



MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY

EXAMINATION HANDBOOK

As approved by the Board, January 11, 2025

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry (MSBO) is the State regulatory agency for the profession of Optometry. The MSBO jurisprudence examination has been developed to evaluate knowledge of the Mississippi Professional Optometry Act and attributes expected outcomes to applicants meeting requirements in the State of Mississippi.

Examination dates are scheduled each year as follows: (1) the second (2nd) Saturday in January and, (2) the second (2nd) Saturday in July.

Requirements for Sitting for the MSBO Jurisprudence and/or PEP Certification Examinations

| Optometrist | Optometrist with PEP Certification |
|---|--|
| Recent photograph (within 90 days) | All requirements of column 1 plus: |
| Two (2) reference letters (from the sources) – Mississippi optometrist licensees or non-family members who you have known for at least five (5) years | Submitted affidavit directly from candidate's institution (required 2022 and after) and within and within two (2) years from graduation date to certification date (for exemption) attesting to curriculum inclusion of such course equivalent |
| Verification from the source of passage of all parts of the NBEO | \$750.00 examination fee |
| Letters of good standing (from the source) from all other states where a license has been granted | |
| Certified copies of transcripts from the source – undergraduate and optometry | |
| Fingerprint-based background check and payment of a \$32.00 fee | MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO NOTIFICATION OF PEP CERTIFICATE |
| \$200.00 resident examination fee or \$300.00 nonresident examination fee | Passage of PEP written examination |
| Verification of compliance with Rule 8.1 and 8.2.B. (a) Optometrist shall remain free of control from any layperson, firm or corporation; and (b) the practice must be owned by a Mississippi-licensed optometrist or therapeutic optometrist and shall not be owned by a corporation | Verification of passing scores on clinical skills assessment |
| | Completion of eight (8) hours working under an approved preceptor within three (3) months of passage of skills assessment |
| MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO RELEASE OF LICENSE | |
| \$400.00 initial license fee if testing in January or \$200.00 initial license fee if testing in July | |

Special Accommodations

The Mississippi State Board of Optometry (“Board”) provides reasonable and appropriate accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act for individuals with documented disabilities or a medical condition who demonstrate a need for accommodations and request accommodations prior to testing. If you are in need of special accommodations, you are required to complete the ADA Testing Accommodation Form and submit thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled testing date. This form can be accessed from the website at www.msbo.ms.gov under the “Forms” tab.

Inclement Weather Situations

In the event of inclement weather, the Mississippi State Board of Optometry may choose to delay testing, close early or fully close the office for the day with testing applicants being notified prior to twenty-four (24) hours via email or phone regarding the status of the testing schedule and any necessary adjustments.

In the event that testing is scheduled; however, due to inclement weather which prohibits or endangers the life of the testing applicant, the Board, at its discretion, may offer an alternate testing date upon receipt of a written notification at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance, which provides an explanation as to why they are unable to attend the scheduled testing date and the weather conditions to and from their home and the testing site.

Deadline for Application for Examination and Licensure

The deadline for receipt of a completed application for examination and licensure is thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled examination date.

Cost

The cost of the examination for a Mississippi resident is Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) and Three Hundred Dollars (\$300.00) for the examination of an applicant who is a nonresident of Mississippi [MCA 73-19-21].

The cost of the initial license is Four Hundred Dollars (\$400.00) for those testing in January and Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) for those testing in July and shall be paid when the examination and the completed application are verified by MSBO.

The cost of the Primary Eyecare Procedure Certification Examination is Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$750.00).

Upon verification of the completed application and receipt of all required fees, the applicant has two (2) consecutive scheduled examination opportunities to sit for and pass the examination. All examination and license fees are nonrefundable.

Background Check

To assist the Board in conducting its licensure investigation, all applicants shall undergo a fingerprint-based criminal history records check of the Mississippi central criminal database; and the Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history database [MCA 73-19-23]. The cost of this background check is Thirty-Two Dollars (\$32.00).

Jurisprudence Examination Exemption (Delay)

The only exemption (delay) in testing (fingerprint-based background check still required) is provided under Miss. Code. Ann. §73-50-2 Universal Recognition of Occupational Licensing Act which grants, if qualified, the issuance of a Temporary Practice Permit for a period of three hundred sixty-five (365) days and is nonrenewable upon, receipt of the following:

1. Proof of a Mississippi state-issued identification card; or
2. Current Mississippi residential utility bill with the applicant's name and address; or
3. Documentation of current ownership or current lease of a residence in Mississippi; or
4. Documentation of current in-state employment or notarized letter of promise of employment; or
5. Any verifiable documentation demonstrating your Mississippi residence as approved by the Board.

Be reminded that if you choose this path to entry that any license granted under the UROLA is valid only in Mississippi and does not make the person eligible to work in another state under a reciprocity agreement [MCA §73-50-2 (14)].

Jurisprudence Examination Administration.

1. This examination, administered by the Board, shall be a written jurisprudence examination. The passing grade shall be 70. The applicant is allowed up to sixty (60) minutes to complete the examination.
2. Examination for a license to practice optometry in this state shall be conducted in the English language in writing and by such other means as the Board shall determine adequate to ascertain the qualifications of the applicant. Each applicant shall be given due notice of the date and place of examination.
3. Prior to an examination, the Executive Director or a member of the Board designated by the President shall prepare a tentative schedule showing the time allotted to each examination and the order in which each will be given, said schedule to meet the approval of a majority of the members of the Board. The tentative schedule of examination, and any changes made therein as the examination proceeds, shall be made known to the applicants during each day of the examination.
4. Applicants shall not communicate any words or signs with another applicant while the examination is in progress without the permission of the presiding examiner, nor leave the examination room except when so permitted by the presiding examiner. Violations of this rule shall subject the offender to expulsion.
5. One member of the Board, or delegated proctor, shall at all times be in the exam room while the examination is in progress and no persons except applicants, Board members, employees of the Board or persons having the express permission of the Board shall be permitted in the examination rooms.
6. At the beginning of an examination each applicant shall be assigned a number. Applicants shall use the number assigned to them for identification purposes throughout the examination, and no applicant's name or any other identification marks other than the assigned number shall be entered on any paper containing answers to the questions of an examination. Members of the Board shall in every way endeavor to avoid identification of an applicant prior to the awarding of the general averages.
7. When examination papers are delivered to the presiding examiner, they become the property of the Board and shall not be returned to the applicant. Each Board member shall be responsible for his own examination papers until after final grading and awarding of general averages. All test papers must, at this point, be retained in the Board office to be preserved for a period of thirty (30) days after final grading in order to allow an unsuccessful candidate the opportunity to request an analysis of such person's performance, which request must be made in writing within such thirty- (30-) day period.

Primary Eyecare Procedure Certification

Mississippi State Board of Optometry requires certification to perform primary eye care procedures and certain administration. The certification process will include the credentialing process to perform the authorized ophthalmic surgery procedure YAG laser posterior capsulotomy and require:

1. Proof of holding a Mississippi license to practice therapeutic optometry and is in good standing;
2. Proof of satisfactory completion of a course of instruction as approved by the Board. Those graduating from an accredited school or college of optometry within five (5) years after the effective date of this Act may be excluded from course completion requirement, provided that the candidate has successfully passed appropriate coursework to fulfill requirements as determined by the Board.
3. The Board-approved course of instruction shall be:
 - a. Provided by an accredited optometry, osteopathy or medical school and not completed before May 1, 2021.
 - b. To be completed in a time that is no longer than two (2) years before final certification date.
 - c. A minimum of thirty-two (32) clock hours in length in the following subject matter that includes at least six (6) hours in hands-on laboratory work.
 - (1) laser physics, hazards, and safety;
 - (2) biophysics of lasers;
 - (3) laser application on clinical optometry;
 - (4) laser tissue interactions;
 - (5) laser indications, contraindications, and potential complications;
 - (6) gonioscopy;
 - (7) laser applications in glaucoma care;
 - (8) YAG application in primary eye care;
 - (9) YAG laser posterior capsulotomy;
 - (10) common complications: lids, lashes, lacrimal system;
 - (11) medicolegal aspects of anterior segment procedures;
 - (12) minor surgical procedures;
 - (13) overview of surgical instruments, asepsis, and OSHA;
 - (14) surgical anatomy of the eyelids;
 - (15) emergency surgical procedures;
 - (16) chalazion management;
 - (17) epiluminescence microscopy;
 - (18) local anesthesia: techniques and complications;
 - (19) injectable pharmaceuticals in primary eye care;
 - (20) anaphylaxis and other office emergencies;
 - (21) radiofrequency surgery;
 - (22) post-operative wound care;
 - (23) suturing; and
 - (24) clinical/lab work.
 - d. Pay the required fee of Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$750.00).
4. Sponsored by an organization approved by the Board
 - a. Satisfactorily completes a written test approved by the Board on aspects pertaining to primary eye care procedures including YAG laser posterior capsulotomy and injectable pharmaceuticals. The applicant is allowed up to ninety (90) minutes to complete this examination.

- b. Passage of the State Board written exam or the National Board of Examiners in Optometry, Laser and Surgical Procedures Examination, and Injection Skills Examination will be accepted.
- c. Passes a clinical skills assessment as it pertains to YAG laser posterior capsulotomy that is approved by the Board;
- d. Participates in eight (8) additional hours of working under an approved preceptor who is either an ophthalmologist or licensed credentialed optometrist. The preceptor must be licensed to perform the ophthalmic YAG laser posterior capsulotomy procedures, and the training shall occur within the state in which the preceptor is licensed to perform such procedures. The preceptorship must be completed within three (3) months of passage of skills assessment.
- e. Thirty-two- (32-) hour course exemptions may be considered for qualifying optometry graduates from 2022 and after, if candidate's institution has signed and filed an affidavit attesting to curriculum inclusion of such course equivalent. The exemption is good for a period of two (2) years from graduation date to certification date.
- f. In case of failure, the Board will make available a re-test within ninety (90) days. In case of a second failure, the applicant must repeat the certification process, including all fees.
- g. Such other requirements may be determined by Board.

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* §73-19-9; §73-19-1

Re-examinations

1. Any applicant taking the Board examination for the second time who has failed to pass one or more of the tests will be required to retake all tests which were failed.
 - a. If a candidate has not passed the Board after a second examination, the candidate will not be permitted to retake the examination until he has completed a further course of study outlined by the Board and paid the examination fee therefor.
 - b. An applicant will be considered to be taking the Board examination for the first time regardless of the number of previous examinations taken if the examination is not taken within two (2) years (two [2] consecutive examinations as given by the Board) following the last failure.
 - c. In case of failure of any examination, after the expiration of six (6) months, and within two (2) years, the applicant shall have the privilege of retaking the examination without payment of an additional fee. (73-19-17)

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* §73-19-17; §73-19-19

Examination Review Procedure

1. Each individual who takes the examination for licensure as an optometrist and does not pass the examination shall be provided with copies of their examination scores upon notification of their failure of the examination. In addition, the failing candidate shall be provided with a copy of this regulation so that the applicant will be fully advised of the review procedure.
 - a. If the failing candidate desires to see their failing criteria, the applicant may make a written request for such information from the Board. The Board will see to it that the contents of the examination are made available for the candidate's review for a period of up to two (2) hours. The failing candidate will not be permitted to copy or reproduce anything, however, as the integrity of the examination must be preserved.
 - b. If a failing candidate desires to request a review by this Board of their examination results, the applicant must file a written request for review within ninety (90) days of the date of the notice of the failure of examination. The request must be in writing, sent by Certified

Mail Return Receipt Requested, and must be received in the office of the Board on or before five o'clock (5:00) PM on the ninetieth (90th) day.

- c. The written request for review by the Board must state with sufficient clarity the reasons why the applicant feels the results of the examination should be changed. If the Board determines that the request does not adequately state the reasons for review, the Board may either dismiss the review or request additional information from the candidate, and the Board may extend the deadline mentioned above in order to permit elaboration by the candidate.
- d. Upon receipt of the written request for review, the Board may conduct a review of the examination results and the written request for review in a closed session. This closed session review by the Board may be conducted at a time and place to be determined by the Board in its complete discretion.
- e. If the candidate requests, an informal conference will be scheduled by the Board. The informal conference may occur in closed session at a regularly scheduled Board meeting and may be attended by the individual Board members attending the meeting, the Board's Legal Counsel or a representative of the Attorney General's office, and the candidate. The candidate may choose to be represented by counsel, however, counsel for the candidate will not be permitted to engage in discussions with the Board. Counsel for the candidate may advise the candidate, but any questions propounded by the Board to the candidate are to be answered by the candidate. The candidate will be afforded the opportunity to discuss their examination results with the Board, but the Board will not be required to answer questions propounded by the candidate.
- f. The burden will be on the candidate to show substantial cause why the results should be changed. The Board will consider the following to be adequate reasons for modification of examination results:
 - (1) A showing of significant procedural errors in the examination process
 - (2) Evidence of bias, prejudice, or discrimination in the examination process
 - (3) Clearly erroneous grading
 - (4) Other significant errors which result in substantial disadvantages to the candidate

Source: *Miss. Code Ann.* §73-19-9; §73-19-153