



Membership Categories and Classifications

The Association will have the same membership categories and qualifications as stated in the most current version of the American Optometric Association Constitution and Bylaws. All categories of membership involve an application process. The SCOPA will not change your membership category, unless the proper qualifications are received and approved by the SCOPA/AOA Board of Directors. All applications or letters submitted for any type of membership category will be presented during the monthly BOD meetings for approval by the SCOPA BOD. Once the request is approved by both the SCOPA and the AOA, members will then be granted that particular status of membership.

A member may change his/her classification once during the membership year within the ***open enrollment period which is January – April***. Any change in classification will be made retroactive back to January 1st of the year. The dues are assessed at the new classification's rate for the full year. **Changes in classification submitted May 1st – December 31st are effective for the following year, they will not go into effect for the current year.** No proration of dues is allowed for changes in classification and no changes in classification can be made retroactive to a prior year.

If you are ever experiencing financial hardship, not currently working or in a place where you are considering discontinuing your membership for financial reasons, please contact the SCOPA office. There may be something SCOPA can do to help with your specific situation. ***Thank you for your membership!***

Active Member: An optometrist who has earned a Doctor of Optometry degree from a school or college that has been accredited or pre-accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE) or by an accrediting body that the Board of Trustees, in its sole discretion, determines to be equivalent. The optometrist must be a member in good standing in the affiliated association where he/she resides or where his/her principal place of optometric-related employment is located.

****Partial Practice Member:*** A member working two days or less per week in compensated optometrically related activities qualifies for partial practice. Partial practice members will be assessed 60% of level 5 annual dues amount. Please note SCOPA Reserve Fund is separate from dues and not included in discount. More information on this category can be found on the back of this page.

****Dues Waiver Member:*** A dues waiver may be requested for members who are experiencing financial hardship or medical related disabilities and are unable to pay all or a portion of their SCOPA/AOA dues. A dues waiver is only in effect for the calendar year for which it is submitted. This category should be applied for as early in the year as possible so that the member's outstanding dues balance is correct and the member does not become delinquent for any quarter. Please contact the SCOPA office for more information on how to apply for a dues waiver.

Retired Member - with Benefits: An optometrist who is at least 55 years old and no longer receives compensation for optometrically related activities. The member must be a current member in good standing to transition into retired membership. Retired members electing to receive benefits will be assessed annual dues of \$320 (\$100 for the AOA dues, \$100 for SCOPA dues and \$125 SCOPA Reserve Fund).

Retired Member - without Benefits: An optometrist who is at least 55 years old and no longer receives compensation for optometrically related activities. The member must be a current member in good standing to transition into retired membership. Retired members electing not to receive benefits and to be a member in name only will not be assessed annual dues.

Life Member: A member who has been a member of the AOA for 45 accumulative years. The member must be a current member in good standing to transition into life membership. (Members who applied and were classified as Life Members as of September 30, 2012 were grandfathered in and will retain life status even if the qualifications were not met when the new Bylaws took effect in 2013.)

(Please see other side for more categories, along with partial practice and dues reduction information.)

Post-Graduate Member: A resident or intern in any program accredited or pre-accredited by the ACOE, or by an accrediting body that the AOA Board of Trustees, in its sole discretion, determines to be equivalent. Members enrolled full-time in a graduate program are also eligible for post-graduate membership. This category is an annual fee of \$35 with the AOA.

Student Member: A student of optometry in a program at a school or college accredited or pre-accredited by the ACOE and who is a member in good standing of AOSA and another affiliated association. Student members attending a program outside of the fifty United States and the District of Columbia are not required to join another affiliated association in addition to the AOSA.

Honorary Member: An individual who has rendered outstanding service to the profession of optometry.

Associate Member: Optometrists licensed in, but not practicing in, South Carolina who are members of their state AOA affiliate or of the Armed Forces of Optometry (AFOS). Associate members will be assessed annual dues of \$200. In-state associate members will be assessed the \$125 SCOPA Reserve Fund amount in addition.

****Detailed information on Partial Practice and Dues Waivers:***

Partial Practice Category

In order to qualify for partial practice membership status you must be a member working two days or less per week in compensated optometrically related activities. Partial practice members will be assessed 60% of level 5 annual dues amount.

Members that apply for the partial practice category will be asked to submit a statement provided by the SCOPA each year certifying that they are engaged in 16 hours or less per week of optometric related activities. This form can be found in the Membership Information section of the SCOPA's website or you may contact the SCOPA office to have one sent to you.

This must be received no later than March 15th.

Dues Waiver

A dues waiver may be requested for members who are experiencing financial hardship or medical related disabilities only, and are unable to pay all or a portion of their SCOPA/AOA dues. Dues waivers are effective on a calendar year, January 1st through December 31st. Requests for a waiver of dues during the year will be handled as they are submitted and as long as the requirements asked from the SCOPA Board of Directors have been satisfied, the Vice-President will recommend the waiver at the next Board of Directors meeting. The waiver will expire on December 31st and the applicant must reapply for dues waiver the following year.