

CERTIFICATION INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL ORTHOPTISTS

International Orthoptist Definition: For the purposes of this document & the associated document, "International Orthoptist Application for the Canadian Orthoptic Council Certification Examination", the term international orthoptist refers to individuals who have completed orthoptic education outside of Canada.

If you do not have certified education in orthoptics, please apply directly to a Canadian Orthoptic Program for the full 24-month training period. You will have to comply with their individual entrance requirements. <https://orthopticscanada.org/education>

To practice Orthoptics in Canada, it is necessary to obtain certification from the Canadian Orthoptic Council (COC). American-certified orthoptists in good standing with the American Orthoptic Council do not require Canadian certification to work in Canada but must maintain certification with AOC.

For orthoptists certified outside of Canada and the United States, the application to sit the qualifying examination has three steps:

1. Complete and submit the form, "International Orthoptists Application for Eligibility to the Canadian Orthoptic Council Certification Examination"
2. *After* COC eligibility has been granted, complete the application to sit the examination
3. It is strongly recommended that you familiarize yourself with the differences in the practice patterns of a Canadian Orthoptist with that of your own country.

All documents and applications are available on the COC website
<https://orthopticscanada.org/international-candidates/>

In addition to the application for eligibility, you must submit the following documents:

1. Evidence of a university or college baccalaureate degree.
2. Evidence of a minimum of 24 months of orthoptic education. Note: Proof of a 4-year degree in Orthoptics will fulfill both of requirements 1 and 2.
3. An updated curriculum vitae, including work experience.

If you have practiced orthoptics, please provide:

1. Proof of certification as an orthoptist, including registration with the relevant orthoptic college if applicable. The applicant must be in good standing with their applicable governing body which may be the orthoptic council, organization or university of the country issuing the original certificate. (See application document for additional information)
2. Letter of reference for periods of previous orthoptic employment.

All documents must be submitted in English and must be notarized. If these documents are in a language other than English, they must be translated into English and be notarized. In some cases, applicants may be asked to use a document-verifying service when submitting. If training was completed in a language other than English, the candidate must also provide proof of English language proficiency (for example scores from IELTS).

If you certified in France, you may be eligible to apply to the French integration program (Programme d'Intégration Francophones des Orthoptistes, PIFO). In these cases, PIFO provides the required education in the French language to prepare orthoptists educated in France for the Canadian certifying examination. You should apply directly to the PIFO program if you trained in France. (See below for PIFO contact information)

The COC written examination occurs annually on the first Wednesday in May. If the candidate is successful in the passing the written portion of the qualifying examination, they are invited to part 2 of the examination process. Successful completion of both sections of the examinations allows the applicant to apply for certification from the COC.

For further information on Canadian education programs visit the COC website or contact:

Clinical Vision Science, Dalhousie University

Dr Darren Oystreck OC(C)

IWK Health Centre, 5850 University Avenue, PO Box 9700

Halifax, NS, B3J 3G9

<https://www.dal.ca/faculty/health/clinical-vision-science/about.html>

Programme d'Intégration Francophones des Orthoptistes (PIFO)

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<http://www.orthoptiquequebec.ca/le-programme-dintegration-francophone-des-orthoptistes-pifo>