



**North Carolina  
State Board of Opticians**

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## **Requirements to become a North Carolina Licensed Optician**

As a **resident**, there are two ways to qualify to become a licensed optician in the state of North Carolina:

- (1) graduate from an accredited school of opticianry (such as Durham Technical Community College), achieving a two-year Associates in Applied Science Degree in Opticianry then passing the Licensure Examination and serving a six-month internship while registered with the Board in an approved training establishment.

**-OR-**

- (2) by serving an apprenticeship at an approved training establishment under a registered trainer (2 ½ years effective Nov 1, 2016 or 3 ½ years for registrants prior to Nov 1, 2016) **and** enrolling in a Board-approved certificate program (Durham Tech's Certificate Program or the National Academy of Opticianry's Career Progression Program), passing the Licensure Examination and serving a six-month internship while registered with the Board in an approved training establishment.

NOTE: The DoD optical training made available to military personnel is deemed comparable to the Board apprenticeship program; personnel providing documentation of successful completion of the program are Exam-and-internship eligible.

An **out-of-state applicant** may become licensed in the state of North Carolina if he/she meets the following statutory (G.S. 90-241) qualifications:

- (1) The Board shall grant a license without examination to any applicant who:
  - a) is at least 18 years of age.
  - b) is of good moral character.
  - c) holds a license in good standing as a dispensing optician in another state.
  - d) has engaged in the practice of opticianry in the other state for four years immediately preceding the application to the Board.
  - e) is contact lens certified
  - f) has not violated the Article or the Rules of the Board.

**-OR-**

- (2) The Board shall grant admission to the next examination and grant a license upon attainment of a passing score on the examination to a person who has worked, in a state that does not license opticians, in opticianry for four years immediately preceding the application to the Board performing tasks **and** taking the curriculum equivalent to the National Academy of Opticianry's Career Progression Program, and who is at least 18 years of age, of good moral character, and has not violated the Article or rules of the Board. Also, the individual must document his/her time in training and experience in all phases of the optical business, including eyeglass dispensing, edging and finishing, contact lenses fitting and dispensing, etc.

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Internship Required

Out-of-state licensure candidates (by waiver of examination or by examination completion) must also serve a six-month internship while registered with the Board in an approved training establishment.

Exam Information

The Licensure Exam is administered twice yearly (usually in March and October) at Durham Technical Community College in Durham, North Carolina. All Exam applications must be reviewed and approved by the Board; they and the \$300 Exam fee (payable by certified check or money order) are due into the Board office a minimum of sixty (60) days prior to the Exam date.

Note: If an applicant has taken and passed the American Board of Opticianry (ABO) Certification Examination during the three (3) years immediately preceding their participation in the NC State Board of Opticians' Licensure Examination they will not be required to take the *Rx Interpretation* and *Ophthalmic Lenses* components of the Exam.

Likewise, if he/she has taken and passed the National Contact Lens Examiners (NCLE) Certification Examination during the three (3) years immediately preceding participation in the NC State Board of Opticians' Licensure Examination, they will not be required to take the *Contact Lens-Written* component of the Exam.

Verification of Exam applicants' ABO and/or NCLE certifications must be submitted as part of the Exam application. Copies of certificates or certification letters may be provided, and will be verified against ABO/NCLE records.)

Each component averages an hour in length with the exception of Application of Optical Manufacturing; participants should anticipate 1 ½ days' participation. While the Licensure Exam is proprietary to the Board (i.e., no "sample questions" or detailed info is provided) applicants may review the Exam Reference Sheets for component information, and suggested study materials.

Several Board-independent review courses are offered for applicants' additional preparation. Contact the Board office for providers and contact information.

**Please feel free to call the Board office at (919) 420-1390 for clarification or further assistance.**