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September is Para Appreciation Month

September is a month-long opportunity to recognize paraoptometrics for the value they contribute to the success of an optometric practice. It is the only formal observance in the nation specifically intended to honor paraoptometric staff. Practices are encouraged to be creative in planning recognition activities and to submit photos to social media using **#AOAParaMonth2024**. The practice submitting the best post each week will win a gift card for a staff luncheon!

Highlights from Optometry’s Meeting® 2024—memorable moments!

After being absent for several years, an interactive booth in Nashville style and featuring paraoptometrics found its place once again in the exhibit hall. It was a fun networking opportunity for paraoptometrics and optometrists to learn about the role and importance of paraoptometrics, certification, the benefits of AOA associate membership and more. *Special thanks to the AOA volunteers who made this booth possible!*



A workshop for paraoptometrics, “Experience Vision Loss and How You Can Help” was new this year. Participants experienced common ocular eye conditions such as macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy or cataracts by using special vision loss simulators. Attendees were able to use devices such as telescopes, magnifiers and more to gain valuable information about patient interaction and training on how to use the devices.



Chairside surgical support was the topic of the well-attended “Surgical Assisting for Paraoptometrics” workshop. Paraoptometrics who also complete the lecture and theory portion of the course in [EyeLearn](#) and pass the assessments will earn the [Paraoptometric Surgical Assisting Micro-credential](#).

Planning for [Optometry’s Meeting® 2025](#) is underway! Hope to see you there in Minneapolis, June 25-28. Registration will open in January 2025.



New paraoptometric examinations in 2025

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) is excited to announce that we are nearing the end of the construction of completely new examinations for 2025, including a combined CPOT examination! However, whether you just earned your certification or have been certified for a while, we need your help to bring this project across the finish line. The CPC is currently recruiting certified paraoptometrics to assist with setting the passing points for the new examinations. This project requires active participation this fall in 2-3 calls plus time on your own reviewing the examinations and formulating your feedback. Due to the confidential nature of the project, participants are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. Up to five continuing education credits that can be used toward your next renewal will be provided to active participants. Contact cpc@aoa.org.



Nominations for CPC commissioner

The CPC is seeking nominations for commissioners for the next 3-year term that begins July 1, 2025, and ends June 30, 2028. The CPC is responsible for establishing, maintaining and verifying standards related to the granting of certification. For more information, email cpc@aoa.org.

Post-exam survey comments

Following a paraoptometric examination, testers are asked to complete a post-exam survey. The survey is taken only after the candidate closes their examination and the time clock has stopped. Answers to some of these frequent comments are provided below.

“Having notes” – These are not open-book exams, except for the CPOC (Certified Paraoptometric Coder). Paraoptometrics taking the CPOC examination may bring the materials listed in the [paraoptometric examination candidate handbook](#) into the exam.

“Too far from home” – Testing facilities are owned and operated by Prometric. Not all tests are offered at every testing site, and the CPC does not have any say in what locations offer the paraoptometric exams. However, candidates registering for a CPO, CPOA or CPOT examination have the option to take their exam remotely from their home, office or other quiet place. Technical and physical location [remote testing requirements](#) must be met.

“Not enough study materials” – The AOA Education Center offers a wealth of examination prep materials in a variety of formats (audio, video, downloadable/printable study guides, study halls, review courses). Additional resources are listed in the candidate handbook. View the [Study Resources Checklist](#) and the [paraoptometric examination candidate handbook](#). Certified paraoptometrics may volunteer to help create new study resources. For more information contact educationcenter@aoa.org.

“Too noisy” – Anyone participating in an examination at a Prometric facility may request noise-cancelling headphones during check-in or from other Prometric staff.

“Questions could be worded better” – Many paraoptometric and doctors volunteer their time to create and review all test question as new examinations are developed and at least once per year to ensure items are written appropriately, formatted correctly and have only one correct answer. Certified paraoptometric may volunteer to help by writing and submitting new items, or by joining the CPC item review or test review committees! Contact cpc@aoa.org for more information.

“Being allowed to listen to music or have music playing in the background” – Music may be soothing to some taking an examination but would be extremely distracting to others. Listening to your own headphones during an examination is simply not allowed.



Study resources in EyeLearn–out with the old and in with the new!

The AOA Education Center offers many exam prep resources. Enroll in a paraoptometric review course in [EyeLearn](#) to view, download or print the study resources or to utilize one of the other recommended materials. Please note that the 2020-2024 study resource booklets replace the *CPO Study Guide* and the *Self-Study Course for Paraoptometric Assistants and Technicians* binder. Additionally, if you purchased the self-assessment quiz, scoring of those quizzes will be discontinued after **Oct. 31**.

Updated resources will be available later this year for the new examinations coming in 2025.

What’s new in EyeLearn?

Access the full Paraoptometric Catalog in [EyeLearn](#).

New Paraoptometric Courses

Unlocking the Power of Paraoptometrics

5 HIPAA Compliance Mistakes You Can't Afford to Make

Para Speaker Series: Slit Lamp Workshop

AOA OptoCast: Eyes on Education

AOA Paraoptometric Micro-credential: Optometric Surgical Assisting

AOA EYELEARN
your professional development hub

Upcoming Para Speaker Series live webinars

- Tuesday, Sept. 17, 7 p.m. CT – *Deeper Dive into Visual Fields* with Jessica Schiffbauer, O.D.
- Tuesday, Oct. 8, 7 p.m. CT – *Scleral Lenses: Training, Handling, Solutions and Communications of Basic Fitting, Insertion and Removal* with Shalu Pal, O.D.
- November (date TBD) – *Glaucoma Medications* with Jeff Banas, O.D.

Recordings are accessible through your [EyeLearn](#) account afterward. View the “Upcoming Webinars” calendar on the EyeLearn homepage. Need assistance? Contact educationcenter@aoa.org for more information.

Don't just take our word for it—you need a CPOC!

We asked CPOCs what this credential means to them. Here is what some had to say.

“To me, the CPOC means the credential holder has invested in their career. It shows that they are willing to take the extra steps to make sure they are up to date on all coding rules/regulations. If I were an employer seeking a coder for my practice, someone with a coding certification would stand out among the others.” – *Angela Weger, CPOT, CPOC*

“Value, knowledge, career, pride in my job skills. I also know if I would move to another optometric office, it could make or break me getting that next job. If an employer knows you are certified in a skill set, you become a valuable potential employee. Being a CPOC shows you know how to bill and get claims processed. You submit clean claims to the insurance companies for payment. You bring the money into the office.” – *Carol Lovell, CPOT, CPOC*



Contribute to the paraoptometric examinations—updated item writing course

Are you interested in contributing to future examinations and advancing the role of certified paraoptometric, all while earning continuing education (CE) credits? The CPC Item Writing course in EyeLearn has recently been updated with new information and content outlines for exams that will be given over the next several years. New test items (questions) in all areas are needed for the 2025 (and beyond) examinations. New items are accepted year-round. These items are added to a bank for review by subject matter experts and then processed by Professional Testing Corporation before they can be placed on the new examinations. Help us build a robust bank of test questions!

Anyone interested in learning this skill and earning CE should contact cpc@aoa.org.



CPOT written and clinical examinations—deadline Sept. 18

The last time the two-part examination will be offered is during the November 2-16 testing period. Candidates who have passed one part already, or who are taking both parts during the November administration, must pass both parts of the examination to earn the CPOT credential. Beginning in May 2025, the CPOT examination will consist of a one-part examination. Late applications for the November 2024 testing period will be accepted through 9 p.m. ET on **Oct. 9**.

For more information, contact cpc@aoa.org.



2024 Paraoptometric Examination Schedule

The [registration deadline](#) for the November paraoptometric examinations is **Sept. 18!** Utilize the many excellent study resources that are available to AOA associate members for free in [EyeLearn](#) or available for purchase by nonmembers. Review the [candidate handbook](#) for information on upcoming examinations, live remote proctored testing opportunities, and all the recommended study resources.

2024 certification renewals are due now

Don't procrastinate and put your certification at risk! Anyone who is due to renew a CPO, CPOA or CPOT certification must complete [the CE requirements](#) by **Oct. 31** and submit their renewal by Nov. 1. The late fee will apply to any renewal received after Nov. 1. Only certifications that are due for renewal in 2024 should be submitted. Contact cpc@aoa.org if unsure of your renewal year. Start your 2024 renewal submission [here](#).



AOA membership has benefits

Access examination prep materials and continuing education, attend live webinars, receive discounts on materials and meeting registration—all for free to paraoptometric who are employed by an AOA member optometrist. Paraoptometrics can now enroll themselves! All you need is your employer's AOA ID number.

[Read more](#)

Paraoptometric Newsletter archive

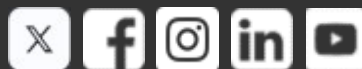
Catch up on paraoptometric news you may have missed in the [newsletter archive](#).



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243 N. Lindbergh Blvd., Saint Louis, MO 63141

The AOA is here to help.
Chat with an AOA representative via live text between 8 a.m.-5 p.m. CT.
Text 314.597.1939 from an Android or Apple device.

Connect with the AOA



This message was intended for: RDavila@aoa.org

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