

# 2023 Registration Review Report

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Manitoba Association of Optometrists



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## Introduction

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The Fair Registration Practices Office (FRPO) issues this registration review report for the Manitoba Association of Optometrists (MAO) under authority of The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act (act). Registration reviews are conducted at times specified by the director of fair registration practices and in accordance with the review provisions in the act, section 15.1, 15.2, and 15.3. The purpose of this review is to determine compliance with the legislation and to identify areas that may need improvement. Compliance to the legislation refers both to the fairness of assessment and registration practice, with particular attention to the fair consideration of internationally educated applicants, as well as the co-operation of the regulator with the director.

Manitoba's fairness legislation was amended in December 2021. This review is largely restricted to the consideration of compliance regarding three new duties in the Fair Registration Practices Code: a duty that assessment criteria be necessary, a duty to abide domestic trade agreements and a duty to notify FRPO regarding changes in assessment and registration practice. Outstanding issues raised in previous registration review reports may also be raised or result in further recommendation for action.

This registration review results in an FRPO statement of compliance for the regulator. Reviews that result in recommendations to change practice or policy contain an action plan response from the regulator, current as of the time of the review.

To provide context, a brief description of MAO's state of progress under fairness legislation to date precedes the compliance analysis. The report also includes appendices containing a flowchart of the registration process for internationally educated applicants, as well as registration data. Data is the latest information available at the time of review completion.

## State of Progress

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The Manitoba Association of Optometrists (MAO) is committed to the fair assessment and registration of internationally educated optometrists. Since the introduction of Manitoba's fairness legislation in 2009, MAO has worked co-operatively with FRPO.

The licensure process for applicants with academic training from programs in the United States and Canada accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) is timely with high success rates.

The licensure process for internationally educated applicants (IEAs) with academic training not accredited by ACOE underwent a significant transition in 2015 with the introduction of academic credential assessment by the Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FORAC) and the Internationally Graduated Optometrist Evaluating Examination (IGO Evaluating Exam) administered by Touchstone Institute.

The FORAC credential assessment and IGO Evaluating Exam have positive features including a stronger, more meaningful assessment of IEAs qualification and a new, more direct licensure pathway for those that do well on the IGO Evaluating Exam. Prior to the FORAC assessment and IGO exam, applicants were assessed by the optometry program at the University of Waterloo for entry into a bridging program.

MAO has also taken steps improving registration information for internationally educated applicants and streamlining documentation requirements, allowing document sharing from its national bodies.

## Fair Practice Analysis

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### I. Assessment criteria must be necessary – act, 8(4)

The criteria used in an assessment of qualifications must be necessary to assess competence in the practice of the profession.

With regard to substantive assessment criteria in a profession, for instance, the type and level of academic training required or the level of scrutiny brought to assess qualifications, FRPO recognises the authority of self-regulated professions setting these standards and will only question these requirements in the circumstance they are patently unreasonable. FRPO's evaluation focuses on the ways in which criteria and requirements may be unnecessary, unduly burdensome, or potentially result in forms of systemic discrimination, particularly as they may impact internationally educated applicants (IEAs).

#### MAO's compliance to necessary assessment criteria

At this time, FRPO does not have concerns with the reasonableness and necessity of MAO's assessment criteria and requirements for registration. MAO is compliant with this duty.

Substantive qualifications for IEAs include doctorate level academic training, and the completion of a national exam; applicants with academic training not accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) must also undertake an evaluating exam.

### II. Duty to comply with domestic trade agreements – act, 4(1)

A regulated profession must ensure that its registration practices comply with the obligations of a domestic trade agreement.

The Manitoba government has labour mobility obligations that extend to regulated occupations, under both Chapter 7: Labour Mobility of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) and Article 13: Labour Mobility of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA). In Manitoba, regulated professions are required to comply with labour mobility obligations under The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act, section 4(1), The Labour Mobility Act, section 3(1) and for health professions, under The Regulated Health Professions Act, section 32(3).

In the regulated occupations, the purpose of these obligations is to provide labour mobility through license-to-license recognition. This needs to occur without any material requirements for training, experience, examinations or assessments — CFTA, Article 705, paragraph 1, NWPTA, Article 13, paragraphs 1 and 2.

#### MAO's compliance to abide labour mobility obligations

MAO's labour mobility policy is compliant under this duty. FRPO identifies no concerns or non-permissible requirements.

## Notice of changes in registration practices – act, 5(2)

A regulated profession that proposes to change its registration practices, as described in the information provided under clause (1)(a), must notify the director of the proposed change, at the time and in the manner and form required by the director.

The purpose of notification is to ensure FRPO has accurate, up-to-date information about the registration practices of Manitoba regulators. This supports FRPO's oversight role and allows for proactive discussion about the fairness of proposed changes.

### MAO's compliance to the duty to notify

In preparation for this registration review, FRPO requested updates regarding changes to assessment and registration practice. MAO provided updates to FRPO; MAO complies with the duty to notify.

## Compliance

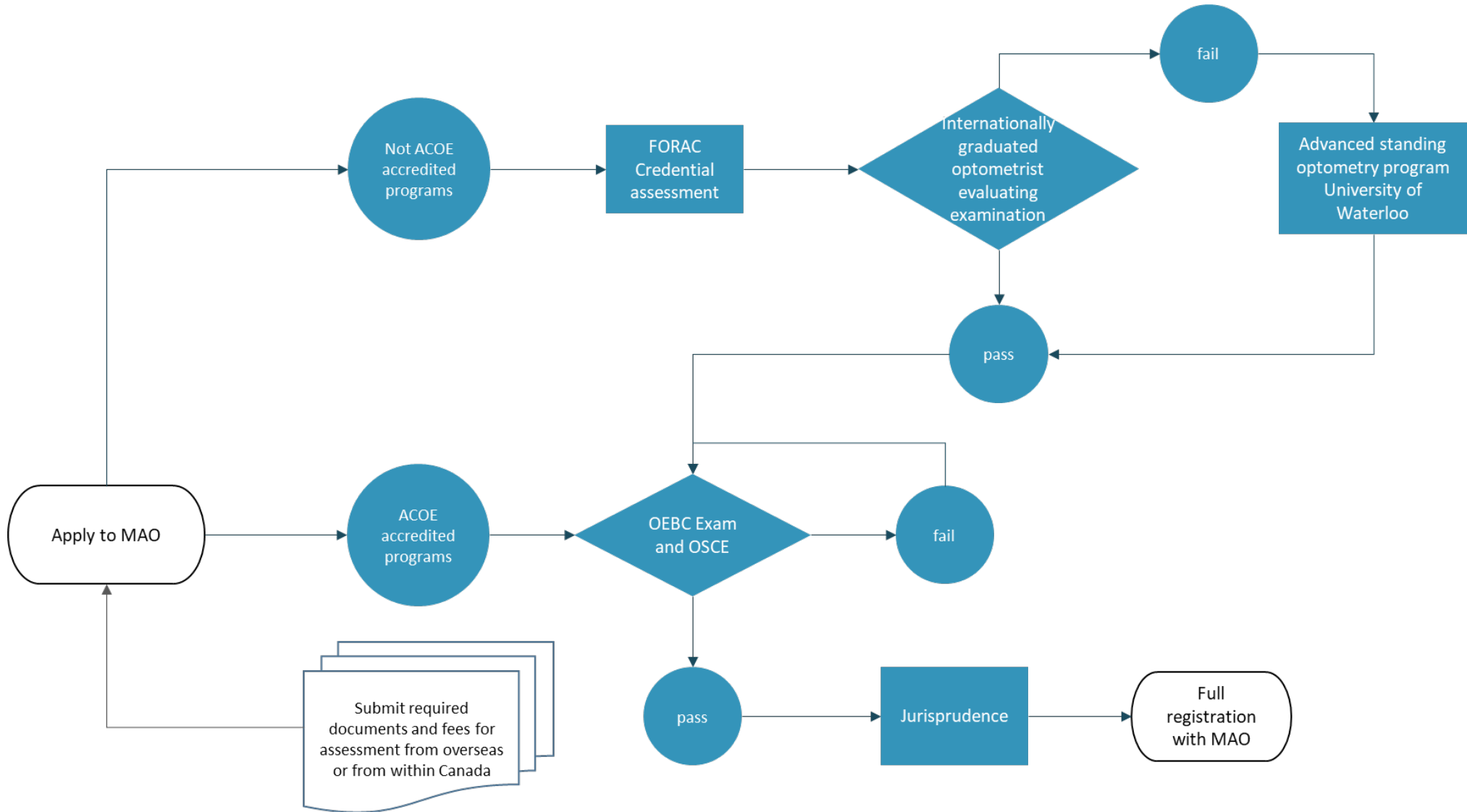
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The Fair Registration Practices Office's (FRPO) 2023 registration review of the Manitoba Association of Optometrists (MAO) examines their compliance to three duties in the Fair Registration Practices Code of Manitoba's fairness legislation; assessment criteria are necessary, labour mobility obligations are respected and FRPO is notified regarding changes in assessment and registration practice.

At this time, FRPO finds the MAO to be compliant to each of the duties under review and has no outstanding issues. No recommendations are issued.

FRPO commends MAO for its compliance and their work ensuring fair assessment and registration practice for internationally educated optometrists and mobility applicants.

# Appendix 1 – Registration Process for Internationally Educated Applicants





Manitoba  
Association of  
Optometrists



**192**  
**Registered  
Members**  
(As of December 2022)

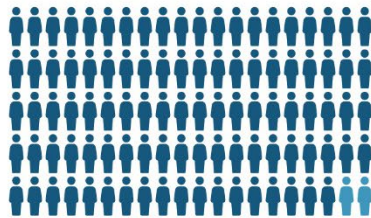
### 2011-2022 Internationally Educated Applicant Data



**40**

applications

#### Application Outcomes



registered - **98%**

file closed - **2%**

#### Closed File Status



**100%**  
withdrawn



#### Top Countries of Education



applicants were educated in **4**  
different countries



#### Median Time to Registration

**.2** years

### 2012-2022 Domestic Applicant Data



**65**

applications

**60 (92%)**

registrations