

REFERENCE GUIDE



EXAM CANDIDATE HANDBOOK 2024

National Examining Board of Ocularists
2050 Keokuk St., NEBO Suite
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

-Introduction-

The National Examining Board of Ocularists Certification Examination for Ocularists is designed to assess the competence of the ocularist in performing the variety of health care and related functions and tasks normally encountered in the fitting and fabrication of ophthalmic prosthetics.

The National Examining Board of Ocularists, NEBO, is an independent board consisting of Ocularists and members of related professions including Ophthalmology and a public member.

The Certification Examination was designed by studying the work that Ocularists through job task analysis and role delineation surveys on a routine scheduled timeline to assess the knowledge they rely on to perform their work competently. A national representative committee of highly qualified, certified and experienced Ocularists carry out these studies accompanied and analyzed by qualified Psychometric professionals to define precise content areas that are important, critical, and relevant to the profession. The results of the “Role Delineation Survey” (RDS) define the specifications for the quantity and depth of each area assessed in examination process for NEBO Certification.

Committees of highly qualified and certified Ocularists then write and repeatedly reviewed the test questions to fit the demands of the RDS. Psychometric procedures are applied at various levels in construction of the exam to ensure that the exams are representative of the domains against which the test is validated. The passing point for exams is determined using the Modified Angoff Technique, a widely accepted criterion-referenced strategy for determining passing points. Thus, the expert judgment of Ocularist professionals determined the content of the test and psychometric expertise ensured that the test questions measure what they are intended to assess. This exam analysis and passing point is measured, reviewed and compared every year for approval by the Board of Directors for NEBO.

Security is of the utmost importance throughout the test development and administration process. Examination materials are locked in a secure place either physically or electronically before and

following the test administration. During the administration of the tests, monitors supervise the testing conditions and examinees' behavior and note any irregularities. The performance of the examinees may also be analyzed statistically for the purpose of detecting and verifying fraud. Individuals who remove or attempt to remove examination material from the test site will be prosecuted. Examinations will not be processed for examinees who violate security until after a thorough review of the evidence.

Any inappropriate behavior during the administration of an examination, such as giving or obtaining unauthorized information physically or electronically for aid, as evidenced by proctor observation or statistical analysis of answer sheets, constitutes sufficient cause to invalidate an examinee's score and/or terminate his or her participation in the examination and/or take other appropriate action.

Meazure Learning uses a combination of advanced technology and a high degree of human expertise to produce accurate and reliable scores and proctoring. Prior to scanning, (if offline paper exams are used) answer sheets are reviewed individually for accuracy of name and I.D., bubbling, and for possible scanning difficulties (i.e., incomplete erasures, light bubbling, etc.). Examination sheets then go through double scanning and scan checking to detect possible errors in the scanning process. In addition to the computer scoring, some candidate sheets are manually scored and compared to the computer results (approximately 4% random check) for statistical verification. Online or computer exams follow a similar path of verification to paper exams (offline exams).

Candidates are notified in writing regarding whether they have passed or failed the examination directly by Meazure Learning. Individual test scores are confidential and will be disclosed to no one via phone or facsimile until Meazure Learning's notification results have been distributed to all Candidates. All pre/posttest analysis, psychometric analysis with Meazure Learning and NEBO committees are done using test IDs so that the amenity of each Candidate is protected from any potential bias. Without prior written authorization from the Candidate NEBO will not disclose the status of any portion of the candidate's exam progress or results.

-Certification Examination-

The National Examining Board of Ocularists Certification Examination (offered only in English) is divided into a Written Examination and a Fabrication Examination.

The Written Exam** of the Certification Examination is a 150 question multiple choice examination. Candidates will complete their written exam at a local Measure Learning or approved testing site. The examination is criterion referenced, every effort has been made to assure that all questions in the examination relate to tasks performed or knowledge and skills needed to perform as a fitter and fabricator of ophthalmic prosthetics.

The Written portion includes questions from four general categories. 31.94% of the examination will relate to the fitting of ophthalmic prosthetics, 35.20% to the fabrication of ophthalmic prosthetics, 16.72% to preliminary examination and evaluation principles and the remaining 16.14% to questions related to general care and hygiene. More details in each category can be found on our website along with a bibliography and study guide.

Each item, on the written examinations, is worth one point. Candidates are advised to answer every question, since the final score is determined by the number of questions answered correctly. There is no penalty for guessing.

Example: Which of the following professional titles refers to the fitter and fabricator of ophthalmic prosthetics?

- a) Optometrist
- b) Optician
- c) Ocularist
- d) Oculist

Answer: c) Ocularist

Three hours and thirty minutes are allowed for the completion of the written exam.

Measure Learning Proctors will assure the absolute integrity of the examination process.

The Fabrication Exam or practical exam of the Certification Examination requires that the examinee demonstrate his/her ability to fabricate (from specifications in a fabrication kit) the two most commonly encountered types of prostheses, a conventional prosthesis and a scleral shell prosthesis. Candidates can arrange for a proctor as soon as 14 days after the approval of their application.

All work is done in the laboratory of the examinee by the examinee. Examinees are given up to ten days to complete fabrication of both the conventional and scleral shell prostheses. The painting of iris, vascularization, tinting, and final finishing/polishing of the scleral shell is performed under the supervision of a proctor appointed by the National Examining Board of Ocularists.

-Validity of Scores-

The integrity of the scores awarded examinees for their performance on NEBO examinations is protected by every means available. All possible efforts are expended to assure that the tests are administered under standard conditions and in conformity with the principles on which the test and its scoring are founded. These efforts are made to assure that no examinee or group of examinees receives, either advertently or inadvertently, unfair advantages in the test. All aspects of the tests are examined for non-bias compliance at numerous levels.

Any score that the National Examining Board of Ocularists determines does not represent a reasonable assessment of the examinee's knowledge or competence, sampled by the examination, shall be deemed irregular. The answer sheets of all examinees are monitored and may be analyzed statistically for purposes of detecting irregular scores.

Certification Exam results are sent between 4-8 weeks after completion of all requirements.

-Exam Eligibility Criteria-

Pathway I- Complete a NEBO approved education program (ASO College of Ocularistry or ASO Education Program). Note: Graduates of NEBO approved programs must require their members to complete 10,000 hours of fitting and fabricating ocular prosthetics under supervision of a B.C.O. in good standing and current status.

Applicant must provide;

- evidence of start date
- evidence of continued work duration
- evidence of completion of time requirement
- completion of educational program
- Letter from Sponsoring B.C.O. proving compliance
- completion of background check signoff

Pathway II- 14,000 hours experience in fitting and fabricating ocular prosthetics.

Applicant must provide;

- evidence of start date
- evidence of continued work duration
- evidence of completion of time requirement
- at least 2 (two) Ophthalmologist/Oculoplastic surgeon attesting to the time compliance as outlined.
- at least 2 (two) B.C.O.'s attesting to the time compliance as outlined.
- completion of background check signoff

Certification will be awarded to candidates qualifying under Pathway I and II after:

- a) achieving a passing grade in both the Written Examination and the Fabrication Examination
- b) completion and NEBO verification of all required education, training and/or experience requirements
- c) paying the required examination or other assessed fees
- d) NEBO verification of background signoff documentation

All requirements must be fulfilled before certificates are awarded.

****The Exam is only available in English.****

“Translators and/or dictionaries are not allowed”

-Certification Exam Application Requirements-

Application Deadline: December 1

No applications after December 1.

Application process opens April 1

Applications are available for download at: www.neboboard.org,

Also include:

Photographs

-Two passport type photographs of the applicant must be submitted in a sealed envelope with the application for application approval.

-One color copy of Government issued photo ID for exam verification; no applications will be accepted without copy of ID.

-Required Documentation for evidence of pathway (See application for more information)

-Completed and signed NEBO Background Check form.

Applicants to this examination shall be considered without discrimination as to age, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, handicap or marital status.

Please send completed application, photos and supporting documents with ink signatures and exam fee to:

Dan Yeager, Executive Director
National Examining Board of Ocularists
2050 Keokuk St., NEBO Suite
Iowa City, IA 52240

-Re-Examination Provisions-

The examination consists of a Written Examination (MCQ) and a Fabrication Examination (FAB). Any section an examinee passes will be valid for four years. If the certification process is not completed within that four-year period, the previously passed section will have to be retaken and passed. There will be a waiting period of 30 days following the notification by Measure Learning of failure of the Written Examination (MCQ) before the MCQ exam may be retaken. The Fabrication Examination may only be taken once per year. In unlikely event of any portion (FAB or MCQ) examination loss (damage, mail loss, etc.) that portion of exam must be repeated at the earliest Candidate convenience. No additional fees will apply in “acts of God” loss cases.

-Makeup or Retest Exams-

Permission is granted on an individual and as needed basis after NEBO review of an additional new Test application for a “Makeup” written exam and may or may not result in additional fees. Fees for retaking the Written Exam after failure (retest) apply. Failure to attend any scheduled “Makeup or Retest Exam” without 24 hrs. advanced notification, may

result in forfeiture of fees and re-application to take exam the during the following year's exam cycle.

The fees for Makeup and Retest exams reflect additional cost incurred by the Testing Service – Meazure Learning and NEBO.

Make up or RETAKE EXAM

Written_____ \$ US 600

Recertification RETAKE_ \$ US 600

(Canada, ADD \$300.00 US)

-Test Accommodations-

Test Accommodations for Candidates are done on an individual basis following the standards set by the American Disabilities Act (ADA). A written request must be sent to the NEBO Board no later than 60 days prior to the exam date. Unless special ADA test accommodations are granted based on a specific request for a specific exam date, all other standard testing conditions will apply. For more information regarding test accommodations for qualified ADA disabilities contact the NEBO Board directly at the published address and phone numbers listed in this document

-Withdrawals, Cancellations and Refunds-

Applicants who voluntarily withdraw, in writing and received by NEBO at least 7 days prior to the examination, will receive a full refund, less a processing fee of \$300. If applicant withdraws within 6 days of the examination, the examinee will receive a 50% refund. Any other

refund will be at the discretion of the National Examining Board of Ocularists.

-Appeals-

A. Any individual, whose application for examination has been refused or returned, shall have the right to a written statement concerning the basis for refusing or returning the application which states the deficiency or deficiencies contained therein. A refund of all fees minus any administrative costs of \$300 US are to be refunded. The Examining Board may refuse an application for reasons including, but not limited to the following: false and misleading written statements concerning certification, accreditation, designation, and or education.

B. Due to deadlines for the examination applications a timely and prompt appeal and response is necessary so that in the event the applicant is found eligible to take the certification exam, there will be time to coordinate the exam for them. An applicant who is determined to be ineligible for the certification exam has up to 14 calendar days to appeal the decision. This must be in writing and directed to the executive director. The executive director will then have up to 14 calendar days to respond to the applicant with a decision following the receipt of the written appeal. Criteria for eligibility are forwarded to the executive committee along with the appeal and the appeal is voted upon.

C. If you believe that a discrepancy exists in the scoring or reporting of your test results, you may request re-scoring of the written or fitting portion of the examination. Your examination will be inspected and re-scored upon receipt of the hand-scoring request form and the applicable fee. Requests for re-scoring answer sheets must be received by Scantron Corporation, no later than 30 days following release of the examination results. Requests beyond this time period will not be processed.

D. An Individual who is determined not to be certified has up to 30 days to appeal the decision. This appeal must be in writing and received by the Executive Director within 30 days of the examinee being denied certification. Necessary information is forwarded to the Executive Committee and the appeal is voted upon. The NEBO Executive Committee will then have 30 days to give response to the written appeal.

Recertification Process

All candidates that successfully pass the certification exam after 2019 will automatically begin the new 4-year recertification scheme structure.

After a transition period to accommodate all current B.C.O.'s registering or re-certifying in the next 3 years, all B.C.O.'s will Re-Certify every 4 (four) years with 200 credits per the new scheme as well.

The Registration portion of the old cycle, and the credit requirement will be eliminated by the new 4 (four) year Recertification only scheme.

There will be no “look backs” on credits after the transition is made by the BCO into the new 4 (four) year recertification cycle. All future credits will only be valid for 4 years from the Issue date to the expiration date of the current certificate.

Financially NEBO will operate by charging a yearly “Maintenance of Certification” (MOC) to the BCO and by charging a “flat fee” for pre-approved programs/events/meetings.

Additional “non-prior approved” program and credit awards’ will still be available at a current fee of \$10 (ten) US dollar per credit cost to the

applicant with a \$50 (fifty) US dollar non-refundable application fee. All applications for this style of credits must be submitted within the calendar year to have credits reviewed/verified and awarded.

Initial certification will include a full-size certificate with an initial issue date (Jan 1 of the year results are valid unless delayed by exam results) and final expiration date (Dec 31, 4 calendar years after issue date).

An 8x10 certificate will be sent for all subsequent recertifications every 4 (four) years. All Certificates for Board Certified Ocularists will begin on January 1 and end 4 (four) calendar years later on December 31.

Certificate numbers will be as follows: Initial year of certification (or new issue date, if certification has lapsed and the B.C.O. has certified anew)- and Personal ID number. Ex: 19-270 (2019 and B.C.O. #)

The ID numbers will not change and will remain the same for recertification unless a lapse by the B.C.O. results in a loss of certification.

In that event when the lapsed B.C.O. later retakes the initial certification exam again, the new Certification becomes a new initial year of Certification for that B.C.O. and a new record begins, and previous certificate and issue dates are no longer used.

Once the B.C.O. successfully re-exams, they will be issued a new issue date and large certificate. Subsequently, the recertification cycle will follow the new issue date. The lapse in recertification cancels the old “first certified date” as the candidate is completely retested and started anew.

To recertify.

Recertification Cycle;

A B.C.O. must re-certify as part of maintaining their certification by one of two processes every 4 (four) calendar years, a B.C.O. will then “Recertify” utilizing either Process I or Process II.

Process I- In the event that a B.C.O. has less than 200 CE Credits, the B.C.O. must take the Written Certification Exam.

- The B.C.O. will need to be “in good standing” (see glossary)
- The B.C.O.’s will need to be “current” (see glossary)
- The B.C.O. must complete and attest to yearly background affidavit when paying their MOC. (see below and glossary terms)
- The B.C.O. must successfully complete the written exam before their expiration date.
- The B.C.O. is responsible for paying the applicable fees.
- If the B.C.O. fails the 1st attempt at the written exam, the B.C.O. must apply for a retake exam within expiration date window.
- Failure to complete the exam during the Recertification time frame will result in the B.C.O. being “not Current” will be placed in the “suspension” status on the website.
- If the B.C.O. fails the 2nd attempt, Certification is revoked immediately per date of test failure notification.
- Failure in Process I will require a complete re-exam of original certification requirements to regain B.C.O. Certification.

Process II- Submit 200 Approved CE credits.

(Credits/paperwork must be submitted no later than Dec 1, 30 days before the certificate expiration date. CE credits totals may be submitted anytime in the fourth year of the recertification cycle if already obtained.

- The B.C.O. will need to be “in good standing” (see glossary)
- The B.C.O.’s will need to be “current” (see glossary)
- The B.C.O. must complete and attest to yearly background affidavit when paying their MOC. (see below and glossary terms)
- Credits in excess will not be rolled over to the next recertification cycle and all credits expire when the certificate expires.
- Credits must be obtained from the certificate issue date to certificate expiration date.
- There are no additional fees for recertification if using pre-approved credits.
- \$300 late fee for all paperwork/credits received after Dec 1, of expiration year.
- A maximum of 100 “Administrative Credits may be used per recertification cycle.
- CE Credits for the same course/lecture/authorship may not be repeated for credit awards within the four-year recertification cycle.

Credits for Recertification

Only three types of credits;

- Pre-Approved Credits
- Non-Pre-Approved Credits.

- Administrative Credits

Pre-Approved Credits (PAC's)

Any education program that wishes to offer Continuing education credits may apply under the pre-approved credits process. The attendees will not have to pay any fees to NEBO to have the credits accepted from PACs.

- Programs/event/meetings for PACs must be submitted for NEBO credit assignment at least 30 days prior to the beginning of the program/event/meeting.
- Submit application with completed program containing course times and date, synopsis of course and time duration, whether or not course is tested or requirements for passing lab portion of course if the course is a “hands on” laboratory course.
- Program sponsor must pay a flat non-refundable fee of \$250 for program review and credit assignment per program/event/meeting.
- NEBO will assign credits based off time/content/validity and contact program sponsor with a credit total within 7 days of receiving the application based on the rules governing credit assignment for CE credits.
- The program sponsor may confirm or decline the credits opportunity within 14 calendar days of receipt of credit totals.
- The applicant can reject the assigned credits with no further fees or obligations to either party by stating the rejection in writing to the NEBO Board within that 14-day window.
- If accepted the program sponsor will then pay a flat fee of \$7,000 per program/meeting that will include up to 100 (one hundred) credits for that event only for the approved courses within 14 days

of the accepted review. Changes within the event and re-assignment of credits is included as well as credit adjustments made after the program/event/meeting audit.

- The Pre-Approved Credits program fee also includes any distance learning credits given 30 days prior to the last day of the program/event/meeting.
- A digital badge will be issued showing the specific program is a NEBO Approved Program. This badge will be custom for each event and organization and the Credit opportunities will be listed on our website free of charge for “Pre-Approved Credit opportunities”.
- The “Pre-Approved Program” fee includes credits for program chairs, moderators, instructors, and/or presenters of that program/event/meeting.
- Fee does not include credits for an organization’s administration but may be awarded through the “Non-Pre-Approved program credits” pathway. (See “Administration Credits”)

Non-Pre-Approved Credits (NPAC’s)

Any B.C.O. that attends a program/course/meeting, gives a lecture/course, or contributes to a written publication (authorship) that is directly related to the field of Ocularistry is eligible for CE credits. A B.C.O. may submit an application for “Non-Pre-Approved Credits” at any time within 365 days of the event. All fees and applications must be completed within 365 days of the event/lecture/publication to be able to verify validity and attendance in order to receive credits.

- Submit application with required evidence of a program attendance/lecture/authorship plus a \$50 non-refundable application fee.
- NEBO will assign credits based off time/content/validity and contact the BCO with a credit total within 30 days of receiving the application.
- The BCO may confirm or decline credits, a decision must be made within 14 calendar days of receipt of credit total opportunities from NEBO.
- The applicant can reject the assigned credits with no further fees or obligations to either party by stating the rejection in writing to the NEBO Board with that 14-day window.
- If confirmed, an invoice for the credit total will be sent at \$10/credit and all transactions must be completed within 14 calendar days of acceptance.
- There are no “non-pre-approved” credit limits per year for rectification.
- A confirmation “credit letter” will be sent to the applicant B.C.O. upon receipt of payment. This letter will also be saved electronically to their individual file and a yearly running credit total for NPACs will be tracked within the master database at additional no charge to a B.C.O. that is current and in good standing.

Administrative Credits (AC’s)

- A maximum of 25 credits per year will be allowed for NEBO Board Members, Committee Chairman, Committee Members, SMEs and examiners per current Credits assignment rules.

- Credits assigned “Administrative Credits” based off job title/duty per current rules and standards.
- Credits not covered by Approved Program fee or by serving in NEBO roles may be applied for separately by application. AC credits are subject to the same NPAC application fee and \$10 (ten) US dollar / credit fee structure.
- Must apply within 365 days or 1 year and all credits expire after 4 years.

Board Service (Approved)

The Board will be made up of at least 4 B.C.O.’s, 1 Appointed AAO member, and a public member. Opportunities for other elected members (non B.C.O.’s, Optometrists, Nurses, etc.) will be handled on a case by case or organization by organization basis to avoid any undue influence or bias.

Board Service is a three-year term. A series of three terms may be served concurrently. Once nine years of service is met, member must resign from the board for at least 365 days before a new term of service may be started.

A nomination process will be used to vote in a new B.C.O. Board Member.

- An open call for nominations will be sent to the entire B.C.O. Administrator/Executive population.
- The Nomination period will be open for 14 days, at which point the current NEBO Board.

- Each nominee will be contacted by the NEBO Administrator/Executive Director and informed of their nomination, expected duties, opportunities of service, confirm the nominee’s willingness to serve a minus three-year term and attend at least one Board meeting per year.
- After a criminal background search is completed all those nominated will be placed on a secure ballot constructed by the Administrator /Executive Director with the nominees arranged in alphabetical order and forwarded to the Board for a secure vote.
- The ballots will be sent to the BOD by secure mail or verifiable email for election by the Board.
- The BOD shall complete their vote in 5 (five) days or less.
- The vote by anonymous ballot shall then be tallied and processed by the NEBO Administrator/Executive Director and public member within 10 (ten) days and report the vote to the Board of the winner(s).
- This entire process will be concluded within 30 days of the initial nomination email.
- The elected nominee will be contacted directly by the Chairperson of NEBO for duty assignment.
- The process will be the same for all positions on the NEBO Board.

NEW Suspension and Inclusion with Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Fee

- A fee for “Maintenance of Certification” or MOC of \$250/calendar year will be due no later than January 31 of each

calendar year per B.C.O. when in the new 4-year Recertification program.

- The payment of the yearly MOC will allow the B.C.O. to remain in “Good Standing” status with NEBO (see glossary for terms of “Good Standing”) with no additional fees or costs if utilizing Process II and only PAC credits.
- There will be a \$100 late fee added after January 31st. The B.C.O. has until February 28th to pay MOC and late fee.
- If no payment is received by February 28th, the B.C.O. is placed under “Suspension” classification. (see glossary for terms of “Suspension”)
- In the event of Suspension the B.C.O. can regain “in good standing“ status by paying MOC due for the year, the late fee (\$100) if paid by February 28th and Suspension fee (\$500) if after February 28th before the end of the calendar year in which the B.C.O. failed to pay the MOC.
- Once the back due MOC, late fee and suspension fees are paid in full the Suspension is lifted. The B.C.O. status will then be changed back to “In good standing” (see glossary for terms).
- Failure to comply with any and all of the three elements for recertification will result in a B.C.O. being placed on Suspension status until corrected, or the Certificate is revoked for failure to comply at the end of the Suspension year. The three elements are to be in good standing, to be current and have completed the yearly “Ethical or Background Check”.
- During the “suspension” time period the B.C.O. is listed as “not in good standing” or “not current” for all credentialing verification inquiries, register listings and other communications with NEBO.
- **Yearly ethics sign off-** A B.C.O. may not qualify for recertification requirements even if they are “Current” on credits

and “in good standing” financially if they have been found guilty or convicted of any crime more severe than a simple misdemeanor criminal offense is subject to review by NEBO. Alford pleas, bench agreements or other types of reduced charges associated with misdemeanor level charges also apply and must also be disclosed for NEBO review. Sexual conduct/offense registry also disqualify a candidate or B.C.O. from certification or recertification. All code of conduct violations are based on public court documentation of a conviction or plea. An appeal hearing process shall be accommodated.

- Failure of the B.C.O. to pay the yearly MOC, late fees and suspension fee by December 31st, of the “suspension” calendar year will result in revocation of Board Certification at Midnight (CST) on December 31st.
- Recertification after suspension revocation must be done by completing an all-new Certification application and passing the entire Certification Exam process anew.

NEW Retiree Status

- A B.C.O. that has retired “Current” and “in good standing” has the option of applying for “Retiree Status” or using the acronym “BCO (Ret.)” for the remainder of his or her life. As long as they do not practice in the field of Ocularistry for compensation.

- A form requesting use of this status must be sent to NEBO prior to the expiration of their current certificate.
- The B.C.O.'s standing will be evaluated and a response form will be sent back to the BCO within 14 days with explanation on how to correct inequities, if evident, for approval.
- "BCO (Ret.)" will be used to denote those who have retired from the field.
- This is a NON-BILLING (free) status and affords the B.C.O. a listing in the classification of "Retired B.C.O.'s" on our website and other notifications until the time of death. For Retired B.C.O.'s that continue to stay active in education/lectures/programs, the use of B.C.O. (Ret.) will be appropriate.

-National Registry-

An official listing of all NEBO Board Certified Ocularists current and in good standing will be published by NEBO annually. This can be found on our website www.neboboard.org.

Applicants to this examination shall be considered without discrimination as to age, sex, race, religion, national origin, handicap or marital status.

Contact: Executive Director, Dan Yeager, for further questions.

National Examining Board of Ocularists
2050 Keokuk St., NEBO Suite
Iowa City, IA 52240
Phone (319) 339-1125 Fax (319) 337-5445
Email: nebo@neboboard.org
www.neboboard.org

The National Examining Board is a proud member of The Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) formerly the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA)

