

# The Society to Advance Opticianry

**Question:** What is the purpose of the Society to Advance Opticianry?

**Answer:** Academic credentials are essential in order to advance the scope of practice within a profession. Setting high standards of education and credentialing is inherent to the growth of a profession's current and "potential" future. Opticianry is the only profession of the three "Os" that does not require formal academic education as an entry level into the profession. It is the stated goal of the SAO to make academic credentialing and advanced certification of opticians the criterion by which opticians are judged in the future. The mentoring of Opticians interested in achieving the high standards to become members of the SAO is a stated goal.

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**Question:** What title will your members have and how might they benefit by being accepted as a member?

**Answer:** They will have the right and privilege to use the registered title "Ophthalmic Optician®" and will benefit through the efforts of the SAO to promote ophthalmic opticians as being the highest qualified and skilled opticians in the optical industry to the public, doctors, and industry leaders.

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**Question:** What are the current certification and education requirements needed to become a member of the SAO and earn the credential "Ophthalmic Optician® (O.O.)", instead of the alphabet soup of acronyms found in the opticianry industry?

**Answer:** Currently membership shall be open to Opticians who have:

1. A current ABO and a current NCLE certification with at least one being an Advanced Certification.
2. A current license, if practicing Opticianry in a licensed state.
3. An AS/AA in General Studies from an accredited college, or a college approved by the board of directors of SAO.

Or

1. A current ABO and a current NCLE certification.
2. A current license, if practicing Opticianry in a licensed state.
3. An AS/AAS in "Optical Science" from an accredited college, or a college approved by the board of directors of SAO.

Education credentials necessary to become a member of the SAO will increase gradually through December 31, 2020.

**What the SAO offers opticians:**

1. The SAO is a credentialing society which offers opticians whom are interested in earning an upper level designation that shows they have earned the highest levels of certification and education in the opticianry industry. The SAO understands, what we offer is not for all opticians. SAO is for opticians who are not satisfied with entry level credentials.
2. The privilege of using the professional title "Ophthalmic Optician®" and the letters "O.O.", after their name, instead of the alphabet soup of letters that confuses the public. Ophthalmic Opticians® will be known as being fully credentialed at advanced levels in both glasses and contact lenses, along with being college educated; similar to European Ophthalmic Opticians.
3. A professional certificate that documents their achievement of the highest level of academic excellence and professional skills.
4. The opportunity to be recognized along with other opticians who have reached the same goal.
5. Their names will appear on a list, which will be promoted to the major employers as being fully credentialed opticians who have met the highest standards in the industry.
6. A mentoring program to help candidacy members achieve full membership. All members are encouraged to help other opticians achieve "Ophthalmic Optician®" status.
7. The SAO offers a credential that demonstrates level of excellence within our profession worthy of striving for.

## Mission Statement

The Society to Advance Opticianry is a credentialing organization, which promotes higher education and certification levels for Opticians, and provides mentoring services to its candidate members.

[www.ophthalmicoptician.org](http://www.ophthalmicoptician.org)