

**MINUTES  
OPHTHALMIC TECHNICIAN PROGRAM  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
October 22, 2020 (via Blackboard Collaborate)**

**WELCOME AND  
INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order by Lisa Maas at 6:30 p.m. Members and their affiliates were identified.

In attendance were:

Alan Frohlichstein, Retinal Angiographer and Adjunct Faculty  
Kayla Gagliardi, Triton Academic Advisor  
Mary Casey-Incardone, Triton Counselor  
Lisa Maas, Program Coordinator

**REVIEW OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved.

**UPDATE REGARDING  
COVID-19 AND IMPACT  
ON PROGRAM**

After spring break in March, classes were totally remote. This impacted the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students who were graduating in May because they needed to finish their clinicals.

International Council of Accreditation (ICA) sent a letter stating that any student who was graduating between March and October would be granted a one-time exception on completion of clinical hours as long as the program assessed student competency and deemed that the student was fit to graduate (see attachment). Students had 23 clinical days left at this point; therefore, Ms. Maas created a 30-hour project for the students which included case studies taken from the American Academy of Ophthalmology and simulators used during the semester. This met course objectives and accreditation guidelines and all students successfully completed the assignment. Students' certification information was then provided to JCAHPO so there would not be an eligibility issue when they took their exam.

Two students, who needed to finish up some AHL classes, are now completing their 23 days at clinicals and are expected to graduate in December.

The summer online course was completed successfully.

For this fall semester, lectures are again taught remotely through Blackboard Collaborate and labs have been split into three smaller groups. In an effort to cover skills missed in the spring and summer semesters or to review more difficult lectures, lab are approximately 45 minutes longer.

**ICA ACCREDITATION  
UPDATE**

ICA had a Town Hall meeting on September 24 to discuss the information they gathered from all programs on the following:

- What challenges is your program currently facing?
- What concerns do students have?
- What ICA support would most help you?

The common response from programs was the concern for clinical sites.

Ms. Maas reported that students finished the summer rotation on September 18. Because of the limited number of clinical sites, they were split into two sections of 5-week sessions so the participating clinical affiliates had back-to-back students. Despite COVID-19 concerns, all students wanted to return to clinicals.

On September 22, the fall rotation started with limited clinical sites to accommodate students; therefore, the first section will complete their clinical experience this fall semester and the second section will complete theirs in the spring. They will have another 16 weeks to complete and Ms. Maas hopes to have enough sites to accommodate all 16 students.

Ms. Maas informed the committee that she currently has 13 clinical sites and students understand that they will have to do their clinicals in sections. Ms. Maas will be meeting with two potential sites, who should be able to accept students in May if all goes well. In addition, she is currently working on a commitment with another site.

While it has been a challenging time, Ms. Maas is thankful that the program is managing rather well. Some programs have reported that they have not had any clinicals since March and some have not been able to get any students to enroll due to COVID-19 and the clinical situation.

In response to the Town Hall meeting, ICA reported the following (see attachment):

- Clinical hours will not be reduced at this time and they will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and watch how programs are progressing. Verbally, they had also denied simulations in lab time to make up for clinical hours.
- Site visits scheduled for 2020 will be held virtually and programs will be contacted shortly.

The program received 5-year accreditation after providing the self-study, pending the site visit results. The visit was scheduled for March 2020 and Ms. Maas will update everyone once a new date is set.

According to a program director who went through the process recently said it went wonderfully: ICA sent a packet via email to upload all documents needed; set meetings with institution president, vice president, program director, dean, faculty, students, and clinical affiliate representatives; and toured the facilities with the aid of an i-phone.

## JCAHPO CERTIFICATION TEST PERFORMANCE REPORT

Ms. Maas took the certification exam again after 30 years to see firsthand what students experience when they go to Pearson testing center and to determine why the pass rate is poor. She found the security level at the center to be quite shocking and being able to convey this to the students was helpful.

The recent results for the COT exam are for the period of August 1, 2019 to July 31, 2020; however, it is unclear as to what cohort is being represented (see attachment):

18 students took the exam, 7 passed for a pass rate of 39% - (4 passed on 1<sup>st</sup> attempt, 1 passed on 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt, 2 passed on 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt).

The faculty worked really hard the past two years implementing scaffolding teaching, making sure the program and accreditation objectives were met, and classes were cross-conceptualized to help students bring up their scores. Once students pass the written exam, they take a skills test, which they do very well on because they practice them in lab.

This program graduates sit for COT certification, which is a higher level test. A non-program candidate can take a home study course while gaining 1,000 hours on-the-job training to take COA test and then continue working for an additional 2,000 hours to be eligible for the COT test. More on-the-job training may help the candidate to formulate and put things together enabling them to score higher.

Ms. Maas explained that the exam is 220 questions, divided into 9 content criteria. She noted areas such as pharmacology and visual assessment were lacking and wants to analyze other performance reports for consistency to focus more attention on those areas to improve scores.

Ms. Casey-Incardone said that Dr. Jaswilko was helpful in preparing struggling nursing students with their state exam and suggested that Ms. Maas talk to him.

It was also suggested that all course test questions might be formulated as those on the home study practice exam.

Ms. Maas reported that she received a Perkins grant to purchase simulators and next year she hopes to get a home study course for each student.

It was asked if the exam could be proctored here at Triton to lessen the students' test-taking stress; however, JCAHPO will not allow it.

It is not mandated to be certified to work in the field and approximately 50% of the doctors require certification because of their expenses for the employee continued education, certification,

and higher salaries. However, the objective is to have students pass the certification exam on the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt because they have spent money and time getting prepared for this profession.

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS,  
AND SUGGESTIONS**

Ms. Casey-Incardone explained that Triton now has separate departments to support students: Advising handles the academic functions and Counseling handles health and wellness issues. Advisory meeting representation from these departments will be confirmed.

**FUTURE MEETINGS**

Details on the spring ophthalmic technician advisory committee will be forthcoming.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Maas thanked everyone for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Maas  
Coordinator  
Ophthalmic Technician Program

LM/db



# ICA

## International Council of Accreditation

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April 14, 2020

Dear ICA Program and Medical Directors,

The International Council of Accreditation (ICA) Board of Directors thanks you for keeping the safety of your students and faculty a top priority during the recent global events caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). ICA has been contacted by several training programs in response to the ICA guidance published on March 13, 2020, regarding how the COVID-19 situation will affect their program. As COVID progresses and changes the ICA and the program must also adjust to keep the best interests of the programs and students at the forefront. The ICA Board appreciates the helpful feedback from programs and students in response to the guidance. The ICA Board supports your program and is confident that your program/institution has an effective contingency plan in place.

### **Accreditation Requirements and Status:**

Going forward, programs do not need to send updates to ICA regarding changes to the current student cohort's curriculum and instruction. Instead, programs will be required to provide this information in their upcoming Annual Reports, Self-Studies, or Site Visits. Programs must continue to send in documentation of all other major program changes (i.e., new program director, new medical director, etc.). It is unlikely for ICA to deny any changes to your program during this time of crisis, as long as your program continues to meet the Standards. Please be advised that ICA accreditation will continue to take student outcomes/certification into consideration.

### **Didactic Instruction and Lab Experience:**

The ICA understands that all programs may need to move didactic instruction and lab work to distance learning education for the remainder of the academic year. If your program does not have the means to access an online educational platform, the contingency plan set in place must include how students will complete their didactic and lab course work.

### **Clinical Instruction:**

The ICA is aware that all programs are not able to send their students to clinical sites during this pandemic. The ICA Board of Directors met on Thursday, April 9, to discuss program clinical completion. A motion was passed to send a letter to IJCAHPO stating the following was approved by the ICA Board. The letter requested the IJCAHPO Certification Department grant a one-time exception to forgive clinical hours for the students set to graduate within the given time frames below, and allow them to sit for the certification exam:

1. Students graduating between March and October will be granted an exception on completion of clinical hours as long as the program assesses student competency and deems the student fit to graduate. Programs must submit all students' completed hours (as well as the confirmed graduation list) to the IJCAHPO Certification Department, in one summary document.
2. This one-time exception does not pertain to any students who will be attending another term or more of their program (i.e., first year students). Students graduating starting in November and on will need to make up their missed clinical hours during future semesters.

**Site Visits:**

ICA has postponed all Site Visits scheduled for spring 2020. We will continue to monitor the status of the COVID-19 situation and remain in contact with programs who are scheduled for a Site Visit. These programs have been notified of the postponement.

**Self-Study Renewal Applications and Fees:**

All programs who are due for continuing accreditation renewal will be contacted and given a 5-month extension to submit their Self-Study (now due January 31, 2021). Self-Study Renewal Application Fees will still be due August 31, 2020.

**Annual Reports and Fees:**

All Annual Reports and Fees will still be due by October 31, 2020. Programs who are required to complete the Annual Report and/or pay the Annual Fee will be contacted in August 2020.

ICA understands that many circumstances are still unknown, and the world is changing every day. We will continue to monitor the status of the COVID-19 situation and send communications to Programs, should there be any requirement changes.

We wish good health to all programs, faculty, students, and related families during this time.

Best regards,

*Suzanne Hansen*

Suzanne Hansen, MEd, COMT, OSC  
ICA President



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October 16, 2020

Greetings Program Directors,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your participation in the International Council of Accreditation's (ICA) first town hall meetings. These town hall meetings enabled the Board to hear from programs about current challenges and share helpful solutions from other program directors who have overcome obstacles this year. We hope to continue these meetings in the future.

ICA recognizes that many programs are facing challenges with recruitment; attrition; student and program personnel concern with contracting COVID-19; student financial concerns; and face-to-face lab instruction. While ICA may not be able to resolve these challenges, we understand and strive to assist you with these difficulties.

Three of the major concerns brought forth were completion of clinical hours, Site Visits, and Annual Reports. I would like to address these.

1. **Clinical Hours:** There are many unknowns with how the pandemic will continue to affect our lives in the coming months. At this time, ICA is not reducing the number of required clinical hours. ICA will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and may adjust clinical hours accordingly including discussions with IJCAHPO, as necessary.
2. **Site Visit:** ICA will be moving forward with Virtual Site Visits for programs originally scheduled to have a Site Visit in 2020. This will save programs the costs of an in-person Site Visit. ICA staff will be scheduling the Virtual Site Visits with programs in the coming weeks.
3. **Annual Reports:** It is very important that ICA continues to stay informed of program status'. Annual Reports and Fees will still be due by October 31, 2020. If your program requires an extension, please submit a detailed request letter to ICA. Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Because ICA and IJCAHPO have had a long-standing relationship, IJCAHPO will generously be:

1. offering discounts to the ACE Virtual Program for students enrolled in accredited training programs.
2. offering discounts for their Clinic CE Subscription to accredited training programs.
3. sending an eblast to clinics asking if they would be willing to be a placement site for students of accredited training programs in their area.
4. continuing to provide 1 free webinar per month to COTP Members.

I would again like to thank you for your time, and for being open with the challenges you are facing. Should you have questions, please contact ICA at [ica@icaccreditation.org](mailto:ica@icaccreditation.org).

Sincerely,

*Barbara Harris*

Barbara Harris, PA, MBA, COT, OSC  
President



INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION ON ALLIED  
HEALTH PERSONNEL IN OPHTHALMOLOGY

**2019-2020 Program Performance Report**  
**Examination: COT® Multiple Choice**  
**Triton College**

POPULATION	# of Examinees	1st Attempt Pass	2nd Attempt Pass	3rd Attempt Pass	Total Passed	Pass Rate %	Mean Score
Program	18	4	1	2	7	39.0	115.8
All Program Graduates	69	28	7	5	40	61.0	125.7
All Candidates	416	257	69	34	360	83.1	129.0

**Content Area Scores**

CONTENT AREAS	Percent of Exam	Program N = 18		All Program Graduates		All Candidates	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
History and Documentation	3	5.0	2.12	5.2	1.74	5.8	1.41
Visual Assessment	7	6.8	2.05	7.6	2.12	7.9	1.88
Visual Field Testing	3	3.4	1.13	4.0	1.23	4.0	1.24
Pupillary Assessment	4	4.8	1.13	5.1	1.24	5.2	1.24
Tonometry	4	5.7	1.33	6.0	1.24	6.3	1.25
Keratometry	3	4.1	1.11	4.6	1.08	4.6	1.00
Ocular Motility	6	8.3	2.05	8.6	2.15	8.0	2.34
Lensometry	3	3.1	1.34	3.6	1.37	3.6	1.32
Refraction, Retinoscopy & Refinement	5	6.1	2.15	6.9	1.88	6.7	1.85
Biometry	5	5.6	1.48	5.6	1.66	5.9	1.73
Supplemental Testing	2	3.2	1.15	3.5	1.00	3.7	.89
Microbiology	3	4.1	.71	4.2	.75	4.4	.66
Pharmacology	3	1.8	1.37	2.4	1.41	2.5	1.42
Surgical Assisting	6	8.1	1.41	8.2	1.42	8.7	1.33
Ophthalmic Patient Services & Education	12	13.1	3.2	14.8	3.34	15.6	3.07
General Medical Knowledge	5	6.0	1.87	6.1	2.06	5.9	2.01
Optics and Spectacles	5	4.8	1.34	5.5	1.46	5.8	1.49
Contact Lenses	5	3.8	1.31	4.3	1.45	4.5	1.43
Ophthalmic Imaging	7	7.9	2.08	8.5	2.11	8.8	1.85
Photography & Videography	6	4.4	2.08	5.2	1.92	5.3	1.91
Equipment Maintenance & Repair	1	1.5	.49	1.4	.54	1.3	.60
Medical Ethics, Legal & Regulatory	2	3.5	.59	3.5	.61	3.6	.53

**Definitions**

- Pass Rate:** Reported as a percentage  
**Mean:** The average score  
**SD:** Standard deviation; the larger this number, the more the spread in the scores

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**2019-2020 Program Performance Report**  
**Examination: COT® Skill Evaluation**  
**Triton College**

*Overall Score -- by number of candidates*

Population	First Time Examinees			Conditioned Examinees			Condition Rate
	Total	# Pass	Pass Rate	# Conditional Pass	Pass Rate	# Conditional Pass	
Program	4	2	50.0	2	0	0	-
All Program Graduates	52	16	30.7	36	25	65.7	34.2
All Candidates	230	66	28.6	164	125	57.3	42.6

*Skill Test Scores -- by number of exams*

Skill	Program			All Program Graduates			All Candidates					
	N	Pass	Fail	Pass Rate	N	Pass	Fail	Pass Rate	N	Pass	Fail	Pass Rate
Keratometry	4	4	0	100.0	63	45	18	71.4	272	202	70	74.2
Visual Fields	4	4	0	100.0	53	43	10	82.6	252	216	36	85.7
Ocular Motility	4	2	2	50.0	62	46	16	74.1	307	216	91	70.3
Lensometry	4	4	0	100.0	61	51	10	83.6	278	218	60	78.4
Retinoscopy	4	2	2	50.0	75	41	34	54.6	380	195	185	51.3
Refinement	4	3	1	75.0	58	49	9	84.4	273	206	67	75.4
Tonometry	4	4	0	100.0	56	51	5	91.0	255	222	33	87.0

Definitions-Top Table

- Pass:** The number of candidates who passed all areas of the Skill Evaluation in which they were testing.
- Conditional Pass:** The number of candidates who passed at least one task area on the initial Skill Evaluation, but needed to retake other skill areas.
- Pass Rate:** The percentage of candidates who passed all areas of the Skill Evaluation in which they were testing.

Definitions-Bottom Table

- N:** The number of exam attempts by Skill Evaluation area.
- Pass:** The number of exam attempts in which both technique and accuracy of reading were completed successfully.
- Fail:** The number of exam attempts in which either technique or accuracy of reading was not completed successfully.
- Pass Rate:** The percentage of exam attempts by Skill Evaluation area that were successfully completed.

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