

BECOMING A MEMBER

CANDIDACY FOR FELLOWSHIP IN THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPTOMETRY

EARNING FELLOWSHIP— THE ORAL EXAMINATION

Oral Examination:

The oral examination is given at each annual Academy meeting. The objective of the oral examination is to evaluate candidates on their professional competence in solving their patients' problems at a level commensurate with the standards set by the Academy. In the case of candidates who are not in clinical practice, standards relevant to the candidate's professional activity shall be utilized. Candidates will be examined on the basis of the credentials and written work they have submitted to the committee. Whenever possible, a candidate will be examined before the same committee that evaluated their written work.

Preparation for Oral Examination includes:

The prospect of sitting for the oral examination can be a little intimidating. With few exceptions, the members conducting the oral examination are those committee members who have reviewed your application. Prior to the oral examination, review all written works that were submitted for points, and be prepared to discuss them.

The following information is designed to help all candidates prepare for the oral examination:

1. Candidates should bring their case reports, published papers and any supportive documentation.
2. Be prepared to answer questions about all case reports, including those that were evaluated and sent back for further consideration. Even if you opted to write another case report, be prepared to answer examiners' questions about the originals.
3. Candidates should exhibit a depth of knowledge about the chosen subject area for the case report. If the case report was on binocular vision, for example, questions that may be asked could include, "what types of binocular vision problems might be encountered in a person who has diabetes?" If a case report was submitted which involved the co-management of a patient who had cataract surgery, questions regarding how various complications are managed (even if limited by the scope of practice to refer) may be addressed.

4. If published papers or lectures were submitted for points, review the subject prior to the oral examination and be able to discuss the paper or presentation. If a published paper was written more than four years ago, review recent literature in order to explain current thinking about the topic.
5. If points were obtained through leadership, be able to describe your accomplishments and contributions to optometry. Other questions regarding how you will use your leadership skills as a Fellow of the Academy may also be addressed.
6. If points were obtained through a residency, extensive knowledge in the chosen field of study should be expected. For example, if the candidate completed a pediatric vision residency, questions may include such issues as childhood illnesses, low vision issues, pediatric contact lenses or child abuse. A candidate who has completed a residency is expected to have a superior breadth and depth of knowledge.
7. Subsequent questions during the interview may evolve from the answers given by the candidate in defense of their written work, residency, graduate research, or leadership and should allow the committee to evaluate the candidate's general knowledge of optometry, the vision sciences and subjects such as anatomy, physiology, pathology, low vision, contact lenses, etc., as it relates to their specialized areas of practice.
8. Clinical candidates should be prepared for questioning that will probe their ability to think and support his/her philosophy of practice. Basic knowledge and high standards of care are required for admittance.
9. Scientific candidates will be evaluated in each of the following areas:
 - i. Overall knowledge of their field of research
 - ii. Quality of the research methodology and procedures
 - iii. Understanding of their research data and its interpretation
 - iv. Comprehension of the implications of the results
 - v. Plans for future research

At the Conclusion of the Oral Examination:

All candidates will be notified at the end of their oral examination if they successfully completed the oral examination. Those candidates will be given a "New Fellow" ribbon to wear on their identification badge. Candidates who were not successful will meet with their Examination Committee Chair and either the Vice Chair or Chair of the Admittance Committee. An explanation of the committee's reason(s) for the non-pass will be given. Their Examination Committee Chair will outline further requirements needed to complete the admittance process.