

IAOM Candidate Guide

From Member to Board Certified Orofacial Myologist®

Members include health professionals with background as:

- Dentists and Dental Specialists
- Medical Doctors
- Registered Dental Hygienists, Dental Therapists
- Oral Health Therapists
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Physical Therapists
- Occupational Therapists

Q: What is a Certified Orofacial Myologist®?

A: COM® denotes a mastery level in the treatment of orofacial myofunctional disorders and is awarded after competence examinations (written test and third party onsite examination) have been completed.

Overview of steps to COM®

1. Join IAOM as an active member
2. Complete a 28-hour orofacial myofunctional therapy course
3. Begin implementation in a clinical setting
4. Apply to enroll in the COM® certification
5. Complete the written proficiency examination
6. Submit paperwork for onsite evaluation including four IAOM mentoring committee meeting summaries and schedule for the three required patients
7. Complete onsite evaluation proctored by two IAOM board Certified Orofacial Myologist examiners

*Become a Certified Orofacial Myologist®
(COM®)*

IAOM Candidate Guide

1. Join IAOM as an Active member

US Membership



International Membership



IAOM Mission & Vision

VISION

A world where orofacial myology is recognized as an essential healthcare specialty, and every individual has access to board Certified Orofacial Myologists who support optimal lifelong function.

MISSION

The International Association of Orofacial Myology (IAOM) advances the specialty of orofacial myology by establishing standards for competency, certification, and ethical practice. We support professionals from diverse educational backgrounds in developing the knowledge, clinical skill, and confidence to practice responsibly and collaboratively. Through certification, advocacy, and professional community, IAOM works to ensure consistent, high-quality care and to expand recognition of orofacial myology as a distinct and essential field.

IAOM Values

Integrity: We practice with transparency and accountability, ensuring our work reflects ethical standards and the trust placed in us by the public and our peers.

Excellence: We set and uphold high standards for competency, certification, and clinical practice, continually raising the bar for quality in orofacial myology.

Growth: We are committed to ongoing learning, professional development, and the advancement of knowledge that strengthens both individual practitioners and the field as a whole.

Inclusion: We welcome professionals from diverse educational backgrounds and perspectives, recognizing that best clinical practices through IAOM certification defines competence.

Respect: We act with professionalism and openness, valuing the contributions of others and fostering an environment where dialogue and differing perspectives are welcomed and respected.

Collaboration: We work across disciplines to support comprehensive care, strengthen professional relationships, and elevate the impact of orofacial myology.

Accountability: We take responsibility for our practice, uphold defined standards, and recognize IAOM board certification as a commitment to maintaining trust, safety, and professional integrity.

Join Our Organization

**Become A
Member**

You will be required to submit the following with your application for membership:

1. Verification that your educational background is in one of the following:

- Dental or Dental Specialist (DDS/DMD),
- Medical Physician (MD/DO),
- Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH),
- Dental Therapist (DT),
- Dental Nurse or Oral Health Therapist,
- Speech Language Pathologist (SLP),
- Physical Therapist (PT) or
- Occupational Therapist (OT).

2. Join as an Active Member and pay for Active Membership Dues- \$250.00

[Click here to become an IAOM member](#)

Join Our Organization

Membership Perks

- Mentorship and collaboration opportunities through IAOM committees, mentoring meetings, and professional connections
- Access to the IAOM newsletter with updates on research, education, and industry developments
- Opportunities to serve in leadership roles, committees, and organizational initiatives
- Increased professional visibility and referral potential through IAOM membership and certification status
- Structured pathway for professional growth and advanced competency in orofacial myofunctional therapy
- Access to continuing education opportunities that support maintaining certification and staying current in the field

Join Our Organization

Membership Perks

- Discounted registration rates for the IAOM Annual Convention and live educational events
- Member-only discounts on IAOM courses, webinars, products, and educational resources
- Exclusive member publishing benefits through the International Association of Orofacial Myology journal, including discounted article submission and publication fees.
- Access to recorded webinars and online education you can watch anytime, from anywhere
- Listing in the IAOM online member directory where patients and professionals can find and refer to you
- Professional credibility associated with the COM® credential, recognized as following best practices in orofacial myology

IAOM Mentoring Meetings

**Online
or Recordings**

Attend mentoring committee meetings

Mentoring committee meetings are held monthly. Here you can engage in peer-to-peer on seeing examples of case studies, treatment and have questions answered. You are encouraged to attend mentoring meetings live however you can also watch recorded meetings to complete the summaries.

This is a member perk to all who are an IAOM member. Attending meetings and having summaries written for four mentoring meetings is also a requirement to apply for the onsite evaluation. More details are later in this packet.

IAOM Candidate Guide

1. Join IAOM as an Active member
- 2. Complete a 28-hour orofacial myofunctional therapy course**

Find Your Introductory Course

**Minimum of
28 Hours**

28-hour Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy Course Completion

Complete a 28-hour Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy Course. This must be from one course resulting in a minimum of 28-hours and not several courses totaling 28-hours.

Find Your Introductory Course

**Minimum of
28 Hours**

- Patient history (medical/dental)
- Initial assessment report
- Initial oral/dental pictures or videos and posture/facial/profile pictures or videos
- Baseline oral measurements (frenums, occlusion classification, lips, and other pertinent measurements)
- Timeline from initial assessment to completion and maintenance schedule (i.e., number of months seen, frequency of appointments, and maintenance plans)
- Description of treatment (all techniques utilized during the therapy process, including exercises, along with rationale for each exercise)
- Discharge report

Find Your Introductory Course

**Minimum of
28 Hours**

- Anatomy/physiology of the oral and facial region
- Oral and facial muscle function
- IAOM history and contributions to the field of orofacial myology
- IAOM current standards of scope of practice and organizational standards
- Oral habits and their functional impact
- Oral rest posture
- Dental structures including emergent ages
- The impact of orofacial myofunctional disorders on speech sound development and production
- Oral preparatory and swallow function
- Classification of tonsils
- Ankyloglossia and classifications

Find Your Introductory Course

**Minimum of
28 Hours**

- Restricted oral tissues and classifications and the impact on oral and lingual function
- Current research in orofacial myology
- Thorough understanding of orofacial myofunctional disorders- causes and effects
- Role of the airway and its relation to orofacial myology and concomitant etiologies
- Role of myofunctional concerns/tongue thrust in TMD
- Habit elimination including all noxious habits
- Habituation and normalization post therapy (Can include: day rest posture, night posture and saliva swallowing self monitoring)
- Asepsis techniques / sterilization
- Evidence-based practice

Find Your Introductory Course

**Minimum of
28 Hours**

Interrelationships:

- Patient
- Other professionals
- Parents or other support person
- Willingness and ability to answer questions
- Ability to motivate patient and parent
- Appropriateness of response to patient's performance
- Patient records (initial intake form, assessment report, interim progress notes, end of treatment report)
- Skill and thoroughness in diagnosis
- Management of related problems (sucking habits, frenectomy, tonsils and adenoids etc.)
- Individualization of therapy
- Thoroughness and clarity of instruction

Find Your Introductory Course

**Minimum of
28 Hours**

- Effectiveness of therapy program
- Creativity and flexibility
- Appropriateness of the level of therapy activities and goals
- Use and effectiveness of therapy supplies and equipment
- Management of challenging clinical situations, including pediatric behavioral challenges, complex parent or guardian interactions, difficult referral relationships, and other unexpected clinical circumstances
- Professional demeanor
- Bookkeeping
- Scheduling appointments
- Marketing materials
- HIPAA compliance

IAOM Candidate Guide

1. Join IAOM as an Active member
2. Complete a 28-hour orofacial myofunctional therapy course
- 3. Begin implementation in a clinical setting**

Implement in a Clinical Setting

Clinical Practice

Begin implementing what you have learned by developing a caseload! You will need experience in the assessment and treatment of orofacial myofunctional disorders prior to starting the certification process. It will be required that you have taken at least 2 patients aged 4 years or older through a complete program before seeking certification. It is expected that, while you are working to reach this milestone, you have other patients in various stages on your caseload (i.e., 2 single patients do not provide enough experience to successfully reach COM® status).

Implement in a Clinical Setting

Clinical Practice

Clinicians working solely via telehealth at this time will not be able to fully meet the requirements (e.g. take good quality pre- and post- pictures, physical measurements, etc. that must be taken by the candidate, and other aspects that are only gained through in-person sessions) or to fully prepare for what is required in the onsite evaluation.

We respect the right of clinicians to choose telehealth as their sole platform for therapy. However, for the all appointments for the onsite, an in person patient will be required for our board examiners to properly evaluate skills.

IAOM Candidate Guide

1. Join IAOM as an Active member
2. Complete a 28-hour orofacial myofunctional therapy course
3. Begin implementation in a clinical setting
4. **Apply to enroll in the COM® certification**

Ready to Enroll!

COM® Process

Complete the online certification application found via the IAOM website - *Certification Application*.

Ensure you have included a copy of your professional license (*educational verification*), and a copy of your Certificate of Completion (*from your minimum of 28-hour Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy Course*). This must be uploaded at the time of your application submission.

Once your application is received, the Executive Director will review and approve your application. Once approved, an invoice will be emailed to the email address on file. This will be for the \$250 certification application and fee for the written examination.

Once you are approved, the Executive Director will send a link to access the written proficiency examination.

IAOM Candidate Guide

1. Join IAOM as an active member
2. Complete a 28-hour orofacial myofunctional therapy course
3. Begin implementation in a clinical setting
4. Apply to enroll in the COM® certification
5. **Complete the written proficiency examination**

Requirements for COM® Testing

Online Written Test

The online written examination is designed to ensure clinicians have a strong foundation in the principles of orofacial myology. This step helps candidates move beyond memorization into true clinical understanding. The exam is completed online, allowing flexibility while maintaining the high standards of the COM® credential.

Written Proficiency Examination

Online Written

The candidate will receive a link to the online written proficiency examination.

This link will remain active for 3 months.

The online proficiency exam consist of 140 objective multiple choice items.

Please note, once the exam link is clicked, the examination begins at that time. Once the candidate clicks the link to begin the examination, they will have 8 continuous hours to complete the exam.

Results will be displayed at the completion of the examination and verified by staff. If the online portion is passed with an 80% or higher score, proceed to the next step.

Written Proficiency Examination

Online Written

If the candidate does not pass the written exam, they may pay to retake the exam.

A fee of \$250 will be invoiced in order to take a new written proficiency examination.

In the event the of a second failed attempt there will be a 2 month waiting period to allow for remediation to prepare for the next exam attempt.

Once the written examination is passed, the candidate will have one year to schedule their onsite evaluation.

Written Examination Categories

Testing Categories

Occlusion	Frenum
Treatment goals	Genetics
Noxious Habits	Evaluation
Evidence based practice	Anatomy
Treatment plan	OMD
Generic	Muscles
Infection Control	Therapy technique
Tongue thrust	TMD
Resting posture	Medical/dental history
Code of conduct	Orthodontics
Record keeping	Nasal breathing
Habit Elimination	Sleep
Supportive therapy	Appliances
Habituation	Dental Terminology
Contraindications	Speech
Prevention	Lip Seal
Cranial Nerves	Swallow
Development	Tethered oral tissue

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Onsite Evaluation Application

Onsite Application

Timeline Overview:

The Onsite Application and Onsite evaluation must be completed within one year of passing the online proficiency exam.

There are two portions to the onsite.

1. Onsite Evaluation Application

- Includes scheduling and submitting paperwork one week prior to scheduled onsite. Paperwork includes four mentoring meeting summaries and three patient schedule for onsite evaluation.

2. Onsite Evaluation

- Ensure you pay the \$850 USD onsite evaluation fee
- Receive the Secure Video link for your scheduled onsite

Requirements for COM® Testing

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Mentoring Meetings

Candidates participate in four mentoring meetings with experienced IAOM mentors to support growth and clinical reasoning. These sessions provide an opportunity to discuss cases, ask questions, strengthen critical thinking skills, and bridge the gap between coursework and clinical application. After each meeting, candidates submit a short summary reflecting on key takeaways and how the information will influence their clinical practice.

IAOM Mentoring Meetings

**Online
or Recordings**

Attend mentoring committee meetings and complete summaries

Attend four IAOM Mentoring committee meetings. Committee meetings are held monthly. Here you can engage in peer-to-peer on seeing examples of case studies, treatment and have questions answered. You are encouraged to attend mentoring meetings live however you can also watch recorded meetings to complete the summaries.

If you have any direct questions for the Mentoring Committee, please email them at mentoring@iaom.com.

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Third Party Onsite

The final certification examination is conducted live over secure video through a third-party process with two examiners. This step evaluates a candidate's ability to think critically, demonstrate clinical competency, communicate professionally, and apply myofunctional principles in patient scenarios. Having two examiners helps ensure fairness, consistency, and a well-rounded evaluation process while maintaining the integrity and credibility of the COM® certification.

Virtual Onsite Testing

Onsite Evaluation

Virtual Onsite Evaluation in front of two IAOM Board of Examiners (BOE)

- The Candidate has 1 year from the time notified of passing the online written examination to complete the Onsite evaluation with two assigned BOE Examiners. The Onsite will be completed via Secure Video Telehealth (*provided by the IAOM*).
- The Onsite evaluation requires the candidate to be in-person with their patients. The candidate should prepare up to 3 hours of recorded sessions, in the event extenuating circumstances preclude the patient from making their scheduled appointment for the onsite. These recordings must include and initial evaluation, a therapy session, and a follow up appointment,
- All Onsite evaluations will automatically be recorded.

Virtual Onsite Testing

Onsite Evaluation

- Payment of Onsite evaluation fee is \$850 USD for the Secure Video. Once you schedule and book your onsite, you will be invoiced by the Executive Director. Payment must be received prior to your scheduled onsite evaluation.
- For the onsite evaluation, all visits must be conducted in real time. For the initial evaluation, this must be with a patient who is in person. For candidates who treat via telehealth, they have the option for the mid therapy and habituated patient to be seen via telehealth with them logging into the secure video platform. Secure video platform is provided by the IAOM organization to use for your onsite evaluation.
- Be sure to conduct the onsite visit per all guidelines in the outlined onsite document, available on the IAOM website: Instructions: COM®, Candidate onsite. This document is in the member password protected section.

Virtual Onsite Testing

Onsite Evaluation

- The Executive Director will notify the candidate via email of the onsite evaluation results after receipt of the Board of Examiner's scoring and submission of paperwork. Please allow up to one week for results to be verified.
- Every IAOM Certified Orofacial Myologist (COM®) is required to obtain 20 hours of related continuing education every two years to maintain COM® status starting after the year after obtaining their COM®.

Onsite Testing Grade Sheet

Grading Rubric

1 - Unacceptable

Not appropriate or acceptable performance

2 - Needs improvement

Performance at basic level needs improvement

3 - Acceptable

Performance at acceptable level for clinical competency, could make improvements

4- Good

Performance is at desired level for clinical competency

5 - Excellent

Performance demonstrates mastery level or goes above and beyond expectation for clinical competency

(5 categories graded as level 1 validated by both examiners results automatic failure of the on-site)

Grading parameters, pass rate, and grading examples

Overall grade of 3 is the passing parameter

Total score /number of categories

Example: score 135/41 = 3.29 PASS

Example score 119/41 = 2.90 FAIL

Onsite Testing Grade Sheet

Grading Rubric

The grades of examiners will be averaged. When examiners do not agree the benefit of the doubt goes to the candidate.

Example 1:

Examiner 1 grades 4

Examiner 2 grades 2

Candidate grade is 3

Example 2:

Examiner 1 grades 3

Examiner 2 grades 2

Candidate grade is 3 (benefit of the doubt goes to the candidate)

Fill in the grade for each category for each type of appointment. If the category was not applicable to that appointment grade as N/A. Comments to the candidate may be added to each appointment and will be passed on to the candidate with the final grade after assessment of both examiners grades.

Examiners must independently grade and must not confer on any aspect of the grading. At the conclusion of the onsite grades must be immediately sent to the executive director. Results will be released by administration. Candidate performance/grades must not be discussed with the candidate during the onsite.

Onsite Testing Rubric

Grading Rubric

Initial Assessment:

- _____ Proper patient history taken
- _____ Presented comprehensive forms including consent form
- _____ Interaction with patient and/or parent establishing realistic goals/expectations
- _____ Explanation of time involved consistency and parent involvement if applicable
- _____ Assessment of muscles and function
- _____ Assessment of tethered oral tissues
- _____ Assessment of functional nasal airway
- _____ Assessment of noxious habits - photo and video records taken (if applicable)
- _____ Assessment of posture
- _____ Appropriate photos and videos taken
- _____ Appropriate measurements taken
- _____ Infection control
- _____ Identify and discuss issues that need to be treated before therapy can begin
- _____ Recognition of necessary referrals and communication with other providers if applicable
- _____ Set next appointment

Onsite Testing Rubric

Grading Rubric

Therapy appointment:

- _____ Review of previous therapy appointment
- _____ Evaluation of progress or lack of progress
- _____ Review of previous therapy exercises and appropriate response to patient performance
- _____ Development of and Alteration of exercises not mastered from previous appointment (if applicable)
- _____ Presentation and teaching of new exercises and other applicable therapy techniques
- _____ Motivating patient and/or parent (evaluation of parent involvement if applicable)
- _____ Assessment of noxious habits- photo and video records taken (if applicable)
- _____ Assessment of posture
- _____ Evidence of individualized care (if applicable)
- _____ Proper utilization of therapy supplies/equipment
- _____ Answered questions and demonstrated knowledge to accurately address patient and or parent concerns
- _____ Level of engagement of patient and or parent appropriate
- _____ Set next appointment
- _____ Infection control

Onsite Testing Rubric

Grading Rubric

Follow up/Habituation/Recall appointment:

- _____ Review of maintenance exercises
- _____ Assessment of function
- _____ Assessment of Proper Swallow – demonstrate, liquid, puree', solid
- _____ Assessment of nasal breathing
- _____ Assessment of resting posture
- _____ Assessment of posture
- _____ Assessment of noxious habits - photo and video records taken (if applicable)
- _____ Assess effectiveness of therapy program, was habituation achieved and if not, proper steps taken to address deficiencies
- _____ Assess self-reported progress or decline
- _____ Make decisions on necessary exercises and strategies needed (if applicable)
- _____ Make decision on next steps/appointments required
- _____ Infection control
- _____ Confirmation of data collection for final report including, function, pre and post photos, and measurements
- _____ Confirmation of planned communication with referral source to examiners

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(COM®)***

Congratulations!!

Every IAOM Certified Orofacial Myologist (COM®) is required to obtain 20 hours of related continuing education every two years to maintain COM® status starting after the year after obtaining their COM®.

FAQ's for Process

Frequent Questions

Q: Can any 28 hour course be taken to qualify to become a COM®?

A: Yes, any minimum of 28 hour introductory course will allow you to move forward with certification.

Q: What's the difference between a course certificate and a professional certification like the COM®?

A. A course certificate is typically issued by the course provider and simply confirms completion of that training. It does not validate competency beyond attendance. In contrast, our professional certification (COM®), involves a standardized third-party exam and evaluation, ensuring you've met rigorous competency stand set by an external governing body. It's a credential that signifies validated expertise, not just participation.

FAQ's for Process

Frequent Questions

Q: How long does the entire certification process take, from application to final onsite evaluation?

A: The full process, from application submission to the final onsite exam takes approximately 12-18 months, depending on the candidates pace.

Q: Is the COM® exam difficult?

A: The certification process is designed to assess competency and clinical understanding, not perfection. Candidates who prepare thoroughly and actively apply the material are typically successful.

Q: Is the COM® recognized internationally?

A: The IAOM is an international organization, and the COM® credential is recognized by professionals around the world.