

## Certified Ophthalmic Assistant Certification (COA)

To qualify for certification at the COA level, you must meet one of the following three options:

Eligibility Pathway	Required Education	Required Work Experience Under the Supervision of Ophthalmologist
<b>COA – A1<sup>1</sup></b>	COA-OMP or CMA <sup>2</sup> accredited clinical training program at the Assistant level <sup>3</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ If you completed the program more than 12 months ago, you will need to submit 18 JCAHPO Group A credits for each year following graduation.</li> </ul>	None necessary
<b>COA – A2</b>	COA-OMP or CMA <sup>2</sup> accredited non-clinical training program at the Assistant level <sup>3</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ If you completed the program more than 12 months ago, you will need to submit 18 JCAHPO Group A credits for each year following graduation.</li> </ul>	Employed 500 hours within 12 months prior to submitting application
<b>COA – A3</b>	Graduated from high school or the equivalent <i>and</i> Approved Independent Study Course such as the JCAT course or AAO Ophthalmic Medical Assisting course with Work Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ If you completed the course more than 36 months ago, you will need to repeat the course or submit 18 Group A credits for each year following the 36 month period.</li> </ul>	Employed 1,000 hours within 12 months prior to submitting application

<sup>1</sup> Individuals who graduate from an accredited formal training program at the Technician or Technologist level are eligible to apply for a lower-level certification under the A1 eligibility pathway.

<sup>2</sup> COA-OMP is the Commission on Accreditation of Ophthalmic Medical Programs. CMA is the Canadian Medical Association.

<sup>3</sup> Candidates who attend a formal training program may apply for the certification examination up to two months prior to graduation from the program; however, no examination results will be sent by JCAHPO to the candidate until official notification of graduation is received and verification of the work experience is received if applicable.

### COA Examination Content Areas

Please refer to Appendix A to review the content areas.

### COA Recertification

An initial certification is valid for 36 months (three years). After that period, recertification is required every three years to maintain the use of the credential. The recertification period begins exactly 36 months from the month and year that you obtained initial certification.

To recertify, certificants may use one of two pathways:

Recertification Pathway	Application Requirement	Continuing Education Requirement
<b>Continuing Education Credits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Recertification application printable at <a href="http://www.jcahpo.org">www.jcahpo.org</a> postmarked by your recertification date</li> <li>♦ Sponsoring ophthalmologist signature</li> <li>♦ Recertification fee. Please see page 34 to review the fee schedule.</li> </ul>	18 Credits with a minimum of 12 JCAHPO Group A credits. The other 6 credits may be Group A or Group B credits*. All credits must be earned within the 36 month recertification cycle.  * Please see page 23 for further information about Group A and Group B credits.
<b>Retest in Lieu of CE Credits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Examination application printable at <a href="http://www.jcahpo.org">www.jcahpo.org</a></li> <li>♦ Sponsoring ophthalmologist signature</li> <li>♦ Examination fee. Please see page 34 to review the fee schedule.</li> </ul>	None. Successful completion of the COA multiple-choice exam is required for recertification.

For more information about recertification, please refer to page 23.

## Maintaining Certification

Technology and practices in medicine and healthcare continually change. In order to assure that certificants continue to evolve with the industry's changing needs, the Certification Committee and Board of Directors established the recertification process; a process that requires you to keep current with new developments in the field of ophthalmology through continuing education credits or re-examination. Recertification enables you to demonstrate your continued knowledge to employers, peers, and the general public.

An initial certification is valid for 36 months (three years). After that period, recertification is required every three years to maintain the use of the credential. The recertification period begins exactly 36 months (three years) from the month and year that you successfully completed all requirements for initial certification. A reminder letter to recertify will be sent approximately six months prior to your recertification date.

When recertifying with CE credits, all acceptable credits are classified as either Group A or Group B. Group A credits are pre-approved by JCAHPO based on ophthalmology (eye-care) content. Group B credits may be earned in the ways listed below. Certificants who are applying for recertification may choose earning either all Group A credits, or a combination of Group A & B.

All continuing education courses must be recorded on the application for recertification and duplicate courses are not allowed. The credits also need to be earned within your current 36 month certification cycle.

### You can earn Group A credits by:

- ♦ Attending lectures, workshops, or distance-learning courses, such as online courses, that have been awarded JCAHPO Group A credit.
- ♦ Teaching or authoring courses awarded JCAHPO Group A credit (1:1 basis). Only one credit per course topic will be awarded per recertification cycle.

### You can earn Group B credits by:

- ♦ Attending Grand Rounds or Physicians' Continuing Medical Education (CME) in Ophthalmology, Category 1 courses approved by the AMA or CMA that meet JCAHPO's Group A content areas (2 hours attended = 1 credit for COAs, CCOAs and COTs; 1 hour attended = 1 credit for COMTs.)
- ♦ Authoring or coauthoring a scientific publication and/or poster. JCAHPO reviews submissions for consideration of credit. Maximum of 5 credits for first author and 3 credits for coauthor. Contact the JCAHPO Education Department for more details.
- ♦ CPR certification. You can count 1 Group B credit per course for CPR certification for a maximum of 3 Group B credits per CE cycle.

## Continuing Education Requirements

Number of Credits Required Per Each 36 month (three year) Cycle			
Credential	Total Number of Credits Required	Minimum Number of Group A Credits Required	Maximum Number of Group B Credits Permitted
COA & CCOA	18	12	6
COT	27	18	9
COMT	36	18	18
Number of Credits Required Per Each 36 month (three year) Cycle			
Credential	Total Number of Credits Required	Minimum Number of Credits Related to Exam Content Outline	Maximum Number of Credits Not Related to Exam Content Outline
ROUB	25	10	15
CDOS	25	15	10

***"JCAHPO certification means you've met a standard of ophthalmic knowledge and skills, but it means much more than that. JCAHPO certification means one is dedicated to, and proud of their career choice. Certified personnel are a value to their practice and profession."***

***- Craig Simms, COMT, ROUB, CDOS***

### Sources of CE Credit

JCAHPO publishes a listing of all programs awarded CE credit under “Education - Earn Credits at Home” or “Education - Earn Credits at Meetings” at [www.jcahpo.org](http://www.jcahpo.org) including independent study courses with quizzes. Information on CE opportunities, including distance learning options (audio tapes, videotapes, magazine articles, on-line courses) and independent study courses with quizzes are also posted on the website.



Your Global Center for Online Ophthalmic Continuing Education

EyeCareCE was designed to increase your value as a highly skilled member of the medical eye care team. Leading ophthalmic organizations representing more than 20,000 ophthalmic medical technicians have collaborated to create the EyeCareCE website.

EyeCareCE serves as the premier e-learning network delivering affordable, accessible education and training. The website offers courses at basic, intermediate and advanced levels, with new courses added regularly. You can access interactive simulations, downloadable audio, audio/video, downloadable text, and web-based seminars.

Most courses include a quiz or assessment as the final component of an activity. Upon completion of the quiz, you will receive feedback on your results and have the opportunity to print a continuing education credit certificate for your records.

Offering assessment tests of up to 100 questions, you can complete the assessments to qualify for certificates of completion and continuing education credits or to prepare for certification examinations. To access the continuing education opportunities offered by EyeCareCE, visit [www.eyecarece.org](http://www.eyecarece.org).

### Non-Certified Status

If you do not apply for recertification or miss the recertification application deadline, you will be placed on non-certified status. Individuals who are placed on non-certified status are not permitted to represent themselves as JCAHPO-certified personnel; and they may not utilize the credential after their name on business cards, stationery, name badges, etc. From the time you are placed on non-certified status, you will have 12 months (one year) to apply for recertification before your credential becomes revoked. Within that 12 month period, the number of continuing education credits required to recertify does not increase, but a late fee will be assessed. You will not receive a new recertification date if you recertify within the 12 month non-certified status. For example, if you are due to recertify in December 2014, but do not recertify until December 2015, your new cycle will still be December 2014-December 2017.

If your non-certified status continues for longer than 12 months, your certification will be considered revoked. Please contact the JCAHPO Certification Department for your reinstatement options.

### Recertification Application Audits

If you are applying for recertification for the first time or are late recertifying, please include copies of the evidence of credits earned with your recertification application.

JCAHPO also conducts random audits of recertification applications, requesting proof of attendance and credits earned at all CE courses listed on the application. Please retain all documentation to verify credits in case you are audited. Once you have received your certificate and wallet card, there is no need to retain documentation except for your own records.

### Denial of Recertification

If, during the process of applying for recertification, allegations of a violation of the JCAHPO Standards, Procedures, and Sanctions Pertaining to Certification and Recertification are investigated and proven true, this may result in the denial of recertification, either on a temporary or permanent basis, depending on the circumstances. Certificants are expected to fully cooperate with the investigation.

