

CANDIDATE'S GUIDE

We welcome you as an applicant. This guide describes the expectations, requirements and procedures for earning the Research Track Diplomate credential within the Glaucoma Section of the American Academy of Optometry (AAO). Please note that this guide supersedes all previous information and instructions regarding the research track of the Glaucoma section diplomate program.

The purpose of the Research Diplomate in the Glaucoma Section is to recognize those individuals who contribute significantly to one or more areas of basic, clinical or translational research in glaucoma. Participation in this program is expected to provide a rewarding experience and a gratifying recognition of the contributions that you have made. The research diplomate is equivalent to that of the clinical diplomate, and both have the same rights and privileges. Successful candidates will be those who demonstrate exceptional scholarship as well as a commitment to the mission and goals of the AAO and its Glaucoma Section. Specifically, successful candidates are expected to substantially and consistently contribute to the Section's vision, leadership, impact, and promotion of evidence-based clinical practice in glaucoma.

Eligibility requirements for Research Diplomate candidacy are:

1. Fellow in good standing of the American Academy of Optometry.
2. Active in glaucoma-related research for at least the last 5 years while making a considerable contribution to the body of knowledge in glaucoma.
3. Minimum of 10 published papers in peer-reviewed/Pubmed-listed journals as a first, second, corresponding, or last author.
 - a. If the applicant has a current or recently funded NIH grant (or equivalent) related to glaucoma, this can substitute as two published Papers.

Note: There is no pre-requisite to have a research-related degree (such as MS or PhD) or a Doctorate in Optometry.

Candidates must complete an on-line application, pay the AAO program fee (\$100.00), and submit a comprehensive Curriculum Vitae (CV) including head photograph. Potential candidates should very carefully review their own credentials before applying to this program to determine if additional experience and/or professional accomplishment should precede application.

When an application meets all eligibility requirements, the applicant will be notified of acceptance and advised regarding the three remaining criteria that must be met to achieve the research diplomate credential as noted below.

1. Provide a written Research Career Summary that emphasizes the candidate's glaucoma-related research activities. This document should provide details about the candidate's research accomplishments and the impact that research has had on the field of glaucoma. Specific items to address include but are not limited to:

- a. Overall summary of glaucoma research and resulting publications
- b. Current research activities and plans for further research
- c. Quality of journals where the candidate's papers are published (with quality defined by accepted ranking systems such as journal impact factor, SJR indicator)
- d. Number of citations associated with publications
- e. History of funding/grants
- f. Editorial assignments (e.g. journal editor, study section)
- g. Invited scientific presentations
- h. Graduate student pedigree (detailed history describing academic, research, and professional success of mentored graduate students)
- i. Percent effort dedicated to research
- j. Academic rank
- k. Impact of research: Candidates should describe how their research has influenced the field of glaucoma. Items such as stimulation of new avenues of research, novel ideas, and unexpected relationships discovered should be discussed and explored. The candidate should also demonstrate in detail the influence of their work on others (e.g. collaborations; mentorships; contributions of their students/post-docs and citations of their work).

2. Submission of an original scientific paper:

- a. The candidate will be asked to submit five topics appropriate for a scientific paper. These topics will be reviewed by the Diplomate Chair who will then appoint an ad-hoc Diplomate Award Committee which will be specific to each candidate. The Diplomate Award Committee will consist of a minimum of three members, with at least 2 of the members from the Glaucoma section and at least 2 with PhD terminal degrees. Members of other sections and SIGs may be included as necessary (e.g. Vision Science SIG), to ensure that all Committee members have some expertise in the topic areas suggested by the candidate.
 - i. The topic of the scientific paper should be one in which the applicant has genuine interest, and one that has substantial importance within the field of glaucoma. It should be a topic that the applicant wants to learn more about, and improved understanding of that topic could potentially benefit the applicant's research.
 - ii. The topic of the scientific paper can be related to the applicant's research interests, but should not replicate the central theme of the applicant's current or prior research and publications.
 - iii. The paper's format can be either an exhaustive literature review of a specific research topic (format similar to major review articles published in high impact review

journals such as *Progress in Retinal and Eye Research* or *Survey of Ophthalmology*) or a rigorous original investigation of a meaningful and compelling research question.

- b. The Diplomate Award Committee will rule-out unacceptable topics, and the applicant may then select their preferred topic. Once a topic is chosen, the candidate will submit an outline of the topic to the committee so constructive comments can be made prior to manuscript development. Candidates should consider review of the paper by colleagues prior to submitting to the Committee.
 - c. The paper should demonstrate considerable depth of scholarship, while presenting a well-focused, highly-referenced, and authoritative evaluation of a research question.
 - d. For scientific studies, a well-defined research question and hypothesis should be described in detail. Critical evaluation of relevant past studies should be included, and positive and negative factors associated with methods, results, and analyses of these studies should be comprehensively analyzed.
 - d. Length of the paper is expected to be 5000-6000 words, and the candidate's publications should not dominate the reference listing. References should be cited at the end of the paper, following the guidelines of *Optometry and Vision Science*.
 - e. The expectation is that the paper will be submitted in a timely manner to a peer-reviewed journal, preferably *Optometry and Vision Science*, for future publication.
3. Oral examination: The oral examination will only be offered after the Candidate's written research summary and scientific paper are accepted by the Diplomate Award Committee. To be considered for the oral examination in that year, the written research summary and the original scientific paper will need to be submitted by **July 1st**.

The purpose of the oral examination is to provide an opportunity for the candidate to more fully reveal their knowledge, accomplishments, and future research aspirations. The candidate should expect to defend all aspects of their submitted scientific paper, discuss its relevance and importance within the field of glaucoma, describe how their overall body of work should and will influence future research activity, and how the candidate will contribute to the unique mission of the American Academy of Optometry and its Glaucoma Section. The oral examination will be conducted by the Diplomate Award Committee with an expected duration of 90-120 minutes. This examination will be graded as pass/fail based on consensus from the Diplomate Award Committee.

Upon completion of the oral examination, the Diplomate Award Committee will review the candidate's complete file, and then make a recommendation to the Glaucoma Section leadership regarding the candidate's success in completing all program requirements.

Awarding of Research Diplomate in Glaucoma: Upon successful completion of all requirements, candidates are officially nominated for Diplomate by the Glaucoma Section leadership to the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Optometry who will make the final determination of successful

candidacy. Approved nominees are expected to attend the Annual Banquet at which time they are officially introduced as new Research Diplomates in the Glaucoma Section.

Candidacy Period: The candidate must complete all program requirements by the third annual AAO meeting after the application is submitted. If the candidate has not completed the process in that time frame, a new application form and new application fee (non-refundable) are required.

Ongoing Contribution: Glaucoma Section Research Diplomates are expected to support the AAO and Glaucoma Section missions, including acceptance of responsibilities and leadership in lecturing, writing, and teaching within the Academy and within the Glaucoma Section. Diplomates are also expected to participate in Annual Academy Meetings and must renew their qualifications every five years as required by the Academy (details are available at; http://www.aaopt.org/fellows/diplomate_renewal).