

COTP SUMMER/FALL NEWSLETTER

September 2019



NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

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Deborah Smith
BS, COMT, OSC
COTP President

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Fellow COTP Members,

I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as president of COTP this past year. I am happy to have had opportunities to work with you and get to know you a little better. I am grateful for our spirit of unity, and am inspired by the wisdom, talents, breadth of knowledge, willingness to share knowledge, and the dedication to your programs and students, that I observed from all of you. We really are strong assets and allies for each other and I hope we will continue to maximize our strengths to help promote and improve our formal training programs as well as elevate the AOP profession.

Our programs are important. We are preparing our students, through structured training, to be confident, competent, committed AOP, who will fill the seemingly endless vacant positions our ophthalmologists are seeking to fill. Our graduates begin their new positions with the knowledge and skill sets to make them contributing members of the ophthalmology team from day #1. Their advanced understanding of ocular disease and diagnostic testing enables them to anticipate the needs of their physicians and to work efficiently. It has also been my experience, that their commitment to their career, demonstrated by their investment in education and successful completion of a program, makes them reliable long-term employees. These are all characteristics that serve to elevate our profession. It is satisfying to know that our efforts contribute to the successes of the graduates and the advancement of the career of AOP. By filling vacant positions with our graduates, we are improving the quality of patient care and easing the burden of AOP working understaffed. One would think our programs would be filled to capacity; they should be, and could be, if we work together towards that goal.

Carla Blackburn will be taking my place soon. She is a committed professional and a lovely person, so I know she will do a wonderful job in promoting our programs and supporting our causes. I also know our small but mighty group will provide her with a wealth of resources to draw upon. When she calls us, we will be ready to help her.

I want to say a big thank you to Caitlin for her help and patience this year. She was always prepared to provide me with information I needed and is working very hard to make our meeting in October a success.

Finally, I learned a lot during my time as president. I encourage everyone to serve in a leadership role at some time in the future. If you are interested in doing so, please contact Carla or me.

All my best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Deborah K. Smith'.

Deborah K. Smith, BS, COMT, OSC
COTP President

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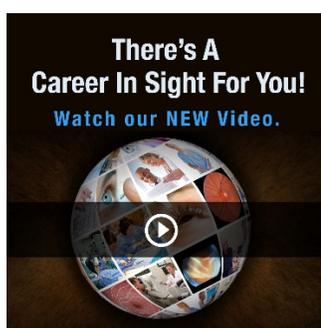
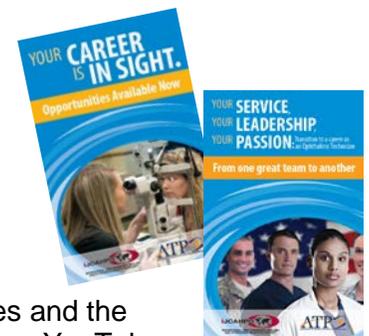
INFORMATION AND NEWS

ATPO and CSOMP Membership. The Association of Technical Personnel in Ophthalmology (ATPO) and the Canadian Society of Ophthalmic Medical Personnel (CSOMP) offer discounted membership to ophthalmic training programs' students. Introduce your students to ATPO and CSOMP and get them involved with their professional membership organization. Visit their websites to learn more: <http://www.atpo.org> and <http://www.cos-sco.ca/csomp/>.

COTP Members Only Page. This is intended ONLY for COTP members. Here you can find the COTP Forum as well as a list of current Board Members. We would like to encourage members to start using the forum as a way to share course materials, recommended textbooks, links, and other useful information. If you are not currently registered, please contact Caitlin Taylor-Sharp at cotp@jcahpo.org.

Membership Feature. COTP would like to recognize your program! We will be promoting one to two training programs per month on the website. Send in one to two paragraphs telling us about your program—how many students you have, your demographic profile, program successes, etc. Please include a group photo of your program, as well as a [photo release](#) for each person pictured in your photo. The signed photo release will allow us to use your image for COTP publications.

Recruitment Brochures. A brochure has been created to promote our profession at job fairs and other similar events, as well as to guidance counselors and unemployment offices. A brochure targeted to military personnel as they begin their job search after service has also been created. Contact Caitlin Taylor-Sharp at cotp@jcahpo.org for more information.



Recruitment Video. A video has been developed that discusses what an Ophthalmic Medical Technician does and the pathway to becoming one. This video is now available on YouTube and has been promoted online through Facebook and COTP, ICA, IJCAHPO, and ATPO websites. Be sure to link the video to your program's website!

Salary Survey. The 2018 COTP Member Salary Survey was completed on May 7, 2018, by 25 program directors. The survey report was released in June 2018 to COTP Members. Please contact Caitlin Taylor-Sharp at cotp@jcahpo.org if you have questions on the survey.

Site Visitors. The International Council of Accreditation (ICA) is always in need of more physician and non-physician Site Visitors. This is an excellent opportunity for you or your medical director to visit other programs and bring back pearls and ideas for your program. Ask your medical director to volunteer for an ICA Site Visit today! Visit the ICA [Site Visitor Applications](#) page for more details.

Website Changes. If you have a change of personnel, please submit documentation to Caitlin Taylor-Sharp at cotp@jcahpo.org so that your information can be updated appropriately.

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ACCREDITATION UPDATE

Craig Simms, BSc, COMT, ROUB, CDOS, IJCAHPO Chief Learning Officer



The International Council of Accreditation (ICA) released the finalized *Standards and Criteria for Accreditation* on May 22, 2019, to all Program and Medical Directors, and posted on ICA's website for public view. To download and review the new *Standards and Criteria*, please visit ICA's website at www.icaccreditation.org.

ICA staff has developed a list of FAQs, in regards to the Standards, for all currently accredited programs and programs seeking accreditation. These FAQs are included in this newsletter and can be found on ICA's website at <http://icaccreditation.org/accreditation/faqs.html>.

If you have questions during your review of the new *Standards and Criteria*, please contact the ICA Coordinator, Caitlin Taylor-Sharp, at (651) 731-7243 or via email ica@icaccreditation.org.

International Council of Accreditation (ICA) Standards and Criteria for Accreditation FAQ's

What is accreditation?

Accreditation is a process of voluntary, non-government self-regulation that recognizes educational institutions and/or programs that have been found to meet or exceed established standards of quality.

What types of accreditations are there?

There are two types of accreditation:

- Institutional—covers entire institutions
- Programmatic or Specialized—covers a specific program within an institution

What type of accreditation does ICA offer?

Programmatic or Specialized—ICA accredits training programs for the ophthalmic medical technician.

What levels of ophthalmic medical training programs does ICA accredit?

There are four different levels of ophthalmic medical training programs that ICA accredits:

- Ophthalmic Non-Clinical Assistant Program
- Ophthalmic Clinical Assistant Program
- Ophthalmic Technician Program
- Ophthalmic Medical Technologist Program

Is a program considered to be accredited if it has applied for accreditation or is in the accreditation process?

No

What are the outcomes for accreditation upon Site Visit?

- 6 year accreditation: Full Compliance With All Critical Criteria
- 4 year accreditation: Substantial Compliance
- 2 year accreditation: Partial Compliance
- Accreditation withheld: Non-Compliance

What is a Critical Criterion?

An essential element of program performance for compliance with a requirement.

What is the difference between the CoA-OMP and ICA Standards?

The Standards are essentially the same with only changes to the hours and wording of some to clarify and make them less confusing.

When am I expected to be in full compliance with the new ICA Standards?

Programs are to begin implementation of the Standards with the 2019-2020 student cohort, and are expected to be fully in compliance at their next accreditation review.

When are the Annual Reports and Annual Fees due?

October 31 every year

Annual Reports are due soon and there is not enough time to make changes to my program's curriculum, what do I do?

We understand changes in an institution's policies and processes take time to change. In the meantime, a program's Annual Report should reflect that the program is working towards any changes required to meet the ICA Standards. There is no reason why a program cannot be teaching from one curriculum, while another one is being developed and approved, if the program is making changes. Once approved, it can be implemented at the next available time according to the policies of your institutions. As long as programs are working towards meeting the ICA Standards, they will not be penalized.

What are the minimum didactic requirements for a program?

It is ICA's recommendation that the minimum didactic hours for a Non-Clinical or Clinical Assistant program are 80 hours.

What is the new curriculum to which I should be teaching?

Every program should conduct a needs assessment of their community, as well as refer to the forthcoming Appendix A, Required Didactic Curriculum and Guidance, to which their curriculum should be based. The ICA will not be providing a required curriculum. The forthcoming Appendix A will include required content areas and performance guidelines. The program is responsible for creating a curriculum that meets the ICA Standards. As long as the programs are working towards meeting the ICA Standards, they will not be penalized.

What kinds of courses can AOP teach?

Discipline specific or core courses may be taught by AOP if they are IJCAHPO certified and the subject matter is at or lower than their current certification. AOP may teach content related to systemic diseases, eye diseases, medical diagnosis, treatment, and surgical procedures if the instructor meets ALL of the following:

- IJCAHPO certified at or above the level of the program, licensed optometrist, or certified orthoptist;
- Approved to instruct the course by the medical director;
- MD or DO played a role in the development of the course;
- MD or DO reviewed and approved the course; AND
- Focus of the content is on what the technician must know about the disease, diagnosis, treatment or surgical procedure. (e.g., recognizing features on an image consistent with a disease)

Please refer to standard 4.3 for more details.

What kinds of courses must be taught by an MD or DO?

Courses on systemic diseases, eye diseases, medical diagnosis, treatment, and surgical procedures.

Where can I find the minimum clinical hours requirements for a program?

Please refer to Standard 2.7

What are the criteria for a clinical site?

Please refer to Standard 4.8

My program has more clinical hours than the ICA published minimum. Do I have to reduce them?

Absolutely not. Your program's clinical hours should reflect the amount of time required for your students to learn all of the skills required. ICA's published clinical hours are a minimum number of hours to meet the standard and programs are encouraged to offer hours beyond the minimum to enhance their program.

Can I use an optometrist practice for a clinical rotation?

No. Please refer to standard 4.8 where it states that "Students must perform direct patient care under the direction or supervision of a licensed ophthalmologist."

Can an optometrist supervise my students?

Yes. Standard 4.8 states that "Programs may utilize optometrists that are in an MD practice for these learning areas: optics, spectacles, refraction, and contact lenses."

How many qualified instructional staff are needed at each clinical site?

There is no set number of qualified instructional staff required. Standard 4.10 states that "The program must maintain a sufficient number of instructional staff members to provide students with adequate attention, instruction, and supervised practice to acquire the knowledge and competencies needed for entry to the profession." It is up to the program to determine this number at each clinical site factoring in all aspects.

Can my students accept paid clinical rotations?

Yes, but certain circumstances must be met. Please refer to Standard 6.6 for details.