

Applicant FAQ

How do I register as an optician in BC?

To become an optician, you must complete an accredited training program or the PLAR process, then pass the licensing exam(s) and submit all of the documentation detailed in our Supplemental Package for Registration.

I did not graduate from an accredited institution in Canada. Can I apply for registration?

Yes. CHCPBC uses the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process to ensure that applicants who did not complete an accredited Canadian education program have the same skills and knowledge as those who did. Learn more about this process please see the International applicants section.

How do I become certified to conduct independent automated refractions?

To become certified in automated refracting, you must first complete an approved program of study. Alternatively, if you have optometric training and/or experience from another country, you may be eligible to complete the PLAR process for refracting.

If you are already licensed and wish to add the certification, you can submit a "status change" application through your online account. If you are not yet licensed, simply ensure that you select the applicable registration category when submitting your initial application.

When you become certified, you may also be required to complete a short exam on the regulations related to conducting automated refractions in BC.

What kind of insurance coverage do I need?

For your own protection, you must hold professional liability insurance for a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence/claim at all times as a practicing optician. Insurance is not required for non-practicing registrants.

Why do I need a criminal record (re-)check?

Learn more about criminal record check requirements in the criminal record check section.

What is "non-practicing" status?

Non-practicing is a registration category available to CHCPBC Optician and/or Contact Lens Fitter registrants who meet certain criteria. The annual fee for non-practicing is cheaper than the practicing fee, because these

registrants are *not currently working* within the field of opticianry. Most opticians with non-practicing status are on medical or parental leave. Some are studying or working temporarily in an unrelated field.

Changing your status to non-practicing is a great way to stay connected to your profession, even while you're taking time away. Non-practicing registrants are still required to complete continuing education, which ensures that they maintain their skills and knowledge.

Non-practicing status is *not* intended for individuals practicing under the supervision of another eye care professional.

When am I required to renew my licence?

CHCPBC's annual licence renewal period runs from mid-February through March 31 each year. All opticians in BC must renew their licensure during this time, regardless of the date of their initial registration. Renewal notices are sent by email throughout February and March.

How do I transfer my license to another province or territory in Canada?

Thanks to the [Labour Mobility Agreement](#) that exists among Canadian optician regulators, it's easy for opticians to move between provinces and have their credentials recognized.

If you are currently licensed in BC and plan to move to another province, let us know. We'll prepare a "Letter of Good Standing" that can be provided to your new regulatory body as proof that you meet all the requirements for licensure in BC. Your new regulator will also require you to submit a registration application and pay fees, as applicable. You will need to refer to their website or contact them directly for details.

My licence has been cancelled. How do I reinstate my licence?

Learn more about cancellation and reinstatement in the reinstating expired licence section.