification Requirements above), you will be escorted into the testing room and assigned a testing station. You may not bring any personal items with you into the testing room.
3. The center administrator will provide you with a pencil and scratch paper for use during testing. These must be returned to the test proctor after you complete the test.

**Note:** Steps 4-10 Steps 4-9 only pertain to candidates taking the multiple-choice examinations.

4. Before beginning the exam, a tutorial is presented to test-takers to become familiar with the computer and the test format. If you have any computer-related questions or concerns during the exam, just raise your hand for assistance.
5. One question at a time will appear on the computer screen with the option to either answer it or mark it for review. You can use either the mouse or the keyboard to enter your answer.
6. At the end of the exam, you may return to the items you marked, provided there is time remaining. You may also review the items you answered if time permits.
7. You must finish the exam within the time allowed. An onscreen timer will tell you how much time you have left. A warning will appear when there is only five minutes remaining on the exam.
8. After completing the examination, you will be asked to complete a short online survey about your testing experience. Comments are routinely reviewed by JCAHPO in an effort to continuously improve the certification examination process; however, JCAHPO will not respond directly to individual comments.
9. After the examination, an unofficial results report, indicating whether you passed or failed the exam will be provided. This report will include feedback on how you performed in each content area. Official examination results will be mailed by JCAHPO (see the "After the Examination" section below.)

**Note:** Steps 10-11 only pertain to candidates taking the computer-simulated Skill Evaluation and Performance Test.

10. A result report will not be provided at the conclusion of the exam. You will receive official notification from JCAHPO and a skill area performance feedback report within four weeks.
11. After completing the examination, you will be asked to complete a short online survey about your testing experience. Comments are routinely reviewed by JCAHPO in an effort to continuously improve the certification examination process; however, JCAHPO will not respond directly to individual comments.

## Misconduct

Any candidate who engages in misconduct during the examination may be dismissed from test administration at the discretion of JCAHPO and/or its testing service. In the event a candidate is dismissed, JCAHPO reserves the right to cancel or invalidate the examination scores. Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, giving or receiving help during the examination, using notes or other study aids during the examination, removing or attempting to remove exam materials from the testing center, creating a disturbance, and attempting to take the examination for someone else.

### After the Examination

- **Notification of Results**

For multiple-choice exam results, you will receive an unofficial examination result report immediately upon completion of the exam. This performance feedback report indicates the content areas where further study may be helpful.

Official results from all examinations are released by JCAHPO by mail approximately four to six weeks after the exam. Exam results will not be released via the telephone, e-mail or FAX.

- **Validation of Results**

JCAHPO is responsible for the validity and integrity of the examination results reported. On rare occasions, occurrences such as computer malfunction or misconduct by a candidate may cause an examination result to be suspect. JCAHPO reserves the right to invalidate and/or withhold examination results if, upon investigation, violations of JCAHPO's regulations are discovered.

Candidates are expected to cooperate fully in the investigation.

- **Use of the Credential**

After successfully completing all requirements for certification, you will be authorized to use the pertinent credential (i.e., COA, CCOA, COT, COMT, ROUB, or CDOS) after your name. You may continue to use the credential as long as you comply with recertification requirements. Please note: There is no credential for Ophthalmic Surgical Assisting certification as it is a sub-specialty certification.

- **Certification Documents**

As a certificant, you will receive a certificate and wallet card. Both contain your certification expiration date and JCAHPO ID number. To maintain certification past the expiration date, you must comply with recertification requirements.

- **Revocation of Certification**

Once certification has been granted, it may be revoked for disciplinary reasons. Conduct which may initiate disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, supplying false information on the application or supporting documentation, engaging in inappropriate or dishonest conduct during the examination, or otherwise failing to comply with the JCAHPO Standards, Procedures and Sanctions Pertaining to Certification and Recertification (see pages 43-46).