Table of Contents

I. Background 3

II. Executive Summary 4-5
   - Mission Statement
   - Program Overview
   - Objectives
   - Highlights

III. Year in Review 6-14
   - Overall Pass/Fail
   - Education Level
   - Employment Setting
   - Candidate Age
   - Candidate Gender
   - Candidate Race
   - State Statistics
   - Reason for Certification

IV. Appendix 15-18
   - Certified Paraoptometric (CPO) Exam
   - Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA) Exam
   - Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT) Exam
   - Certified Paraoptometric Coding (CPOC) Exam
Background

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) was established in 2000 by the American Optometric Association. This program replaced the National Paraoptometric Registry, which was established by the American Optometric Association in 1978. Certification focuses specifically on the individual and is an indication of current proficiency in a specialized field. Certification is highly valued and provides formal acknowledgement of knowledge and skills in a particular area of practice.

The CPC offers four certified programs for optometric staff. Each program requires successful completion of an examination prepared and administered by the CPC with the assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC). The purpose of the examinations is to assure a level of knowledge to perform the functions necessary to each certified designation. Recipients must renew their certification every three years to remain current in their field. Paraoptometric certification provides a formal declaration of education and skill achievement in the profession of optometric assisting by:

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

The CPO™, CPOATM, and CPOT™ examinations are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA accreditation serves as a benchmark on how organizations should conduct certification and clearly distinguishes the excellence and value of CPC certification. To receive this accreditation, the CPC completed an application for each certification demonstrating compliance with the NCCA’s Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs, which were the first standards for professional certification programs developed by the industry. NCCA uses a peer review process to: establish accreditation standards; evaluate compliance with the standards; recognize organizations/programs that demonstrate compliance; and serve as a resource on quality certification.
Executive Summary

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) continues to offer the only certification available for paraoptometrists and seeks to make this experience valuable and desirable for all interested participants. The CPC certified population represents more than 6,500 participants throughout the United States, Canada, and the Armed Forces. The CPC continues to improve the quality and integrity of the program to maintain the positive perception of the program within the optometric community.

Mission Statement

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification serves the public by developing, maintaining, and promoting a certification process which reflects current modes of optometric practice and grants certification to those candidates who satisfy the set requirements throughout the world.

Program Overview

The Certified Paraoptometric Examinations are prepared and administered by the CPC with the assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation. The purpose of the examinations is to ensure a level of knowledge to perform the functions of a certified paraoptometric at each appropriate level. Those who have successfully completed the appropriate examination will be certified with the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification as a Certified Paraoptometric (CPO), Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA), Certified Paraoptometric Coder (CPOC), or Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT).

The passing score for all the examinations is set at the time each new form is reviewed for currency, appropriateness, and accuracy by an appointed committee responsible for examination development. During the process, this committee meets with a psychometrician who serves as a consultant to the committee to guide deliberations and to help ensure psychometric soundness of the decisions reached.

The primary consideration in this process is to represent the basic body of knowledge required for practice. A second consideration is to maintain the equivalent difficulty level of successive examinations. Based on Standard 4.21 of the AERA, APA, and NCME Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, the passing scores are established so that the test review committee can bring their knowledge and experience to bear in a reasonable way.

Objectives

The purpose of this Year-in-Review report is two-fold. First, it assures that the examinations are compliant with NCCA standards and assists the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification in identifying trends, targeting audiences, and ensuring that the examinations are reliable. Second, these metrics are valuable to stakeholders as they identify potential training opportunities that are lacking; personal development needs that are not being met; and identify target demographic audiences for marketing purposes. The information in this report is derived from candidate responses on the examination applications and the stringent review of score reports. All documentation regarding these reports is kept on file for five (5) years. Only through extensive task analysis studies can the CPC
determine the body of knowledge. Task analyses assess how a task is accomplished, including a detailed description of both manual and mental activities, task and element durations, frequency, allocation, complexity, necessary equipment and precautions, and any other unique factors involved in or required for one or more people to perform a given task. The CPC conducts these analyses every three to five years. In between these studies, test reviews and item performance reviews are conducted annually. Test specifications are updated frequently according to the environmental scan of the optometric practice.

Highlights
The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification is pleased to report that we have completed another successful year of providing certifications to paraoptometrics. The examinations are developed in cooperation with the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), which provides professional organizations of all sizes with quality psychometric services. The CPO, CPOA, and CPOT programs are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA helps to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the public through the accreditation of a variety of certification programs/organizations that assess professional competency.

- In 2016, there were 1,634 candidates for the CPO, CPOA, CPOT, and CPOC examinations.
- As of December 2016, there were approximately 6,707 total paraoptometrics that are certified. Here’s the breakdown of each certification:
  - 4,427 Certified Paraoptometrics (CPO)
  - 1,502 Certified Paraoptometric Assistants (CPOA)
  - 585 Certified Paraoptometric Technicians (CPOT)
  - 129 Certified Paraoptometric Coders (CPOC)
  - 64 certificants holding dual designations
All examinations are computer-based and offered during four, two-week testing periods. These are the results for 2016.

**Overall Pass/Fail**

The bulk of 1,634 candidates (86%) passed an examination on the first or second attempt.

*Pass rate is down 1% from 2015.*
Education Level

Most candidates (57%) hold a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent. Thirty-six percent (36%) of candidates hold an Associate’s, Bachelor’s, or Master’s degree, and seven percent (7%) of candidates are enrolled or are graduates of a CPC or ACOE approved assistant or technician program.

### 2016 Candidate Pass/Fail Rate by Academic Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Level</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HS or Equiv</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Program</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician Program</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Pass**: 777
- **Fail**: 154
Employment Setting

Overall, 80% of candidates are employed by a private practice. Of the 1,309 candidates in this category, 88% or 1,151 passed the CPO, CPOA, CPOT, or CPOC examination on the first or second attempt.

![2016 Candidate Employment Setting]

Private Practice is up 2% from 2015.

![2016 Candidate Pass/Fail Rate by Employment Setting]
Candidate Age

A little over half the candidates (51%) are between the ages of 25-39, a little under one quarter (24%) are under the age of 25, and the remaining 25% are over the age of 40.
Candidate Gender

In 2016, examination candidates were primarily female (84%).
Candidate Race

Caucasians account for 68% of all candidates. Hispanics made up 12% of the candidate pool, with the remaining 8% being comprised of African American, Asian, and Native American candidates.
2016 Candidate Pass/Fail Rate by Race

- African American: 47 Pass, 17 Fail
- Asian: 40 Pass, 7 Fail
- Hispanic: 157 Pass, 42 Fail
- Native American: 15 Pass, 3 Fail
- Caucasian: 993 Pass, 123 Fail
- No Response: 160 Pass, 30 Fail
State Statistics

The three states with the most exam candidates in 2016 were Texas, Florida, and Oklahoma. For the third consecutive year, Texas has produced the greatest number of candidates.
Reason for Certification

More than half (63%) of 2016 CPO, CPOA, and CPOT candidates stated their employer was the reason for taking the exam, with 30% of candidates indicating that they were self-motivated to sit for the exam.

![Pie chart showing the reason for certification among 2016 candidates. Employer: 63%, Self: 30%, Colleague: 4%, Coworker: 2%, Other: 1%.]

![Bar chart showing the pass/fail rate by reason for certification among 2016 candidates. Employer: 875 Pass, 118 Fail; Self: 413 Pass, 64 Fail; Colleague: 51 Pass, 13 Fail; Coworker: 29 Pass, 6 Fail; Other: 18 Pass, 10 Fail.]

Employer is up 7% from 2015.
In 2016, 46% of CPOC candidates were self-motivated to sit for the exam, and the same percentage (46%) stated their employer was the reason they took the exam.
Certified Paraoptometric (CPO) Exam

The CPO examination is comprised of 100 multiple choice questions. A minimum score of 75% is required to pass. The examination is divided into four domains: basic science (27%), clinical principles and procedures (35%), ophthalmic optics and dispensing (20%), and professional issues (18%). A total of 1,249 candidates sat for the CPO examination in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Candidates</th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>Low Score</th>
<th>Average % Correct</th>
<th>Repeat Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half (50%) of 2016 CPO, CPOA, and CPOT candidates had between one and five years of experience, with 34% having less than one year.
Appendix

Certified Paraoptometric Assistant (CPOA) Exam

The CPOA examination is comprised of 200 multiple choice questions. A minimum score of 70% is required to pass. The examination is divided into six domains: office operations (15%), ophthalmic optics and dispensing (20%), testing and procedures (18%), special procedures (17%), refractive status of the eye and binocularity (13%), and basic ocular anatomy and physiology (17%). A total of 230 candidates sat for the CPOA examination in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Candidates</th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>Low Score</th>
<th>Average % Correct</th>
<th>Repeat Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT) Exam – Written

The CPOT Written examination is comprised of 225 multiple choice questions. A minimum score of 69% is required to pass. The examination is divided into six domains: pre-testing procedures (20%), clinical procedures (28%), ophthalmic optics and dispensing (18%), refractive status of the eye and binocularity (12%), anatomy and physiology (15%), and practice management (7%). A total of 67 candidates sat for the CPOT Written examination in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Candidates</th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>Low Score</th>
<th>Average % Correct</th>
<th>Repeat Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certified Paraoptometric Technician (CPOT) Exam – Clinical

The CPOT Clinical examination was offered for the first time in November of 2014. It is comprised of 100 multiple choice questions. A minimum score of 75% is required to pass. The examination is divided into four domains: case history scenarios (10%), pre-testing procedures (30%), special procedures (30%), and optical dispensing techniques and recording (30%). A total of 51 candidates sat for the CPOT Clinical examination in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Candidates</th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>Low Score</th>
<th>Average % Correct</th>
<th>Repeat Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

Certified Paraoptometric Coding (CPOC) Exam

The CPOC examination is comprised of 125 multiple choice questions. A minimum score of 70% is required to pass. The examination is divided into seven domains: anatomy and physiology (8%), medical terminology (8%), review of current procedural terminology (22%), diagnosis codes (24%), medical records (14%), claim filing (12%), and compliance (12%). A total of 37 candidates sat for the CPOC examination in 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Total Candidates</th>
<th>High Score</th>
<th>Low Score</th>
<th>Average % Correct</th>
<th>Repeat Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A little under one-third (30%) of 37 CPOC candidates had five or more years of experience, and a little over one-quarter (27%) had two years of experience.

2016 CPOC Candidate Experience Level

- 30% 2 yrs
- 27% 3 to 5 yrs
- 43% 5 + yrs