

Action Plan: Manitoba Association of Optometrists (MAO)

✓ Complete

In response to the self-identified Compliance Issues, the Manitoba Association of Optometrists proposed the following action plan as of March 2013.

Compliance Issues	Action Plan	Status as of May 2016
There is a need for a dedicated landing page for internationally educated applicants.	Obtain OMFC web site template. Create dedicated landing page for international applicants including general intro and link to International Optometric Bridging Program. Invite applicants to contact MAO office by email, phone or in person for additional information.	✓ 2013
Better information needs to be provided for qualification requirements and criteria used to assess qualifications.	Provide link to the FORAC and International Optometrist Bridging Program (IOBP) site for qualification requirements and criteria used to assess information. Provide information about IOBP as third party assessor and provider of bridging program.	✓ 2013
	Provide info on requirements for registration in Manitoba - to qualify to write the national optometry exam (CACO), international applicants must first complete the IOBP.	✓ 2013
Need to provide information about the full costs involved in the registration process and about financial support opportunities.	Provide general info re IOBP fees and costs (with currency date); refer applicants to the IOBP site for details. Advise that candidates are responsible for travel and accommodation costs for IOBP.	✓ 2013
	Provide info re MAO registration fees and annual Dues.	✓
	Reference federal and provincial funding programs, with links (OMFC to provide). Encourage applicants to inquire with federal and provincial immigration programs.	✓ 2016
Better information about timelines and key dates as well as information about length of time for the entire process should be provided.	Provide information on MAO website about timelines and links to key dates (IOBP program).	✓ 2016
	Provide information on MAO website about length of time for best and least qualified applicants to complete FORAC credential assessment and IOBP from start to finish including timelines on initial credential assessment.	In progress
	MAO website to include note that IOBP admission is competitive and there is no guarantee of eventual admission to IOBP, even for well-qualified applicants.	✓ 2016
	Link to IOBP program for length of time program may take.	N/A
A step by step “map” of process is needed. Preparation information should be provided.	Create a flow chart showing process.	✓ 2016
	Make recommendations on actions that can be taken prior to leaving home country (i.e. language training, language testing).	✓ 2016
	Add information about IOBP to MAO international applicants’ page.	✓ 2013
	<i>May 2016 Update: Flow chart is included on FORAC website. FORAC website includes information re language testing and suggests that applicants compare their education to that of the UWaterloo Doctor of Optometry Program.</i>	
Information about the possibility of alternative documentation needs to be introduced.	Find out whether IOBP accepts document alternatives. Include statement on MAO website that document alternatives are considered on a case by case basis if original documents are not available. <i>May 2016 Update: Documents are verified by World Education Services (WES-ICAP) before the applicant can apply to FORAC for credential assessment. WES outlines document requirements by country of education on their website.</i>	✓ 2016

Compliance Issues	Action Plan	Status as of May 2016
MAO anticipates introducing a criminal records check requirement and needs to consider whether checks will be required from an applicant's home country.	Find out from OMFC what a federal criminal records check entails. Once the new Optometry Regulation is in place, MAO will require criminal records checks for international applicants (from date of arrival in Canada) as well as Canadian applicants.	Further discussion required
Need to provide information on IOBP appeal process. If appeal opportunities exist for the credential assessment and the PLA process, it also needs to be introduced.	<p>Find out if FORAC has appeal processes for credential assessment.</p> <p><i>May 2016 Update:</i> FORAC website provides details of the appeal process for credential assessment. Application to IOBP requires successful completion of the Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGOEE) after credential assessment.</p> <p>Find out if there are appeal processes for Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGOEE) and IOBP program. Ask that this information be included on IOBP site or, if not, include on MAO site.</p>	<p>✓ 2016</p> <p>Pending</p>
An English or French language proficiency requirement is under consideration by the MAO (2013). There is a need to make clear the importance of French or English language proficiency to practice safely.	<p>Add comments to the MAO website about the need for English language competency in order to communicate effectively with patients and medical practitioners. Reference the fact that the College of Physicians and Surgeons requires, by policy, that all practitioners must be able to communicate in English and that in order to practice to the full extent of licensing, optometrists must be able to communicate with physicians.</p> <p><i>May 2016 Update:</i> In 2012-2013, consideration was given to requiring all applicants to have English language competency. However, MAO's Regulation, brought into force in 2013, requires either English or French language competency. Statement added to website about the need for English and that MAO's regulations allow for English or French. FORAC process requires an English language proficiency test for applicants whose optometric studies were conducted in a language other than English.</p>	<p>✓ 2016</p>
Level of language proficiency is only identified at intake to IOBP.	Only identified at intake to IOBP – note the comments above about consideration re further testing.	
Uncertain about IOBP appeal policies.	<p>Find out from IOBP whether there is a right to appeal any or all assessment decisions, from credential assessment through the end of the IOBP program.</p> <p>Registration decisions are made by the Board of Examiners and are appealable to the Council of the Manitoba Association of Optometrists.</p>	<p>N/A repeat</p> <p>-</p>
<p>Uncertain if appeal or review committee members are independent from those responsible for the original decision for IOBP.</p> <p>Uncertain about IOBP policies concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timely hearings and appeal decisions; • detailed, written reasons for unfavourable decisions; • how applicants are advised of their right to appeal; • whether appeal information accompanies any assessment and registration decision subject to appeal 	<p>Find out from FORAC whether their review committee members (if any) are independent from those responsible for original decision. In the case of appeals to the MAO Council, members of the Board of Examiners (which makes registration decisions) cannot be members of Council. However, the Board of Examiners is chaired by the Registrar, who is also a member of Council. As this is part of the Optometry Regulation, this cannot be changed. Consideration will be given to policy requiring the Registrar to excuse himself from appeal decisions.</p> <p><i>May 2016 Update:</i> FORAC's appeal process is outlined in detail on their website. FORAC's website indicates that the Appeal Panel is comprised of three members who did not participate in the assessment or review of an applicant's academic credentials. No changes have been made (and no changes are contemplated) to the appeal rights with respect to registration decisions made by the Board of Examiners, or appeal process for Council.</p> <p>Determine IOBP appeal policies.</p> <p>No MAO policies currently exist with respect to these criteria for fair appeal. MAO Council will be asked to consider and create appropriate policies.</p>	<p>✓ 2016</p> <p>N/A repeat</p>
Uncertain about IOBP policies concerning an applicant's access to assessment results and records associated with registration.	<p>Find out from FORAC what access candidates have to their assessment results, as well as the cost of access.</p> <p>Request that FORAC include information about right to access records (whatever that policy is) on their website.</p>	