

Commission on Paraoptometric Certification

Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA)

Candidate Handbook



Committed. Proud. Certified.

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification is accredited by the
National Commission for Certifying Agencies



2010

Computerized Testing Schedule

February 2010 Testing Period

Application Deadline: 12/26/09

Testing Begins: 2/20/10

Testing Ends: 2/27/10

May 2010 Testing Period

Application Deadline: 3/20/10

Testing Begins: 5/15/10

Testing Ends: 5/22/10

August 2010 Testing Period

Application Deadline: 6/26/10

Testing Begins: 8/21/10

Testing Ends: 8/28/10

November 2010 Testing Period

Application Deadline: 9/18/10

Testing Begins: 11/13/10

Testing Ends: 11/20/10

Paper/Pencil Testing Schedule

June Paper/Pencil Testing Schedule

Application Deadline: 5/7/10

Test Date: 6/18/10

Optometry's Meeting®

Orlando, FL

*Meeting registration and additional fees may apply

This handbook contains necessary information about the Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA) Examination. Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. This handbook is subject to change.

Table of Contents

Testing Schedule	2
General Information	4
Objectives of Certification	4
Eligibility	4-5
Application Procedure	5
Completion of Application	5
Submitting Applications by E-mail	6
Submitting Applications by Mail	6
Fees	6-7
Examination Administration	7
Scheduling Your Examination Appointment (Computer Based Testing Candidates)	7-8
Admission to Testing (Paper/Pencil Candidates)	8
Special Needs	8
Statement on Non-Discrimination Policy	8
Compliance	8-9
Changing your Examination Appointment	9
Rules for the Examination	9
Report of Results	10
Schedule for Examination	10
Retesting Policy	10
After Passing the Examination	11
Confidentiality	11
Paraoptometric Program Codes	11-12
Attainment of Certification, Renewal and Recertification	12-13
Revocation of Certification	13
Morals Policy	13
Violation Process	13-14
Code of Conduct for Certified Paraoptometrics	15
Appeal Procedures	15-16
Appeals Process	16
Outline	16-21
Preparing for the Examination	21
Recommended References	23

General Information

The Certified Paraoptometric Assistant Examination is prepared and administered by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) with the assistance of Professional Testing Corporation. The purpose of this examination is to assure a level of knowledge to perform the function of a Certified Paraoptometric Assistant. Those who successfully complete the examination will be certified with the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification as a Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA).

Objectives for Certification

To promote excellence in the field of optometry by:

- Recognizing formally those individuals who meet all requirements of the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification;
- Encouraging continued professional growth of the paraoptometric;
- Establishing and measuring the level of knowledge required for certification; thereby assisting the employer, public, and members of the health professions in the assessment of paraoptometrics.

Eligibility

To sit for the Certified Paraoptometric Assistant Examination, the following requirements must be met:

1. Must have earned the CPO title, hold a current CPO designation, and verify a minimum of six months additional employment in the eye care field as a Certified Paraoptometric (CPO), or
2. Graduates or students currently enrolled and in good standing* in their last semester of study at an approved optometric assistant program are eligible to sit for the examination directly without meeting the above (#1) eligibility criteria. Graduates of approved optometric assistant programs must have completed and graduated within the last three years.

*Students will be required to submit verification of successful completion of the program before their test results will be released to them. The examination fee will not be refunded to students who do not complete their program.

3. Experience

A. Proof of five years or more experience. Employer must attest to this experience by completing the CPOA Reference Form. Documentation will be required.

B. You may substitute advanced current certifications from American Board of Opticianry (ABO); National Contact Lens Examiners (NCLE); or Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology (JCAHPO). Documentation will be required.

Application Procedure

1. Read and follow the directions on the application and in this handbook. The application is available on the AOA Web site and must be completed and e-mailed if paying by credit or debit card. If paying by check, the application will need to be completed online, printed, and mailed to the CPC office. **No handwritten or faxed applications will be accepted.**

2. The original application and appropriate fees for the examination must be received by the CPC on or before the appropriate deadline listed in this handbook (see inside front cover).

3. All correspondence regarding the application should be directed to the CPC at (800) 365-2219 ext. 4210 or e-mail cpc@aoa.org.

Completion of Application

Candidates interested in CPC certification must complete the examination application in full. The completed application with all documentation (if required), must be submitted with the examination fee.

Once submitted, the CPC will determine your eligibility based on the criteria published in this handbook and you will receive an e-mail or a letter within two weeks. The letter will contain information on the process for scheduling your examination appointment.



**Submitting Applications by E-mail
(If paying by credit /debit card only)**

Application must be submitted in order to be received by or on the deadline date shown on the inside cover of this handbook. Follow directions on the application form to save and e-mail the completed application. Submit only once.

NOTE: If documentation is required (program graduate certificate, CPOA Approved Reference Form, etc.), as noted on the application, you can attach documentation to your e-mail or fax to the CPC office at 314-991-4101.

Submitting Applications by Mail

Application must be submitted in order to be received by or on the deadline date shown on the inside cover of this handbook. Follow directions on the application form to print completed application. The completed application with all documentation (if required), must be submitted with the examination fee in time to be received by the deadline date shown on the inside cover of this handbook to:

AOA-CPC
243 N Lindbergh Blvd
St Louis MO 63141-7881

Fees

Examination Fee	\$225.00
Student Examination Fee	\$150.00 (see guidelines)
Rescheduling Fee	\$140.00 (see guidelines)
Handling Fee	\$25.00 (see page 7)

-Checks are to be made payable to AOA-CPC in US Funds.

-No refunds will be made. The CPC will not redeposit a check returned for non-sufficient funds. Any amount due will need to be resubmitted with a certified check, money order, or credit card. A handling fee for returned checks or declined credit card transactions will be assessed.

-The examination fee represents the cost for the examination and does not include study materials.

Examination Administration

The Certified Paraoptometric Assistant Examination is administered during an established one-week testing period four times yearly, Monday through Saturday excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by PSI/LaserGrade Computer Testing, Inc. PSI/LaserGrade has several hundred testing sites in the United States. Scheduling is done on a first-come-first-served basis. To find a testing center near you, visit www.lasergrade.com or call PSI/LaserGrade at (800) 211-2754. You will not be able to schedule your examination appointment until you have received an Eligibility Notice from Professional Testing Corporation.

Scheduling Your Examination Appointment (Computer Based Testing Candidates)

Once your application has been received and processed, and your eligibility verified, you will be mailed an Eligibility Notice. The Eligibility Notice plus current photo identification must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing center. A candidate not receiving an Eligibility Notice or other correspondence at least two weeks before the beginning of the one-week testing period should contact Professional Testing Corporation at (212) 356-0660.

The Eligibility Notice will indicate where to call to schedule your examination appointment as well as the dates in which testing is available. Appointment times are first-come-first-served. Schedule your appointment

as soon as you receive your Eligibility Notice in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date.

**Admission to Testing
(Paper/Pencil Candidates)**

Candidates will receive an Admission Notice from Professional Testing Corporation approximately two weeks prior to testing. The time and exact address to which candidates will report will be noted on the Admission Notice.

The Admission Notice plus current photo identification must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing center. A candidate not receiving an Admission Notice or other correspondence should contact Professional Testing Corporation at (212) 356-0660, no more than two weeks before the test date.

Special Needs

Special testing arrangements may be made for special needs individuals by completing the Request for Special Needs Accommodation form shown on the AOA Web site. Submit the application, examination fee, and completed form at least EIGHT weeks before the testing period begins.

Statement on Non-Discrimination Policy

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability or any other characteristic protected by law.

Compliance

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification supports the intent of and complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Commission will take steps reasonably necessary to make certification accessible to persons with disabilities covered by the ADA. Appropriate and effective modification and/or auxiliary aids will be provided to persons with such

disabilities unless doing so would impose an undue burden on the Commission's programs or fundamentally alter the measurement of skills or knowledge that the programs are intended to test. All requests for special arrangements must be made at least eight weeks in advance of the examination date.

Changing Your Examination Appointment

If you need to cancel your examination appointment or reschedule to a different date within the one-week testing period, you must contact PSI/LaserGrade at (800) 211-2754 no later than noon, Eastern Standard Time, of the second business day PRIOR to your scheduled appointment.

Rules for the Examination

1. No signaling devices, including pagers, cellular phones, and alarms, may be operative during the examination.
2. No books or reference materials may be taken into the examination room.
3. No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort are to be taken from the examination room except for those computer based testing candidates who may take their preliminary score report only.
4. No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the testing period. The candidate should read carefully the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session (computer based testing candidates) **or** the candidate should listen carefully to the instructions given by the examiner, and should carefully read the directions on the test booklet (paper/pencil candidates).
5. Each candidate must bring several sharpened #2 pencils with erasers to the test (paper/pencil candidates only).

Report of Results

Computer Based Testing Candidates - At the end of the examination, candidates will receive a printout that confirms their completion of the examination. Candidates will receive an unofficial test results report prior to leaving the testing center. Candidates are not eligible to use the CPO, CPOA, or CPOT credential until their official score is received. Candidates will be notified in writing by Professional Testing Corporation within six weeks of the close of the testing period whether they have officially passed or failed the examination. Scores on the major areas of the examination and on the total examination will also be reported. International candidates should expect their test results within eight weeks of the close of the testing period. The passing score is determined by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification. Failure to receive the report of the results should be reported to Professional Testing Corporation at (212) 356-0660.

Paper/Pencil Candidates – Within six weeks after the examination, candidates will be notified by Professional Testing Corporation of their examination results. The total score and scores on major areas of the examination will be indicated. The passing score is determined by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification. Failure to receive the report of the results should be reported to Professional Testing Corporation at (212) 356-0660.

Schedule for Examination

Candidates will be allotted four (4) hours to complete the 225 multiple choice question CPOA examination.

Retesting Policy

Candidates who do not pass the examination are eligible to re-take the examination beginning with the next regularly scheduled examination date. Candidates must file a new application and fee each time they retest and must apply by the application deadline.

After Passing the Examination

The CPC will send successful candidates a pin and a certificate suitable for framing. Those who pass both the written and practical portions of the examination will be added to the roster of the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification as a Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA). Certification is renewable every three years subsequent to the completion of 18 hours of prescribed education. Guidelines for renewal of certification will be sent upon successful completion of the examination.

Confidentiality

The CPC will release the individual test scores ONLY to the individual candidate. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to the Professional Testing Corporation.



Paraoptometric Program Codes

If you have completed a formal training program, please supply the proper code number in the space indicated on the application form. If you attended a paraoptometric program that is not listed or no longer in existence, enter "100".

Optometric Assistant Programs

- 102 – Madison Area Technical College
- 105 – Spokane Community College
- 109 – Florida Community College
- 110 – McFatter Vocational-Technical Center
- 111 – Indiana University
- 116 – Traviss Technical Center
- 120 – Prince George’s Community College
- 122 – Manatee Technical Institute

ACOE Approved Technician Programs

202 – Madison Area Technical College

205 – Spokane Community College

208 – Indiana University

300 – US Army Eye Specialist Program

302 – Sheppard Air Force Apprentice Program

If you are using your completion of the program as the basis for eligibility to take the examination, please submit a copy of certificate of completion or associate degree with the application form.

Attainment of Certification, Renewal, and Recertification

Eligible candidates who have achieved a passing score on the appropriate CPC certified paraoptometric examination are eligible to use the appropriate designation after their names and will receive a certificate and pin from the CPC. A database of certified paraoptometric is maintained by the CPC and may be reported in its publications and/or Web site.

CPC certification is recognized for a period of three years at which time the candidate must meet the requirements in effect at that time in order to retain certification. The requirements for renewal include documented continuing education and the appropriate renewal fee.

Upon failure to maintain a certified status the individual will then be classified "non-certified". Once so classified, the individual must immediately refrain from using/displaying all related Commission on Paraoptometric Certification abbreviations, certificates, cards, logos, and pins. Consequences for anyone claiming certification when not certified will be determined by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification, pursuant to written guidelines established by the Commission.

Should an individual wish to become recertified, they must retest at the highest level they had attained. Under no circumstances will an individual be allowed to test for a level they have not previously attained.

Revocation of Certification

Certification will be revoked for any of the following reasons:

- Falsification of an application
- Misrepresentation of certification status
- Unethical conduct

The CPC provides the appeal mechanism for challenging revocation of Certification. It is the responsibility of the individual to initiate this process.

Morals Policy

Applicants for Paraoptometric Certification are expected to be of high moral character. Should the CPC receive evidence that a candidate has engaged in inappropriate actions or behavior with regard to the application or testing process, or has made any false representation pertaining to his/her certification status, that individual will be subject to disqualification or such other penalty as determined by the CPC.

Violation Process

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification will investigate allegations concerning alleged misconduct by paraoptometrics and/or Commission members and/or its consultants regarding violation of certification policies and procedures. Allegations of misconduct must be in writing, signed, and delivered directly to the Commission chairperson within 120 days of the alleged violation(s). Supporting documentation should be submitted with the complaint.

The Commission will review the allegation and take one of the following actions:

- Dismiss the allegation on grounds it lacked sufficient evidence or merit to commence an investigation;
- Attempt to resolve any issue with the parties involved should the allegation appear to be a misunderstanding;
- or,
- Conduct a full investigation of the allegation and if deemed necessary, appoint a hearing panel.

Should an investigation be warranted, the Commission chairperson will appoint a three member panel within 45 days of the receipt of the allegation. The panel will consist of three CPOTs chosen by the Commission chairperson, one of whom will act as the panel's chairperson. The panel shall give not less than 30 days notice to the subject of the investigation of the right to appear before the panel, give testimony, confront witnesses and evidence presented, and to be represented by counsel. The AOA General Counsel shall assist the panel in conducting the proceeding.

The panel will convene within 60 days of its appointment, meeting in either the AOA's St. Louis or Washington office. A record will be kept of all testimony. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the panel shall deliberate and render its written decision within 30 days. The panel's decision shall be final unless appealed within 30 days to the full Commission.

If appealed, the Commission will review the panel's findings within 30 days and inform the parties involved of its decision. The Commission's decision on appeal is final and cannot be appealed.

All decisions on appeal by the Commission, as well as on hearing by the panel, concerning allegations, be they dismissed, resolved, or investigated, will be delivered in writing to all parties involved by certified mail with return receipt.

Code of Conduct for Certified Paraoptometric

Paraoptometric who have been certified by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification are expected to abide by a Code of Conduct. Inasmuch as certification represents to the public an attained level of skill, it therefore is incumbent upon each paraoptometric to:

- Place the welfare of the patient above all else;
- Maintain patient confidentiality at all times;
- Treat patients with respect and a caring attitude regardless of their backgrounds, preferences, or prejudices;
- Avoid gossip and expression of personal biases;
- Promote ways for maintaining visual health and eye care to both patients and the public;
- Continue an ongoing educational process to upgrade and enhance paraoptometric skills;
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner in the office and be an exemplary citizen within the community;
- Support colleagues in efforts to achieve maximum level of certification.

Appeal Procedures

All candidates for certification have the right to appeal alleged grievances concerning but not limited to: scoring, eligibility, equipment failure, examiner bias, exemption from certification requirements, administrative procedures. Appeals must be received by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification within 30 days after the examination results are sent to candidates. All appeals must be in writing and sent certified mail along with supporting documents. The Commission will consider the appeal at its next regularly

scheduled meeting and the appellant will be notified in writing of its decision. The Commission's decision on all appeals is final.

Appeals Process

When an appeal is received by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification the chairperson will appoint one (1) commissioner to serve as an independent reviewer who will discuss the alleged grievance with the appellant and others as to whether the facts as stated are correct and whether there are mitigating factors and/or personal/professional situations not stated in the appeal. The independent reviewer will be neither a supporter nor a detractor in presenting his/her findings to the Commission. The independent reviewer will refrain from making any recommendation regarding the Commission's decision. The independent reviewer does not have a vote in the Commission's decision.

Outline

This outline will provide you with information on the content of the Certified Paraoptometric Assistant Examination. The following outline includes a brief explanation of the expanded areas to be tested, in addition to area inclusive of the CPO outline. You should be familiar with all the terms, meanings and use, and with the instrumentation needed for data gathering or testing procedures. All 225 questions on the examination are of the objective, multiple choice type. Passing score is determined by the CPC.

I. Office Operations (13%)

A. Practice Management

B. Records Management

1. filing
2. confidentiality/safeguards
3. ownership/release
4. legal/ethical Issues

C. Telephone Techniques

1. scheduling

2. emergencies/urgencies
3. triage
4. message taking
5. handling complaints

D. Recall

E. Office Finances

1. accounts receivable/payable
2. banking procedures
3. billing
4. insurance

F. Professional Issues

1. scope of roles and functions
2. liability and malpractice
3. conduct, confidentiality, ethics
4. hygiene and infection control

II. Ophthalmic Optics and Dispensing (20%)

A. Prescriptions

1. components
 - a. sphere, cylinder, axis
 - b. add power
 - c. prism
 - d. measurements
2. optical crosses
3. transposition
4. decentration calculations
5. vertex and effective power
6. verification
 - a. instruments
 - b. Prentice's prism formula
 - c. optics

B. Lenses

1. lens forms
2. lens types
3. lens styles
4. powers/focal length
5. lens materials
6. index of refraction
7. impact resistance
8. FDA/ANSI standards
9. special prescription considerations

- a. high powers
- b. Fresnel prisms
- c. industrial/occupational

10. tints and coatings

C. Frame Selection

- 1. types of frames
- 2. parts of frames

D. Adjustment and Dispensing

- 1. alignment
- 2. procedures
- 3. tools
- 4. techniques
- 5. pliers
- 6. pads
- 7. repair

III. Testing and Procedures (20%)

A. Purpose and Preliminary Testing

- 1. visual skills
- 2. interpupillary distance
- 3. near point of convergence
- 4. near point of accommodation
- 5. cover testing
- 6. fusion/suppression
- 7. Worth four dot
- 8. Maddox Rod

B. Pupillary Responses

C. Case History

D. Visual Acuity

- 1. procedures
- 2. monocular and binocular
- 3. pinhole acuity
- 4. measurement systems/charts
- 5. recording results

E. Color Vision

- 1. procedures and recording
- 2. types of tests

F. Stereo Acuity

- 1. purpose of test
- 2. types of tests
- 3. procedures

G. Examination Instrumentation

1. retinoscope
2. ophthalmoscope
3. biomicroscope/slit lamp
4. phoropter
5. keratometer
6. photography
7. optical coherence tomography
8. other

IV. Special Procedures (17%)

A. Contact Lenses

1. terminology
2. materials
3. soft and gp comparisons
4. care and handling
5. patient instruction
6. verification/measurements
7. special lens designs and uses

B. Tonometry

1. instrumentation/types
2. procedures/causes

C. Visual Fields

1. instrumentation/types
2. procedures/measurements
3. defects
4. physiologic blind spot
5. recording

D. Sphygmomanometry

1. instrumentation/terminology
2. procedures
3. recordings
4. readings

E. First Aid/CPR/Emergencies

F. Low Vision

G. Surgery

V. Refractive Status of the Eye and Binocularity (13%)

A. Refractive Errors

1. Types
 - a. myopia

- b. hyperopia
- c. astigmatism
- 2. presbyopia
- 3. causes
- 4. corrective lenses
- 5. photophobia

B. Refractive Conditions

- 1. types
 - a. aphakia
 - b. anisometropia
 - c. aniseidonia
 - d. amblyopia
- 2. causes

C. Eye Movements

- 1. versions, ductions, rotations, pursuits and saccades
- 2. convergence and divergence
- 3. binocular vision
- 4. accommodative mechanism
- 5. stereopsis

VI. Basic Ocular Anatomy and Physiology (17%)

A. General Anatomy and Physiology

- 1. fibrous, vascular, and neural tunic
- 2. anterior adnexa
- 3. orbit
- 4. bones
- 5. anterior segment
- 6. posterior segment
- 7. crystalline lens
- 8. aqueous/vitreous
- 9. retina
- 10. extra ocular muscles
- 11. visual pathway
- 12. cornea

B. Basic Functions of Anatomical Structures

- 1. lacrimal system
- 2. anterior chamber
- 3. anterior angle
- 4. posterior chamber

C. Common Pathological and Functional Disorders

1. lids
2. conjunctivitis
3. glaucoma
4. cataracts
5. corneal problems
6. retinal disorders
7. legal blindness
8. macular degeneration

D. Basic Ocular Pharmacology

1. types
 - a. mydriatics
 - b. miotics
 - c. cycloplegics
 - d. anesthetics
2. instillation/instruction
 - a. solutions
 - b. ointment

Preparing for the Examination

CPC examinations are designed to cover the knowledge and skills to be most effective in the optometric practice. Below are ideas to help you prepare:

1. Read the entire content outline as the exam will include items for every area and may include questions on the sub-categories.
2. Study from one or all of the recommended references or other resources.
3. Take the free sample examination on the AOA Web site.
4. Prior to driving to the examination location, study a map and/or directions so you aren't rushing to get to the location. Get plenty of rest the night before.

Recommended Reference Material

Listed below are general references that may be useful in preparing for the Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA) examination. The CPC does not constitute an endorsement concerning these sources and does not imply a guarantee that candidates will be successful in passing the Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA) examination.

American Optometric Association Paraoptometric Section. Self-Study Course for Paraoptometric Assistants and Technicians. (Current Version).

Brooks, Clifford W. and Irving M. Borish. System for Ophthalmic Dispensing. 2nd ed. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2006.

Kanski, Jack J. Clinical Ophthalmology, A Test Yourself Atlas. 2nd ed. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2002.

Mannis, Mark J. et. al. Contact Lenses in Ophthalmic Practice. Springer-Verlag, Inc. 2004.

Stein, Harold A. et. al. Ophthalmic Assistant: A Guide for Ophthalmic Medical Personnel. 7th ed. Mosby, 2000.

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