

**American Academy of Optometry
Low Vision Section**

Low Vision Research Diplomate Program

CANDIDATE'S GUIDE
(Revised December 2010)

Diplomate status in the Low Vision Section of the American Academy of Optometry is recognition of academic achievement by Academy Fellows in the assessment and management of the rehabilitation needs of persons with impaired vision. Fellows who have expertise in low vision but who are primarily researchers are encouraged to become candidates for the Low Vision Research Diplomate Program. (See officer listings for contact information at the end of this guide or on the Academy website.)

Participation in the Low Vision Research Diplomate Program can provide a rewarding learning experience and a satisfying recognition of competency. Additionally, it offers opportunities to meet colleagues from many parts of the country and world who share mutual interests and concerns and with whom collaboration may be conducted. Low Vision Research Diplomates work and practice in a wide range of settings including optometric institutions and other universities, hospitals and rehabilitation agencies.

After successfully completing the program, Diplomates are expected to stay abreast of new developments and remain engaged in the field, including acceptance of responsibilities and leadership in lecturing, writing, and teaching within the Academy and within its Low Vision Section. Diplomates are expected to participate in Annual Academy Meetings and must renew their qualifications every five years by documenting continued activity in low vision research, professional activities, and teaching as a way to help ensure their ongoing status as a Low Vision Research Diplomate to reflect the high standard of expertise characteristic of the Academy and Low Vision Section.

Outline

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I. Requirements for Becoming a Candidate for Diplomate Status

There are specific eligibility requirements for Fellows who wish to become Candidates for the Low Vision Research Diplomate Program. Potential candidates should carefully review their own credentials before applying to this Diplomate Program to determine if additional experience should precede application.

Eligibility:

Category I (Absolute Criteria)

The Candidate must be a Fellow of the Academy of Optometry for at least one (1) year. The Candidate must show active participation in the Academy Low Vision Section.

The Candidate must be sponsored by three Active (Clinical or Research) Low Vision Diplomates who have submitted letters of reference to the Chairman attesting to the Candidate's involvement in low vision research and his/her regional, national and/or international prominence as well as worthiness to become a Low Vision Research Diplomate.

These criteria fulfilled, the Candidate's CV will be evaluated by the Low Vision Diplomate Executive Committee and the Chair of the Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee Chair using the following criteria:

Category II

A. Publications: Candidates must have a minimum of five published research papers in leading refereed journals. At least two of the papers should have been published within the past three years. *Candidates are required to submit two copies of each of these five published papers.*

B. National Reputation: The candidate should have established a reputation as being a significant contributor to the advancement of the knowledge related to low vision and its rehabilitation. *Candidates should identify the scientific and professional communities in which they are best known, and describe their own reputation within these communities. Candidate should list any prizes, awards, grants or other honors that attest to their reputation.*

C. Professional Organizations: The candidate should be an active participant and show signs of leadership potential in professional and scientific organizations whose purview includes low vision research. *Candidates should submit a list of the organizations in which they participate and describe their past and anticipated future roles within these organizations.*

D. Research: The Candidate should have a history of at least five years of active involvement in low vision research and development. Currently they should be engaged in low vision research and be planning to be involved in low vision research in the future. *Candidates should submit a brief description of their history in vision research with an emphasis on activities within the last five years including all funded grant activities. They should also briefly describe their plans for future low vision research.*

E. Lectures: The Candidate should have an established record of presenting lectures, papers, posters or courses on low vision and low vision research at scientific and professional meetings in optometry, medicine, rehabilitation, public health, or similar professional settings. *Candidates are required to submit a list of all such presentations within the last five years and for longer if they wish. The list submitted should identify the audience, the title, the authorship list, and nature of the presentation and date of each presentation.*

The Candidate must fulfill all five areas above for acceptance.

4. Submission of a current curriculum vita is required. This document should include specific activities relevant to the above eligibility criteria.

5. Payment of a nonrefundable application fee of \$100.00 must accompany the Application (see page 3 of this Guide). When submitting your application, include a check for \$100.00 made payable to: American Academy of Optometry.

Application Deadline: Applications can be submitted at any time, but should be submitted by June 1 if the applicant seeks to sit for any examinations at the annual Academy meeting which occurs in late Fall of that year.

II. Application

American Academy of Optometry Low Vision Research Diplomate Program

Name: _____ Date: _____

Office address: _____

Office phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Office fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Home address: _____

Home phone: _____

NOTE: All correspondence will be sent by email

Be sure to attach:

- Curriculum Vitae with description of low vision activities (see Requirement 3 under Eligibility)
- Check for \$100.00 payable to "American Academy of Optometry" .

I understand that I have three (3) years allowed for completion of requirements for LV Research Diplomate with a one year extension, which includes the next three (3) Annual Academy Meetings, to complete the requirements for Low Vision Research Diplomate. I understand that if I do not complete requirements for Diplomate status within the requisite three-year period, I can apply for an automatic one-year extension and pay a fee equal to that of new applicants to the Diplomate Program. Subsequently, if requirements are not completed by the end of that one-year extension, I must re-apply and start again from the beginning, if I plan to continue in the Low Vision Research Diplomate Program.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Return completed application with CV and check to the Chairperson of the Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee:

David S. Loshin, O.D., Ph.D., F.A.A.O.
Chair, Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee
Dean, NSU College of Optometry
3200 South University Drive
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33328

III. Overview of the Research Low Vision Diplomate Program

The Officers of the Executive Committee of the Low Vision Diplomate Program, in conjunction with the Chair of the Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee, will evaluate the Candidate's CV and letters of recommendation. If the Candidate meets the criteria and the application is accepted, the Candidate must complete the following four requirements to achieve Research Diplomate status:

- a) Submit a summary of research in low vision over the Candidate's career highlighting the last five years
- b) Submit a written discussion of the clinical importance of two recent research publications (reprints should also be submitted).
- c) Written Examination
- d) Oral Examination

Both (a) and (b) above should be submitted to the current Chair of the Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee who will evaluate the documents and provide feedback. The written exam can only be taken after the chair has decided the submitted documents are adequate to satisfy the requirements. The written and oral examinations are given at the annual Academy Meeting, usually during the first two days of the meeting.

Written Examination

The written examination will shall consist of approximately 50 multiple choice or short answer questions and three essay questions that will test the Candidate's understanding of low vision patient care and management as well as current research in the area of expertise. The material to be covered may include

Clinical and laboratory methods for assessing vision functions

Clinical and laboratory methods for assessing visual task performance, daily living skills, including mobility.

Clinical and laboratory methods for assessing quality of life

Basic visual psychophysics and related methodologies (ocular anatomy, optics of the eye, vision processing related to detection, resolution, recognition, contrast sensitivity, color vision, dark adaptation, and eye movement control)

Epidemiology and epidemiological methods for studying low visual impairment

Basic principles of research design and statistics

Methodologies for studying visual capacities and the relationship to functional abilities

Methodologies for assessing rehabilitation outcomes

Current research activities in low vision

Oral Examination

The oral examination will only be administered after the Candidate successfully completes all of the other requirements including the written examination. The oral examination will be conducted by the Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee and will cover aspects of the Candidate's research with emphasis on the published papers submitted. Questions may be asked to further explore strengths and weaknesses in the Candidate's knowledge on topic(s) covered in the written examination. The oral examination will stress conceptual grasps of topic areas rather than knowledge of details or skills in manipulating data.

The final decision regarding an applicant's completion or non-completion of the Research Diplomate will be made by the Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee and will

be forwarded to the Chair of the Low Vision Diplomate Executive Committee and the Executive Committee of the Academy.

Candidacy period: A Candidate is expected to complete all portions of the examination process by the third consecutive Academy meeting following acceptance into the program. At each Annual Meeting during this period, candidates may choose to take some or all of the parts of the examination for which they have become eligible. Candidates are encouraged to schedule their examinations within one year of application date.

Candidates who have not completed requirements for Diplomate status within the requisite three- year period can apply for an automatic one-year extension using the same procedures as new applicants. There will be a fee equal to that of new applicants to the Diplomate Program payable to the American Academy of Optometry. If requirements are not completed by the end of that one-year extension, individuals must re-apply and start the Diplomate process again from the beginning.

Additionally, the Low Vision Diplomate Executive Committee reserves the right to extend the candidacy period for specific candidates based on individual circumstances.

Preparation for Written Reports and Examinations: Candidates are assigned a mentor who provides guidance on the written material to be submitted for review and preparation for the oral examination. Direct contact with the Diplomate assigned to oversee the required documents or written examination allows for further instruction and guidance.

Attendance at low vision lectures, workshops, paper and poster sessions, symposia, and section meetings at the Annual Academy meeting is encouraged as they may provide useful additional preparation.

Feedback on Progress toward Diplomate Status: Candidates who take the written and/or oral examinations for Diplomate status during a given year will meet with Program officers at the Annual Meeting to review performance and provide feedback. Candidates are also encouraged to work closely with their assigned mentors to assist them in areas that have been identified as needing additional study.

Summary of Research: Candidates should submit a report summarizing their research activities and accomplishments in low vision. They should also describe their current research activities and their plans for further research in the area. The report should include any relevant publications, grants, presentations, and other supporting evidence.

Published Articles: Candidates must submit a summary of two published research articles or papers (along with the reprints) along with comments on the importance of their work and any impact it has had on the field. Candidates should also submit reprints of at least three more Published articles related to low vision.

Questions and Concerns: Questions concerning the submission and review of Written Reports should be directed to the Chairperson, Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee. (See listing at the end of this guide or on the Section website.)

V. Written Examination

Eligibility: Candidates may only take the written exam after their Summary of Research and Published Article summary has been submitted and accepted.

Purpose: The written examination is designed to test and evaluate knowledge of all aspects of low vision rehabilitation patient care and management and current research in low vision.

Format: This examination is administered at Annual Academy Meetings. It consists of approximately fifty (50) multiple-choice or short answer questions which evaluate knowledge in basic low vision and vision areas and three essay items which will emphasize questions about the Candidate's published papers and research.

Timing: Three hours is typically allotted for this examination.

Content: See details about the written examination at the beginning of this section.

VIII. Oral Examination

Eligibility: The orals examination will only be offered after the Candidate successfully completes all other requirements including the written examination.

Purpose: The oral examination provides an opportunity for Candidates to more fully reveal their particular research approach and outcomes.

Format: In a congenial and professional atmosphere, the candidate will be asked questions primarily related to their publications and research areas. The Chair will structure the interview to include questions to gain insight into strengths and weaknesses of the candidate as revealed in the written examination. In developing questions, the Chair will coordinate a review of comments from the candidate's research discussions or publications.

Questions demanding knowledge of details or computational skills will be kept to a minimum.

Timing: 30 to 45 minutes are typically allotted for the Oral Examination.

Questions: Questions concerning the administration of the Oral Examination should be directed to the Chairperson of the Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee. See current listing at the end of this guide or the Academy website.

Awarding of Research Diplomate in Low Vision: Upon successful completion of all requirements, candidates are officially nominated for Diplomate status and must be approved by the Low Vision Section and the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Optometry. Approved nominees are expected to attend the Annual Banquet where they are officially introduced as new Low Vision Research Diplomates.

Renewal of Research Diplomate Status: Diplomates are expected to document active and current involvement in low vision. Accordingly, Low Vision Research Diplomates are expected to renew their status every five years according to specific criteria assigning points for research and other activities. They need to generate 40 points over five years, with a minimum of eight points in any three of those years.

IX. Executive Committee of the Low Vision Diplomate Program

Current Officers and Chairpersons (Nov. 2010 through Oct. 2011)

Chairperson:

Roanne Flom, O.D., F.A.A.O.
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Columbus, OH 43210
Phone: 614-688-3337
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Vice-Chairperson:

Robert Greer, O.D., F.A.A.O.
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Secretary:

Dawn DeCarlo, O.D., F.A.A.O.
University of Alabama at Birmingham
609 Park Lake Circle
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Immediate Past Diplomate Chairperson & Current Low Vision Section Chair:

John Musick, O.D., F.A.A.O.
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Chairperson, Low Vision Research Diplomate Examination Committee:

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