

Certified Ophthalmic Technician Certification Requirements (COT)

To qualify for certification at the COT level, you must meet one of the following three options:

T1. GRADUATE OF A FORMAL TRAINING PROGRAM

- Graduated from a CoA-OMP or CMA accredited program for Ophthalmic Technicians within the 12 months (one-year) prior to submitting your application. All examinations must be completed within 24 months (two-years) of initial application. (*Candidates who attend a formal training program may apply for the certification exam up to two months prior to graduation from the program; however, no examination results will be sent by JCAHPO to the candidate until official notification of graduation is received*).
- If you completed the program more than 12 months (one-year) ago, you will need to earn 12 JCAHPO Group A credits for each year following graduation. These credits must be earned within the 36 months (three-years) prior to submitting your application.
- No work experience is necessary.

T2. CURRENTLY CERTIFIED AS A COA AND WORK EXPERIENCE

- Employed at least 2,000 hours (one-year full-time equivalent) as a COA, under ophthalmologic supervision within 24 months (two-years) prior to submitting your application.
- Earned 12 JCAHPO Group A credits within the 12 months (one-year) prior to submitting your exam application.
- Maintained certification as a COA while pursuing COT certification.

T3. CURRENTLY CERTIFIED AS AN ORTHOPTIST AND WORK EXPERIENCE

- Employed at least 2,000 hours (one-year full-time equivalent) as a CO or OC(C), under ophthalmologic supervision within the 24 months (two-years) prior to submitting your exam application.
- Earned 12 JCAHPO Group A credits within the 12 months (one-year) prior to submitting your exam application.
- Maintained certification as an Orthoptist (by the American Orthoptic Council or the Canadian Orthoptic Council) while pursuing COT certification.

COT Multiple-Choice Examination Content Areas

Please refer to Appendix B to review the content areas effective prior to mid 2012 or Appendix A to review the content areas effective in mid 2012.

COT Skill Evaluation

Upon successful completion of the COT multiple-choice examination, you may take the Skill Evaluation. Successful completion of the Skill Evaluation must take place within 24 months (two-years) of application for the COT multiple-choice examination.

Skill Areas for the COT Skill Evaluation

Please refer to Appendix A or B to review the tasks on the COT Skill Evaluation.

Skill Tests and Specifications

You will have a total of two hours (120 minutes) to complete all seven tasks. There is no time limit on each of the individual tasks. Lensometry, retinoscopy, and refinement are offered in plus (+) and minus (-) cylinder.

¹Individuals who graduate from an accredited formal training program at the Technician or Technologist level are eligible to apply for a lower-level certification under the formal training program eligibility option. For example, graduates of an accredited Ophthalmic Technician program may choose to apply for certification at the Ophthalmic Assistant level. Likewise, graduates of an accredited Ophthalmic Technologist program may choose to apply for certification at the Ophthalmic Assistant or the Ophthalmic Technician level. CoA-OMP - Committee on Accreditation for Ophthalmic Medical Personnel; CMA - Canadian Medical Association; CAAHEP - Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs

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Skill Evaluation Construction and Scoring

The seven skills included in the test are those most commonly performed by 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 the candidate is evaluated on how well each task is performed. The system includes these elements:

- Each skill is scored independently.
- Each skill is scored on two components: technique and accuracy of results. 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.

Note: Only technique is scored for Visual Fields since you are not required to report results for this skill.

- 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 Visual Fields, which is scored on technique only. A passing score in all seven-skill areas is needed to successfully complete the Skill Evaluation.

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.

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 candidates 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. Focus on doing your personal best; your score is not affected by anyone else's.

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Completion of the Skill Evaluation

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

1. *You successfully complete all seven skill areas (Pass).* 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 (two-year) time period from the date your initial multiple-choice application was approved.
3. *You do not successfully complete any of the seven skill areas (Fail).* In this case, you must reapply and repeat the entire Skill Evaluation at a future session, provided that you are within the 24-month (two-year) 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 retest 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 (two-year) time period stated above. If you do not pass within the 24-month (two-year) time period, or after six attempts, a new COT multiple-choice exam application needs to be submitted with eligibility, supporting documentation, and required fees.