

BOARD FOR HEARING AID SPECIALISTS AND OPTICIANS

HEARING AID SPECIALIST TRAINING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

The Board for Hearing Aid Specialists and Opticians Ad Hoc Committee on Optician Apprenticeships met on Wednesday, August 7, 2019, at the Offices of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, 9960 Mayland Drive, 2nd Floor, Board Room 3, Richmond, Virginia. The following board committee members were present:

Rebecca Bennett
Pamela Chavis
Beth Connors
Mark Grohler
Alan Krishnan
Bruce Wagner

DPOR staff present for all or part of the meeting included:

Stephen Kirschner, Regulatory Operations Administrator
Tamika Rodriguez, Licensing Operations Administrator
Cathy Clark, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:55 a.m.

Call to Order

Mr. Wagner asked for public comment. There was none.

Public Comment

Mr. Kirschner initiated discussion by presenting a slide show that included examination pass rates and percentages of licensure over the current temporary permit term, as well as staff recommendations.

Discussion

The Committee discussed the existing training. The slide show contained statistics on training requirements in other states. The Committee agreed with staff recommendations that no changes should be made to the existing training.

Based upon the pass rate statistics provided in the slide presentation, the Committee agreed that the current 12-month temporary permit was not sufficient time for adequate training, and further agreed with staff recommendation to extend the term of the temporary permit to 18 months.

The Committee discussed the period in which a candidate must pass the examination, and agreed that the current rule that requires the candidate to pass the examination within three successive attempts in a 9-month window should be revised. Staff recommended that a candidate should pass all sections of the exam within two years of the initial exam date. In addition, it was recommended that testing would be prohibited until the temporary permit had been held for at least twelve months.

Mr. Kirschner outlined for the Committee the three methods of exam qualification, including (1) Temporary Permit; (2) a college degree in the field; and (3) a notarized statement of acceptable training. He also suggested the Committee consider an apprenticeship under the auspices of the Department of Labor and Industry as a fourth method of qualification.

A discussion was initiated by Ms. Connor about the need for continuing education. Other Committee members voiced their support. It was agreed by consensus that information and data would be gathered on the topic to be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

Upon a motion by Mr. Wagner and seconded by Mr. Grohler, the Committee voted to bring the following recommendations to the full Board for consideration:

1. Make no changes to current training topics.
2. Extend the temporary permit term to 18 months, with no extension except under the conditions currently identified in 18 VAC 80-20-40.A.2.
3. Prohibit testing before the temporary permit has been held for a certain length of time, to be determined by the full Board.
4. Add the hearing aid dispenser apprenticeship as a training option, including Related Technical Instruction.
5. Change testing period to 2 years from the date of the initial examination.

The members voting 'yes' were Ms. Bennett, Ms. Connors, Mr. Grohler, Mr. Krishnan, and Mr. Wagner. There were no negative votes. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Chavis left the meeting before the voting.

By consensus, the committee agreed to further explore the idea of requiring continuing education.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Wagner adjourned the committee meeting at 12:07 p.m.

Adjourn



Bruce R. Wagner, Chair



Mary Broz-Vaughan, Secretary