

AOC BYLAWS
American Orthoptic Council, Inc.
Amended 10.13.21



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ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this organization shall be the American Orthoptic Council, Inc., also referred to in these Bylaws as "the American Orthoptic Council", "the Council", and "the Corporation".

ARTICLE II

PURPOSES

The purposes of the American Orthoptic Council are as follows:

- A. To promote and advance the study of all aspects of neuromuscular anomalies of the eye.
- B. To establish standards for the education of orthoptists, including the requirements for conducting an orthoptic teaching program.
- C. To grant a certificate of competency in the knowledge and practice of orthoptics to students upon successful completion of orthoptic education and a proficiency examination formulated by the Council, and to other qualified individuals as specified in these Bylaws or by actions of the Council through its several committees.
- D. To encourage continuing education of certified orthoptists.
- E. To establish standards for the professional and ethical conduct of certified orthoptists.
- F. To provide guidance to The American Association of Certified Orthoptists (AACO).
- G. To adopt such other measures to achieve the purposes of the Council as are not forbidden by law, the *Articles of Incorporation*, or the Bylaws of the Corporation.
- H. To promote the growth of the profession of Orthoptics in order to improve access to care for children and adults with ocular motility and vision threatening disorders.

ARTICLE III

RESTRICTIONS

Section 1. No part of the revenues of the Corporation shall inure to the personal benefit of any member or officer of the Council.

Section 2. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda and the Council shall not engage nor participate in the political campaign of any candidate for public office. Such proscription does not apply to any act of political lobbying that enhances the health and wellbeing of the profession of orthoptics.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The voting membership of the American Orthoptic Council shall consist of Doctors of Medicine specializing in ophthalmology and of Certified Orthoptists.

Section 2. Ophthalmologist members shall be selected from and subject to approval by the following organizations: the American Ophthalmological Society, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, the American Academy of Pediatrics Section of Ophthalmology, and the Canadian Orthoptic Council. Ophthalmologist members may serve more than one term, representing either the same or another of the component organizations.

Section 3. Certified Orthoptist members shall be selected from and subject to approval by the following organizations: The American Association of Certified Orthoptists, The American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and the American Academy of Pediatrics Section of Ophthalmology. Certified Orthoptists representing the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus and the American Academy of Pediatrics section on Ophthalmology shall be eligible to serve on the Nominating committee. One additional member shall be a Certified Orthoptist designated by the Canadian Orthoptic Society. Certified Orthoptist members representing the American Association of Certified Orthoptists shall include its President; President-Elect [ex-officio member, without vote], Vice President; Representative to the International Orthoptic Association; Chairperson of the Education Committee, 1 member serving as Representative to the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology and 2 members at large selected each for a term of at least 3 years. Certified Orthoptist members may serve more than one term.

Section 4. The members described in this Article shall constitute the Board of Directors of the American Orthoptic Council, Inc.

Section 5. The number of Council members, in cooperation with the sponsoring organizations, may be determined and changed from time to time at the discretion of the Council; however, after a period of transition, the number of Ophthalmologists and Certified Orthoptists shall be equal.

Section 6. If any individual member of the American Orthoptic Council shall fail to attend two consecutive annual meetings of the Council, that individual's membership on the Council will be subject to termination. The sponsoring organization represented by said member shall be informed when a Council member is removed under this Section, and its approval of a successor member proposed by the Executive Committee of the Council shall be sought.

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS, Board of Directors and Executive Committee

Section 1. The officers of this Council shall be a President,, a Vice-President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and an Immediate Past President. The office of the Secretary and the office of the Treasurer may be held simultaneously by the same member. The term of the Immediate Past President shall expire at the same time as that of the last term served by the President.

Section 2. The President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer [or Secretary-Treasurer], and the Immediate Past President of the Council shall serve as the Executive Committee of the Council. The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer [or Secretary-Treasurer] and the Immediate Past President, shall also be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer [or Secretary-Treasurer] and Director at Large respectively of the Board of Directors of the American Orthoptic Council, Inc. and serve as the Executive Committee of the Corporation. The President of the American Association of Certified Orthoptists, whether or not serving as an elected Officer of the Council, shall be a full voting member of the Executive Committee of the Council and the Corporation, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be delegated by the President or by the officer acting in place of the President

Section 3. The Council, in considering a matter of business other than amendments to the Bylaws, may

affirmatively empower the Executive Committee to take action on behalf of the entire Council. Each member of the Executive Committee shall have no more than one vote on any measure. In the event of a tie vote on any measure, the deciding vote will be cast by the most immediate Past President, not then a member of the Executive Committee, serving on Council.

ARTICLE VI

MEETINGS

Section 1. The Council shall hold at least one meeting yearly, designated the Annual Meeting. The Board of Directors of the American Orthoptic Council, Inc. shall hold at least one meeting yearly which may be held concurrently with the Council meeting. Notice to members of the time and place of these meetings shall be at least sixty days.

Section 2. Other meetings of the Council or the Corporation may be called by either the President or the Secretary (or Secretary-Treasurer). Notice to members of the time and place of this meeting shall be at least thirty days.

ARTICLE VII

CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Section 1. At Meetings of the Council the agenda and order of business shall be decided by the President or other presiding officer.

Sections 2. All voting members present shall be eligible to vote on matters presented at any meeting of the Council or Corporation. Sixty percent of those eligible shall constitute a quorum for the consideration of business. A simple majority of members present and voting shall be required to approve actions proposed as items of business at meetings of the Council.

ARTICLE VIII

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Section 1 The nomination and election of officers shall take place at the Annual Meeting,, the terms of office beginning immediately following adjournment of the Business Meeting at which they are elected. A term of office ends at the adjournment of the next annual business meeting, except that the term of the President ends at the adjournment of the second of two such consecutive periods. At the discretion of the Nominating Committee, the President may be nominated for re-election for an additional consecutive year. Nothing in this provision prevents a President from nomination and election to additional non-consecutive terms.

Section 2. In the event of resignation or inability to serve of any officer other than a Certified Orthoptist for whom these Bylaws do not otherwise provide a means of succession, the President or the officer carrying out the duties of the President shall convene the Nominating Committee, by meeting or otherwise, to nominate a member of the Council to assume the vacated office for the remainder of that term. The Nominating Committee shall make its recommendation for action by the Council as specified in Article X, Section 9 of these Bylaws.

ARTICLE IX

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The President shall preside at all meetings unless absent and shall make appointments and designate the chairpersons of standing and ad hoc committees, with the exception of the Nominating Committee, and discharge all other usual duties of a presiding officer. The President, or the officer acting for the President, shall have the power to form or disband ad hoc committees. The President shall be empowered to draw upon the funds of the Corporation for the purposes of the Council. The President also is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and shall preside at meetings of the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President when the office of President is vacant for any reason or when the President is unable to serve, and shall preside at any meeting of the Council in the absence of the President. The Vice President also is Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and shall assume the duties of the Chairman under the same circumstances.

Section 3. The Secretary, in cooperation when necessary with the Executive Director, shall in the absence at any meeting of the President and the Vice-President, appoint an active member to preside; act as Executive Officer of the Council and conduct its business affairs; send appropriate notification of any meeting to all members of the Council; submit a detailed report of the activities of the Council to each of the sponsoring organizations; keep a record of all students in training; keep a correct list of all Certified Orthoptists and carry out the procedures established by the Council for certification renewal; arrange for the preparation and delivery of certificates; and keep a record of all meetings of the Council. The Secretary also is Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Corporation and shall maintain minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors and perform the other usual duties of this position.

Section 4. The Treasurer, in cooperation when necessary with the Executive Director, shall receive all monies; draw, sign, and send all vouchers for payment of indebtedness of the Council; open accounts in the name of the Council or of the Corporation in an appropriate financial institution; and arrange for checks to be drawn on this account by either the President or the Treasurer. All monies received shall be deposited in such accounts, and the Treasurer shall so keep the books that an accurate statement of the financial status of the Council can be made at any time. The Treasurer shall submit a financial report to the Council at the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall provide a suitable bond if requested to do so by the Council.

Section 5. The Immediate Past President shall be a full participant as a voting member in the activities of the Executive Committees of the Council and the Corporation, and shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be delegated by the President or by the officer acting in place of the President.

ARTICLE X

STANDING COMMITTEES AND THEIR DUTIES

Section 1. The standing committees of the Council are:

- A. Accreditation Committee
- B. Bylaws Committee
- C. Continuing Education Committee
- D. Ethics Committee
- E. Examination Committee
- F. Long Range Planning Committee
- G. Nominating Committee
- H. Program Committee

Section 2. **The Accreditation Committee** shall consist of at least three members, one of whom shall be designated Chairperson by the President. The Committee shall establish standards to be required of the orthoptic teaching programs seeking accreditation or re-accreditation by the Council. The Committee shall review applications for accreditation and re-accreditation, conduct site visits to applying programs, and make recommendations for action by the Council. Upon accreditation or re-accreditation being duly granted to any orthoptic teaching program, the Chairperson shall arrange for the preparation and award of a suitable certificate to that teaching program.

Section 3. **The Bylaws Committee** shall consist of at least three members, one of whom shall be designated as Chairperson by the President. This Committee shall consider and propose changes to the Bylaws as are felt from time to time to be desirable. The Bylaws Committee also shall draft new or amended bylaws at the suggestion of officers and other members of the Council, and shall circulate all proposed bylaws and amendments for action by the Council in accordance with Article XVIII of these Bylaws.

Section 4. **The Continuing Education Committee** shall consist of at least three members, one of whom shall be designated Chairperson by the President. The Committee shall
(1) be advisory to the Council and shall recommend the requirements for continuing education for recertification, and (2) determine the suitability of educational offerings for credit towards recertification.

Section 5. **The Ethics Committee** shall consist of at least three members, one of whom shall be designated Chairperson by the President. At least one ophthalmologist and at least one orthoptist member of the Council shall be a member of this committee. This committee shall investigate all charges of unethical conduct, including any violation of the Code of Rules Governing Department of Certified Orthoptists, made against any Certified Orthoptist. The results of any such investigation shall be duly considered and, if necessary, presented to the Council as set forth in these Bylaws. The Committee shall work in close cooperation with the Ethics Committee of the American Association of Certified Orthoptists.

Section 6. **The Examination Committee** shall consist of five members of the Council, at least one of whom shall be a Certified Orthoptist member of the Council. One member shall be designated Chairperson by the President. The Examination Committee shall prepare the examinations given to candidates for orthoptic certification. The examination shall consist of a written examination and an oral-practical examination. The written examination shall be given first to all candidates at a time designated by the Chairperson. The oral-practical examination shall be given to those candidates who successfully pass the written examination and to any who qualify under exceptional circumstances approved by the Committee, at a time and place designated by the President. The Chairperson shall announce the final application date and the times and places of the examinations in appropriate publications. The Committee, with the approval of the Council, shall determine the standards for successful completion of the written and oral-practical examinations. The Chairperson of the Examination Committee shall report the results of the examinations to the Council and shall make recommendations to the Council concerning the granting of certificates.

Section 7. **The Long Range Planning Committee** shall consist of at least five members, one of whom shall be designated as Chairperson by the President. This committee shall consider issues concerning the long term objectives of the Council in promoting the continued development of orthoptics as a profession, in safeguarding the interests of the public in high quality orthoptic services, and in furthering the welfare of orthoptists.

Section 8. **The Nominating Committee** shall be formed annually and shall consist of 7 members, chaired by the Immediate Past President; one representative from each of the sponsoring physician organizations; and two representatives from the American Association of Certified Orthoptists chosen from among the orthoptist members of the Council. Currently serving Council officers shall not serve as members of the Nominating Committee. If there are no members representing a constituent organization eligible to serve, one of the representatives may be chosen to serve without a vote. The representatives of each sponsoring physician organization shall decide, before the next Annual Meeting of the Council, which of its members

shall serve on the Nominating Committee for the ensuing year. If they cannot agree on a member, the eligible member with the most years of service on the Council shall be designated to serve. The Immediate Past President shall serve as Chairperson, without a vote. If the Immediate Past President is unable to serve or no longer is a member of the Council, the most recent Past President remaining on the Council and able to serve shall be Chairperson of the Committee. In this event, if the most recent Past President is already a voting member of the Committee, the members representing the same organization as does the Past President shall select another voting representative to the Committee. The Committee shall suggest ophthalmologists to be appointed to the Council to replace members who are not reappointed or who resign. The Committee shall also compile a slate of candidates for Council offices to be voted upon by the Council at its Annual Meeting, provided however, that nominations from the floor also may be considered.

Section 9. **The Program Committee** shall consist of at least four members, one of whom shall be designated Chairperson by the President. The Committee shall plan and supervise the program of the joint symposium of the Council and the American Association of Certified Orthoptists with the American Academy of Ophthalmology at the annual meeting of the Academy. One member shall be the moderator of the joint symposium for the current year. Other members shall be the symposium moderators for the previous and for the next year, and one member from among the representatives to the Council from the American Association of Certified Orthoptists, as designated by the President of that organization.

ARTICLE XI

TRAINING & CERTIFICATION OF ORTHOPTIC STUDENTS

Section 1. The requirements for training and certification of orthoptic students are as follows:

- A Training shall be carried out in orthoptic teaching programs accredited by the Council.
- B. The accredited training shall be for a period to be determined by the Council with the advice of the Accreditation Committee. Modification of this requirement may be made by the Executive Committee of the Council under exceptional circumstances.
- C. Such training shall consist of theoretical instruction and its practical application. In the practical training, contact with clinical patient material under the supervision of a Certified Orthoptist is mandatory.
- D. Candidates who successfully pass the examinations conducted by the Council are eligible for certification, and shall receive the certificate upon approval by the Council.

The examination shall not be given to any orthoptic candidate who has not fulfilled the requirements of the regulations governing training and certification of orthoptic students as determined by the Council or as set forth in these Bylaws.

- E. Certificates issued by the Council shall remain the property of the American Orthoptic Council, Inc. and are subject to renewal upon expiration.

Applicants are required to acknowledge the American Orthoptic Council's proprietary rights in these certificates and the limitations under which they are issued.

Section 2. In case of application to take the Council's examination leading to certification by an orthoptist who has not fulfilled the requirements as set forth in Section 1 of this Article, exceptions may be made in accordance with the guidelines of the Examination Committee as approved by the Council.

ARTICLE XII
CERTIFICATION RENEWAL

Section 1. Renewal of the orthoptic certification shall be granted only to orthoptists who have completed the required continuing education as determined by the Council and set forth in the American Orthoptic Council Policies and Procedures, who otherwise remain in good standing and who pay the required renewal fee.

Section 2. The Council shall have the power to modify these requirements in exceptional circumstances.

ARTICLE XIII
ACCREDITATION AND REACCREDITATION
OF ORTHOPTIC TEACHING PROGRAMS

Section 1. Application for accreditation may be made to the American Orthoptic Council, Inc. by any prospective orthoptic teaching program.

Section 2. To be eligible for accreditation or re accreditation, a teaching program shall meet the requirements set forth by the Council and found in the American Orthoptic Council Policies and Procedures.

Section 3. Orthoptic teaching programs shall, on making application for accreditation or reaccreditation, be required to submit the information then required by the Council and found in the American Orthoptic Council Policies and Procedures.

Section 4. The certificate of accreditation granted by the Council to an orthoptic teaching program shall remain the property of the Council. It is subject to revocation and withdrawal and shall remain in effect only as long as the teaching program to which it is awarded continues to fulfill the requirements for accreditation. Programs without students for three consecutive years will lose their accreditation and will be required to reapply for certification as a new program.

Section 5. The certificate of accreditation shall be granted on the basis that an orthoptic teaching program fulfills the standards for a given approved number of student orthoptists. An accredited Orthoptic Teaching Program shall not have in its program more orthoptic students than the number for which it is accredited, except by specific prior written authorization of the Accreditation Committee.

Section 6. The minimum curriculum of theoretical training of student orthoptists shall be determined by the American Orthoptic Council on recommendation of its Accreditation Committee.

Section 7. The required clinical patient load per student shall be determined by the American Orthoptic Council on recommendation of its Accreditation Committee.

Section 8. Accredited and reaccredited orthoptic teaching programs are required to inform the Secretary of the Council whenever any student begins the program and to provide the student's name, address, and educational background. The teaching program is responsible for not accepting any student who does not fulfill the requirements as determined by the Council.

Section 9. The Council, upon recommendation of its Accreditation Committee, may act on an application for accreditation or re-accreditation by approval, conditional approval [with the conditions stated], or by disapproval. A site visit to the teaching program may be requested if necessary for the Council's decision.

Section 10. If the Council shall determine, after review and a majority vote of the Accreditation Committee, that an accredited Orthoptic program no longer fulfills the requirements for accreditation as set forth elsewhere in this Article, the Council will consider withdrawal of accreditation. If such withdrawal is decided upon, the affected program will be so notified in writing, and will be given a reasonable time to request a formal hearing in which the Accreditation Committee will consider information in mitigation of this decision. After such a hearing the Committee will recommend action to the Council. If a hearing is declined or not requested within a reasonable time by the affected program, the original determination to withdraw accreditation shall become final.

ARTICLE XIV

DEPARTMENT OF CERTIFIED ORTHOPTISTS

Section 1. Each applicant for the examinations given by the Council shall be required to agree in writing to adopt the Code of Ethics and Rules and Regulations Governing Department of Certified Orthoptists, as formulated by the Council through its Ethics Committee.

Section 2. The signed adoption by each orthoptist of the Code of Ethics and Rules and Regulations Governing the Department of Certified Orthoptists shall, upon satisfactory completion of the examinations by the orthoptist and upon approval of the Council of the issuance of its certificate to the orthoptist, be made a permanent entry in the orthoptist's individual file maintained by the Secretary of the Council.

ARTICLE XV

REVOCATION AND WITHDRAWAL OF ORTHOPTIC CERTIFICATES

Section 1. The certificate granted by the Council to an orthoptist, as property of the Council, is subject to revocation and withdrawal and shall remain in effect only so long as the orthoptist to whom it is awarded shall by act or conduct reflect no discredit on the profession of orthoptics. Any immoral or unethical act or conduct, or any violation of the Rules and Regulations Governing the Department of Certified Orthoptists, shall be deemed grounds for revocation and withdrawal of the certificate.

Section 2. Charges of immoral or unethical conduct of any Certified Orthoptist shall be submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Council for investigation and action. If the Ethics Committee by two-thirds vote declares that the evidence in support of the charges is not sufficient to warrant revocation and withdrawal of the certificate, the Committee shall so report to the Council and the decision of the Committee shall be final and the charges dropped.

Section 3. If the Ethics Committee does not advise dropping the charges, the matter shall be submitted , together with all accompanying evidence, to the Secretary of the Council. The Secretary shall give the orthoptist notice in writing, by registered or certified mail, not less than thirty days beforehand, of the time and place of a hearing on such charges, and the orthoptist so charged shall be given the opportunity to be heard and to present defense thereto, personally or by duly authorized representation. The decision of a two-thirds majority of the Council, after such hearing, whether or not the orthoptist is present or represented, shall be final.

An orthoptist whose certificate is thus revoked and withdrawn shall be eligible to apply for recertification after two years from the date of revocation and withdrawal, under procedures of the Council then in effect.

ARTICLE XVI

REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CANADIAN ORTHOPTIC COUNCIL

Pursuant to action taken by the Canadian Orthoptic Council to accept an ophthalmologist member of the American Orthoptic Council as a full member of its own organization, the President of the American Orthoptic Council shall appoint an ophthalmologist Council member as such representative for a renewable term of two years.

ARTICLE XVII

AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

These Bylaws may be amended by ballot at any meeting of the Council, or by mail or electronic mail ballot when necessary at other times. The proposed changes in the Bylaws shall have been introduced at a preceding meeting of the Council, or in urgent circumstances by registered or certified mailing or by electronic mail by the Secretary to Council members at least thirty days prior to the meeting or mail ballot at which they are to be voted upon. For adoption of amendments to these Bylaws at a meeting of the Council, the favorable votes of two-thirds of the entire Council shall be required

ARTICLE XVIII

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

In pursuit of its purposes, the American Orthoptic Council shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of age, race, creed, color, natural origin, sexual preference, or physical handicap.

Bylaws Amended 10.13.21

Bylaws Amended 9.21.19

Bylaws Amended 8.25.17

Bylaws Amended 3.2.15

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