

Recertification

Certification assures the public that an individual is competent to practice. Your certification credential signifies that you have met JCAHPO's established standards for the practice of ophthalmic medical care.

Techniques and practices in medicine and healthcare continually change, so it is important to continue to improve your knowledge and skills. For this reason, JCAHPO has developed a recertification process that enables you to demonstrate your continued competence to employers, peers and the general public. The recertification process requires you to keep current with new developments in the field of ophthalmology through continuing education credits or re-examination.

Maintaining Your Certification Credential-COA®, CCOA®, COT®, COMT®, and ROUB®

JCAHPO certification is valid for 36 months. This certification period begins in the month and year that you successfully complete all requirements for initial certification and continues for the next 36 months.

Certificants are required to recertify every 36-months. To recertify, certificants must comply with continuing education (CE) requirements. The minimum number of CE credits required during each 36-month cycle vary according to credential, as noted on page 22. All acceptable CE credits are classified as either Group A or Group B. Certificants who are applying for recertification may choose to either acquire all credits in Group A, or in a combination of Group A and Group B.

You can earn Group A credits by:

- Attending lectures or workshops that have been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit on any of the content areas listed in this handbook.
- Completing an independent study course and quiz that has been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit on any of the content areas listed in this handbook.
- Completing topics on medical ethics, professionalism, coding and regulations that have been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit.
- Review certification exam preparation courses that have been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit.
- Teaching or authoring courses awarded JCAHPO Group A credit. (1:1 basis).

You can earn Group B credits by:

- Attending lectures or workshops that have been awarded JCAHPO Group B credit (topics not listed in this handbook).
- Completing independent study course and quiz that has been awarded JCAHPO Group B credit (topic not listed in Appendix B). Sources of CE credit are listed on page 22.
- Attending Grand Rounds or Physicians' Continuing Medical Education (CME) in Ophthalmology, Category 1 courses approved by the American Medical Association (2 hours attended=1 credit for COAs, CCOAs, and COTs, and 1 hour attended=1 credit for COMTs.) Courses approved by the Canadian Medical Association are also acceptable in this category on the same basis as above.
- Participating in self-study (4 hours study=1 credit). You can read journals and books, listen to audiotapes, watch videotapes or CD ROMs, or attend courses that were not awarded credit by JCAHPO or the AMA as long as the topics are related to ophthalmology.

For self-study credits, you must provide complete information on your recertification application showing a list of the materials studied, title and author, the month and year you completed the self-study, and the amount of time spent completing it.

Get Certified - Stay Certified!

Your JCAHPO certification credential is important and makes a difference. Patients value proof that you have met national standards and are able to provide quality care. Physicians and clinic administrators recognize that certification provides you with additional knowledge and demonstrates a commitment to ophthalmology. JCAHPO certification adds value for you, your profession, and patients. Success in today's competitive marketplace demands continued professional improvement. Maintain your credential by applying for recertification!

JCAHPO certification adds to your professional credibility and gives you an advantage in today's marketplace. The prestigious designations of COA®, COT®, and COMT® are recognized worldwide by employers and peers as a validation of your knowledge and experience. JCAHPO certification is the standard that others covet, and it reinforces the professional image of the ophthalmic medical assisting career.

Your decision to stay certified is one of the most important decisions you will make. JCAHPO certification is for professionals like you - success-oriented men and women striving for excellence in performance. Maintaining your credential tells others that you are serious about your career!



Other Ways to Earn CE Credits

- Serve as a Performance Test Examiner (half-day session=1 credit), COMTs only.
- Teach a course carrying JCAHPO credit (1 hour taught=1 credit)
- Author or co-author a scientific publication and/or poster. JCAHPO reviews submissions for consideration of credit. Maximum of 5 credits for first author and 3 credits for co-author. Contact JCAHPO Education Department for more details.
- Achieve CPR certification. You can count one Group B credit per card for CPR certification for a maximum of 3 Group B credits per CE cycle.

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
COA	18	12	6
COT	27	18	9
COMT	36	18	18
CCOA	18	12	6

Sources of CE Credit

JCAHPO publishes a listing of all programs awarded CE credit, including independent study courses with quizzes. The list is published in the JCAHPO newsletter and available on the JCAHPO web site, www.jcahpo.org. Information on CE opportunities, including distance learning options (audio tapes, videotapes, magazine articles, on-line courses), is also posted on the web site.

Recertification Requirements

JCAHPO will mail you a recertification application approximately six months prior to your recertification date; however, it is your responsibility to be aware of and comply with recertification requirements. The expiration date of the certification cycle is published on your certificate and wallet card.

At the end of your certification cycle, you are required to submit the recertification application accompanied by supporting documentation and pay the recertification fee listed in the JCAHPO's fee schedule. The recertification application must be *postmarked* no later than the last day of the last month in your certification cycle.

Your recertification application must include:

- The signature/endorsement of your sponsoring ophthalmologist to verify that he/she knows you, confirm your continued knowledgeable and skill in the field, and that you are working within established JCAHPO guidelines.
Note: CCOAs are not required to have a sponsoring ophthalmologist. CCOAs must include their supervisor's signature on their application. ROUBs may have a physician as their sponsor.
- A list of all CE credits earned, signed by you to verify that you have completed the required continuing education.

The first time you apply for recertification or if you submit a recertification application late, you must provide proof of your attendance or participation at all CE courses listed on your application.

JCAHPO conducts random audits of recertification applications, requesting proof of attendance and participation at all CE courses listed on the application. Please retain all documentation of your attendance in case you are audited. Once you have received your certificate and wallet card, there is no need to retain documentation except for your own records.

Alternative to CE Credits for Recertification

You may apply for a multiple choice computer-administered exam at your current core certification level in lieu of earning CE credits during your certification period. To be recertified using the examination option, you must successfully complete the multiple-choice examination appropriate for your current level. In order to avoid a lapse in your certification, the exam must be completed before the expiration of your certification. The Skill Evaluation or Performance Test do not need to be repeated.

Please contact the Certification Department for an application and more details if you plan to pursue this method of recertification.

Ophthalmic Surgical Assisting Recertification

The certification period for this sub-specialty is 36 months and it is linked to your core level certification cycle. Because the two are linked, your first certification period in this sub-specialty may be shorter than the standard 36 months. Once the two cycles are synchronized, you will be due to apply for recertification in both areas every 36 months.

Example: David passed the ophthalmic surgical assisting computer-administered exam on June 15, 2007. He is also a COT. His current technician certificate is valid from January 2006, through January 2009. His new certificate, with the ophthalmic surgical assisting sub-specialty, will be dated January 2006 to January 2009. He will be due to apply for recertification in both areas by the deadline of January 31, 2009. After this, his certification cycle for both areas will be January 2009 through January 2012.

At the end of your certification cycle, you will need to submit the following information to JCAHPO, **postmarked** no later than the last day of the month in your certification cycle:

- A completed application for recertification. JCAHPO will mail you an application approximately six months in advance of the time you are due to apply for recertification in your core level. A separate application and fee are not required for the sub-specialty if submitted with your core level recertification application. The application requires the signature/endorsement of your sponsoring ophthalmologist. If you are unable to submit an application for recertification in ophthalmic surgical assisting, please indicate this on your recertification application.
- A log of surgical cases in which you have participated during your certification cycle. You will need to submit a log of cases in which you have actively participated (not merely observed), functioning as one of the following: Sterile First Assistant, Sterile Scrub Assistant, or Non-sterile Circulator. The log must include a signature from your sponsoring ophthalmologist attesting to your continued satisfactory performance in the operating room.

The log must include 10 cases for each 12 months of sub-specialty certification during the current cycle (30 cases for each 36-month certification cycle). The cases may have occurred during any portion of the current certification period. If you are required to apply for recertification in less than 36 months, the case requirement is prorated for each 12-month period.

The case requirement is divided into two groups: Categories A and B. You may choose to earn 100 percent of your case requirement from Category A, or you may choose to earn at least 80 percent of the case log from Category A and the remaining cases from Category B. See Category A and B lists in Appendix H.

Recertification Alternatives for Ophthalmic Surgical Assisting

You have the option of attending CE courses to fulfill a portion of the case log requirement. You may earn up to 10 CE credits by attending courses in ophthalmic surgical assisting to substitute for up to 10 of the cases in the surgical experience requirement. You may attend courses that have been awarded JCAHPO or AMA CME Category 1 credit. You may not use self-study for the purposes of recertification in ophthalmic surgical assisting.

You also have the option of re-testing in lieu of submitting the case log if you meet all of the prerequisites outlined on page 7 of this handbook. Please contact the JCAHPO Certification Department for more details.



ROUB Recertification

ROUB certificants are required to recertify every 36 months. To recertify, certificants must comply with continuing education (CE) requirements. A minimum of 25 CME (Continuing Medical Education) credits must be submitted per three-year cycle.

All JCAHPO Group A or Group B credits, American Medical Association (AMA) Category 1 credits, and American Osteopathic (AOA) Category 1 credits are accepted towards the 25 CME credit requirement.

Programs approved by the following are also accepted towards the 25 CME credit requirement:

- American College of Cardiology (ACC)
- Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)
- American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM)
- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG)
- American College of Radiology (ACR)
- American Society of Echocardiography (ASE)
- Canadian Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (CSDMS)
- Canadian Society of Vascular Technology (CSVV)
- Society of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (SDMS)
- Society of Vascular Technology (SVT)

Verification of all credits must be submitted with the recertification application. CME documentation must include the name of the certificant, the title of the course or activity, the date of the course or activity, the name of the sponsoring organization, and the number of credit hours awarded.

Recertification requirements require submission of a complete recertification application, the recertification fee, and verification of all CMEs earned.

Number of Credits Required per each 36-month Cycle:			
Credential	Total Number of Credits Required	Minimum Number of Credits Related to Content Outline (Refer to page 35)	Maximum Number of Credits Not Related to Content Outline (Refer to page 35)
ROUB	25	10	15

Non-Certified Status

If you do not apply for recertification or miss the recertification application deadline, you will be placed on non-certified status. Individuals who are placed on non-certified status are not permitted to represent themselves as JCAHPO-certified personnel; and they may not utilize the credential after their name on business cards, stationery, name badges, etc.

From the time you are placed on non-certified status, you will have 12 months to apply for recertification before your credential becomes revoked. Within that 12-month period, the number of continuing education credits required to recertify your credential do not increase, but an \$85 late fee will be assessed.

You may choose to take the multiple-choice exam at your previous core certification level in lieu of earning CE credits. The exam must be successfully completed within 12 months from the time you are placed on non-certified status. The Skill Evaluation or Performance Test do not need to be repeated. Please contact JCAHPO for an application and more details if you plan to pursue this method of recertification.

Please note: Certificants will not receive new recertification dates when they reinstatement within the 12-month InActive status.



Example: Jennifer's COMT certificate is dated September 30, 2005 through September 30, 2008. She is not ready to complete her recertification application by her deadline.

- If her recertification application is processed and accepted after September 30, 2008, and before September 30, 2009 (one year late), no additional credits are needed, but a late fee is assessed.
- Even if Jennifer recertified September 1, 2009, her next recertification cycle is still September 30, 2008 through September 30, 2011 and all credits will need to be earned during that time period. Any credits that Jennifer earned between September 30, 2008, and before September 30, 2009, that were not used to satisfy her original recertification, may be carried over.

If your non-certified status continues for longer than 12 months, your certification will be considered revoked. Please contact the JCAHPO Certification Department to discuss your reinstatement options.

Denial of Recertification

If, during the process of applying for recertification, allegations of a violation of the *JCAHPO Standards, Procedures, and Sanctions Pertaining to Certification and Recertification* are investigated and proven true, this may result in the denial of recertification, either on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the circumstances. Certificants are expected to fully cooperate with the investigation. See Appendix A for more information.

Hardship Cases

Individuals who have failed to comply with recertification requirements due to hardship have an opportunity to request a review of their case. A written request must be submitted to the Secretary of Certification.

The request must be postmarked within 30 days of your recertification deadline and include detailed supporting documentation regarding the hardship. Examples of hardship include health and extended active duty with the military.

Appeal Procedure

Any candidate may appeal determinations related to initial exam ineligibility, examination results or recertification audits. The appeal must be in writing and received within 30 days of being notified of examination results, audit or ineligibility. The appeal should be addressed to the Secretary of Certification and include: a detailed written explanation of the grounds for your appeal and any evidence or documentation to support the reason a decision should be overturned. The burden of proof is the responsibility of the applicant.

JCAHPO's Secretary of Certification will submit the appeal to members of the Certification Committee for review, and a written notification of the Committee's decision will be mailed in four to six weeks. If the initial appeal is denied, you may appeal to the JCAHPO Board of Directors within 30 days. The Board's decision will be final and binding.