Commission on Paraoptometric Certification

2015
Certified Paraoptometric (CPO)

Candidate Handbook


CPO - A person who has attained national recognition via certification by demonstrating an understanding of the concepts used in optometric care

CPC | 243 N LINDBERGH BLVD | ST LOUIS MO 63141-7881

PTC | 1350 BROADWAY-17th FLOOR | NEW YORK NY 10018

AMERICAN OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION

NCCCA
Computerized Testing Schedule

February 2015 Testing Period
Application Deadline: Jan 9, 2015 (9:00pm EDT)
Testing Begins: Feb 7
Testing Ends: Feb 21

May 2015 Testing Period
Application Deadline: Apr 10, 2015 (9:00pm EDT)
Testing Begins: May 2
Testing Ends: May 16

August 2015 Testing Period
Application Deadline: Jul 10, 2015 (9:00pm EDT)
Testing Begins: Aug 8
Testing Ends: Aug 22

November 2015 Testing Period
Application Deadline: Oct 5, 2015 (9:00pm EDT)
Testing Begins: Nov 7
Testing Ends: Nov 21

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

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies
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General Information
The Certified Paraoptometric 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. Those who successfully complete the examination will be certified with the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification as a Certified Paraoptometric (CPO).

The development of the CPC examinations begins with a job analysis, which results in identification of the major domains of practice through a survey of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for competent performance. The outline of the examinations’ contents and specifications are derived from the results of the job analysis, including the relative emphasis or weight for each of the major sections is established.

Experienced practitioners are asked to draft questions for the examinations. These draft questions are reviewed by a panel of experts in the profession, editing as needed for consistency, accuracy, grammatical correctness, and for conciseness of presentation, so that each item is testing for knowledge and application of content and not for reading skills.

A draft of the examinations is drawn from the items which have been reviewed and approved for use by the subject matter experts. The CPC reviews all of the items on the examination one last time to ensure they are written clearly, have one and only one correct response, and are appropriate for the examinations. The CPC also participates in an exercise to determine the passing score each time a new form of the examination is approved.

Objectives of 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 member of the health professions in the assessment of paraoptometrics.
Eligibility
To sit for the Certified Paraoptometric Examination, the following requirements must be met:

1. Applicants must have a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent, and

2. Must have a minimum of six (6) months employment in the eye care field.

Applications will be randomly audited and verified

Application Procedure
Note: All candidates must have an individual email address. The email address on the application must not be a shared address.

1. Read and follow the directions on the application and in this handbook. All applications must be completed online. The application may be found on Professional Testing Corporation’s website http://www.ptcny.com/clients/cpc/.

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

3. All correspondence regarding the application and fees should be directed to Professional Testing Corporation at ptcny@ptcny.com or 212.356.0660.

4. Applicants will receive an e-mailed confirmation of application within 1-3 days of submitting application.

Completion of Application
Candidates interested in CPC™ certification must complete the examination application in full, using your name exactly as it appears on your current government issued photo ID.
The completed application must be submitted online with the examination fee prior to the established deadlines shown on page 2. If payment is being made by check or money order, complete the online application and mail payment to:

**CPC Examinations**
Professional Testing Corporation
1350 Broadway-17th Floor
New York NY 10018

**NOTE:** If paying by check or money order, be certain payment clearly indicates candidate name and appropriate examination.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to be certain they have applied for the correct examination. Be certain to fully read the e-mailed confirmation after applying. The online application webpage indicates the name of the examination in color. The CPO examination is shown in orange.

### Fees
- Examination Fee: $265
- Rescheduling Fee: $200

Checks and/or money orders are to be made payable to CPC™ Examination in US Funds.

### Refunds/Reschedules
There will be no refund of fees. If you need to cancel your examination appointment or reschedule to a different date within the two-week testing period for which you have registered, you must contact PSI at 800.733.9267 no later than noon, Eastern Standard Time, of the second business
day PRIOR to your scheduled appointment. Rescheduling is subject to the availability of appointments at PSI. There is no fee for rescheduling within the two-week testing period for which you have registered.

A candidate who applies to take the examination but then wishes to take it during a different testing period, may be granted a one-time deferment to the next immediate testing period. The candidate must request the deferment in writing to cpc@aoa.org no more than one week after the original testing period ends. The candidate is responsible for contacting PSI to cancel their examination appointment, if one has been scheduled. **If a candidate fails to schedule or keep their appointment, the entire examination fee is forfeited.**

Once a deferment to the next testing period has been established, the candidate must complete a new application for the next immediate testing period and submit the rescheduling fee of $200 with the application. Only one deferment will be permitted.

**Examination Administration**
The Certified Paraoptometric Examination is administered during an established two-week testing period four times yearly, Monday through Saturday excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by PSI. Scheduling is done on a first-come-first-served basis. To find a testing center, visit [www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites.htm](http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites.htm) or call PSI at 800.733.9267. Candidates will not be able to schedule an examination appointment until the eligibility notice has been received.

**Testing Software Demo**
Testing software demo can be viewed online by visiting [www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm](http://www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo.htm). This online demo can provide you with an idea about the features of the testing software.

**Scheduling Your Examination Appointment**
Once the application has been received and eligibility is verified, the candidate will receive an email confirmation at the candidate email address shown on the application. The eligibility notice will also be emailed to the address shown on the application prior to the beginning of the testing period. **A printed copy of the eligibility notice plus your current government issued photo identification must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing center.** A candidate not receiving an eligibility notice at least two
weeks before the beginning of the two-week testing period should contact Professional Testing Corporation at 212.356.0660 for a duplicate copy.

The eligibility notice will indicate where to call to schedule the examination appointment as well as the dates during which testing is available. Appointment times are first-come, first-serve, so 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.

**It is the candidate’s responsibility to schedule the examination appointment with PSI.** It is highly recommended that you become familiar with the testing location.

**Admission to Testing**
Arrival at the testing site at the appointment time is the responsibility of the candidate. Please plan for weather, traffic, parking, and any security requirements that are specific to the testing location. Late arrival may prevent you from testing. It is the candidate’s responsibility to provide their current, government-issued, valid photo ID, such as driver’s license or passport, and a printed copy of their eligibility notice.

**Special Needs**
Special testing arrangements may be made for special needs individuals by completing the Request for Special Needs Accommodation form available at [http://www.ptcny.com/PDF/PTC_SpecialTestCenterRequestForm.pdf](http://www.ptcny.com/PDF/PTC_SpecialTestCenterRequestForm.pdf) or by calling PTC at 212.356.0660. Submit the application, examination fee, and completed form at least eight weeks before the testing period begins.

Please notify PTC at least two weeks prior to your examination appointment if you need to bring a service dog, medicine, food, or beverages needed for a medical condition.

**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 CPC 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 in writing at least eight weeks in advance of the examination date.

**Rules for the Examination**
Electronic devices, including but not limited to cell phones, Blackberries, personal digital assistants, pagers, cameras, voice, MP3 players (such as IPOD and ITOUCH) and Bluetooth devices cannot be used and must be turned off during the examination. No one will be permitted to send or receive text messages or make or receive phone calls while the examination is in session. Simple, non-programmable calculators are permitted.

1. No books or reference materials may be taken into the examination room.

2. No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort are to be taken from the examination room except for the preliminary score report only.

3. No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination. The candidate should read carefully the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.

4. Candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing room while their examination is in session, with the sole exception of using the restroom.

**Report of Results**
At the end of the examination, candidates will receive a printout that confirms their completion of the examination as well as an unofficial test result report prior to leaving the testing center. Candidates are not eligible to use the CPO credential until their official score report is received. Candidates will be notified in writing by Professional Testing
Corporation within four 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. 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 two (2) hours to complete the 100 multiple choice question CPO 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 certificate suitable for framing. Certification pins are available for order through the CPC™ office. Those who pass the examination will be added to the roster of the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification as a Certified Paraoptometric (CPO). 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 and are available on the AOA Web site, www.aoa.org.

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 at 212.356.0660.

Attainment of Certification, Renewal, and Recertification
Eligible candidates who have achieved a passing score on
the CPC™ Certified Paraoptometric Examination are eligible to use the CPO designation after their names. A database of certified paraoptometrics 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 payment of the appropriate renewal fee by the renewal deadline.**

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 on all 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 previously 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 or results report
- 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 CPC office at 243 N. Lindbergh Blvd, Floor 1, St. Louis MO, 63141 within 120 days of the alleged violation(s). Supporting documentation should be submitted with the complaint.

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

- Dismiss the allegation(s) on grounds it lacked sufficient evidence or merit to commence an investigation;
- Attempt to resolve any issue with the parties involved should the allegation(s) appear to be a misunderstanding; or,
- Conduct a full investigation of the allegation(s) 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 chair-person. 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. AOA General Counsel shall assist the panel in conducting the proceeding.

The panel will convene within 60 days of its appointment, meeting in the St. Louis office or via conference call. 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**
Paraoptometricians 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 knowledge and/or 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, exemption from certification requirements, and 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 by certified mail along with supporting documents to Commission on Paraoptometric Certification, 243 N. Lindbergh, Floor 1, St. Louis MO 63141. 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 Examination. The following outline includes a brief explanation of the areas covered on the examination. You should be familiar with all the terms, meanings and use. All 100 questions on the examination are of the objective, multiple choice types. Passing score is determined by the CPC™.

I. Basic Science (29%)
   A. Anatomy
      1. Definitions of Anatomical Parts
      2. Function
   B. Common Eye Disorders
      1. Definitions
      2. Causes
   C. Terminology
      1. Prefixes
      2. Suffixes
      3. Root Words
   D. Basic Pharmacology

II. Clinical Principles and Procedures (37%)
   A. Eye Examination
      1. Case History
      2. Visual Acuity
      3. Automated Keratometry/Topography
      4. Retinoscopy
      5. Subjective Refraction
      6. Ophthalmoscopy
      7. Binocular Vision
      8. Tonometry
      9. Visual Fields
     10. Biomicroscopy
     11. Fundus Photography
     12. Tomography
     13. Blood Pressure Measurements
   B. Refractive Status
      1. Emmetropia
      2. Myopia
      3. Hyperopia
      4. Astigmatism
5. Presbyopia
6. Accommodation

C. **Contact Lenses**
   1. Soft
   2. Gas Permeable
   3. Care and Handling
   4. Patient Education
   5. Base Curve Radius
   6. Lens Power
   7. Overall Diameter
   8. Optical Zone Diameter
   9. Peripheral Curves
   10. Edge and Center Thickness

III. **Ophthalmic Optics and Dispensing (18%)**

A. **Ophthalmic Prescriptions**
   1. Components of a Lens Prescription
   2. Add Power
   3. Prism
   4. Optics

B. **Ophthalmic Lenses**
   1. Types of Lenses
   2. Lens Materials
   3. Neutralization

C. **Ophthalmic Dispensing**
   1. Frame Anatomy
   2. Sizes and Measurements
   3. Basics of Frame Selection
   4. PD/Segment Height
   5. Ordering
   6. Basic Adjustments

IV. **Professional Issues (16%)**

A. **Eyecare Specialists and Ancillary Personnel**

B. **Practice Management**
   1. Telephone Techniques
   2. Appointments
   3. Record Filing Systems
   4. Recalls
   5. Fee Presentation
   6. Collections
   7. Third Party Payments
   8. HIPAA
   9. Hygiene and Infection Control
   10. Ethics

C. **Business Skills**
   1. Computer Applications
   2. Basic Business Technology
   3. Health Information Technology (HIT)
You may prepare for the Certified Paraoptometric (CPO) Examination using study resources available through the AOA and various other internet sources as well as hard copy optometric texts. The study map below lists the subject matter of the examination content along with some study resources. The Study Guide Map connects available resources to individual sections of the examination. Use of this listing does not constitute an endorsement concerning these sources and does not imply a guarantee that their use will ensure candidates are successful in passing the Certified Paraoptometric Examination. Please note that some AOA Web addresses require a membership sign-in and password.

### I. Basic Science

**AOA Marketplace**
- CPO Study Guide Book (PS-04B) or CPO Study Guide CD (PS-04)
- CPO Flash Cards (PS-11)
- Paraoptometric Certification CPO Review Course (PS19)
- Anatomy & Physiology Education Module (PS-07)
- Paraoptometric Skill Builder – Level 1 (PS-25)
- CPO Study Bundle (PS-20)

**Other**

### II. Clinical Principles and Procedures

**AOA Marketplace**
- CPO Study Guide Book (PS-04B) or CPO Study Guide CD (PS-04)
- CPO Flash Cards (PS-11)
- Paraoptometric Certification CPO Review Course (PS19)
- Special Procedures Education Module (PS-9)
- Soft Contact Lens Wear and Care Education Module (PS-10)
- Fitting Toric Soft Contact Lenses Education Module (PS-12)
Paraoptometric Skill Builder – Level 1 (PS-25)
CPO Study Bundle (PS-20)

Other

### III. Ophthalmic Optics and Dispensing

**AOA Marketplace**
CPO Study Guide Book (PS-04B) or CPO Study Guide CD (PS-04)
CPO Flash Cards (PS-11)
Paraoptometric Certification CPO Review Course (PS19)
ABCs of Optical Dispensing Education Module (PS-3)
Ophthalmic Dispensing Education Module (PS-08)
Optimizing Efficiency in the Optical Dispensary Education Module (PS-13)
CPO Certification Study Bundle (PS20)
New Horizons for Paraoptometrics - Optician Basics (PS24)
New Horizons for Paraoptometrics - Contact Lens Basics (PS23)
Paraoptometric Skill Builder Beginner Level 1 (PS25)

**Other**

### IV. Professional Issues

**AOA Marketplace**
CPO Study Guide Book (PS-04B) or CPO Study Guide CD (PS-04)
CPO Flash Cards (PS-11)
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 are not rushing to the location. Get plenty of rest the night before.
3 ways to place an AOA Marketplace order:

1. By email at orders@aoa.org

2. By phone at 800.262.2210

3. By mail to:
   American Optometric Association
   Attn: AOA Marketplace
   243 N. Lindbergh Blvd., Fl 1
   St. Louis, MO 63141-7881