

The Quality Assurance Program involves four pillars of professionalism: continuing education, peer circles, practitioner assessment and support for registrants in the process.

Although each of the four pillars of the program has a specific purpose, they work together to maintain and advance scientific knowledge in the practice of optometry, enhance professional competency, assure the public of professional/clinical performance, and improve patient outcomes.

2.6.1 Continuing Education Requirements

Continuing Education Activities

1 In policy 2.6.1:

(a) “accredited program” means an educational program approved by the Registrar² or by the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE);

(b) “peer circle” means a peer circle as defined in subsections 2, 3 & 4 below;

(c) “registration year” means November 1 to the following October 31 in each year

(d) “approved program provider” means the following bodies:

1) a program provider approved by the *Council on Optometric Practitioner Education* (COPE); or

2) any other body that is approved by the Board.

[Note: A commercial entity is not considered to be an “approved program provider”. Course instructors who apply to the Registrar for accreditation of their continuing education program, are expected to meet the same standards that COPE requires for commercially supported continuing education. (Refer to the COPE Standards for Commercial Support, page 20-22).]

(e) “approved program” means a continuing education program approved by the Quality Assurance Committee, under section 71 of the Bylaws, as follows:

1) an accredited program given by an approved program provider, whether given in person, or by long-distance, or by self-study delivery methods such as correspondence, video, computer or internet; or

2) a peer circle; or

3) any of the continuing education activities listed in subsection 5 below.

Peer Circles

2 “Peer circle” means a small-group, interactive learning environment, guided by a facilitator, for the purpose of encouraging safe, effective and appropriate eye-care practices.

3 A peer circle must have a facilitator.

4 A facilitator of a peer circle must:

² Accreditation will be granted in accordance with current COPE standards and requirements for course Qualification, and must meet the goals of advancing and enhancing scientific optometric knowledge, professional competency, promoting safe, effective and ethical optometric practice, and improving patient outcomes. Refer to the Criteria for COPE Qualification of Continuing Education. Courses provided in an exclusive manner will not be deemed acceptable.

- (a) be a Therapeutic Qualified Registrant; and
- (b) be in good standing with the College; and
- (c) not be the subject of public notification, pursuant to inquiry or discipline proceedings; and
- (e) be appointed by the Quality Assurance Committee.

[Note: Peer circles facilitate collegial discussion among registrants about practice methodology and clinical best practices. Discussion may include topics relating to the current practice of optometry and patient care, record keeping, technology/equipment, and practice management.]

Hourly Credits for Continuing Education Activities and Peer Circles

5 For the purpose of calculating hours of yearly continuing education programs under section 73 of the Bylaws, activities will be accredited for the number of hours specified in the table below:

Activity	Course category	Hours accredited
For each hour of attendance at or participation in an accredited program under section 2(2)(a) ¹	Ocular health ³	1 hour
	Other ⁴	1 hour
For each hour of instruction or formal presentation of an educational course under section 2(2)(a)	Ocular health	2 hours
	Other	2 hours
Publication of an article in a refereed optometric or ophthalmological journal	Ocular health	5 hours
	Other	5 hours
Publication of a case report in a refereed optometric or ophthalmological journal	Ocular health	2 hours
	Other	2 hours
For each hour of peer circle participation or peer circle facilitation	Ocular health	1 hour
	Other	1 hour
For serving the CEO/CACO as an exam question developer	Ocular health	No more than 10 hours per year
Achieving Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry	Other	10 hours
Achieving Diplomate of American Academy of Optometry	Other	14 hours

6 Continuing education program hours under subsection 5 must only be claimed by the registrant if the registrant is able to provide proof of having attended the program or completed the course for

³ Ocular health” includes educational programs classified as clinical optometry, ocular disease and related systemic disease.

⁴ “Other” includes educational programs classified as optometric business management.

which continuing education program hours are sought⁵. Acceptable proof includes the original continuing education attendance certificate or continuing education attendance recorded within *OE Tracker*.

Annual Continuing Education Requirements

- 7 In accordance with Part 5 of the Bylaws, the Quality Assurance Committee specifies the following continuing education hours for Full⁶ and Non-practising registrants:
- (a) In each registration year, no less than 20 accredited continuing education hours must be obtained.
 - (b) A maximum of 10 hours out of the required 20 accredited continuing education hours may be on subjects other than ocular health.

Self-Recording and Self-Reporting of Continuing Education Requirements

- 8 Registrants must:
- (a) self-record and self-report their Continuing Education hours, and
 - (b) retain all original continuing education certificates for a minimum of seven (7) years commencing December 1, 2010; and
 - (c) upon request of the Registrar, provide to the College all original continuing education certificates; this will be carried out by, but not limited to, continuing competency assessments and audits by the Registrar.
- 9 Commencing November 1, 2017, registrants:
- (a) will no longer be able to carry forward continuing education hours into the next registration year; and
 - (b) will, if they have authorized the College to enroll them in *OE Tracker* or have provided the College with their current *OE Tracker* number, no longer be required to self-report their continuing education hours⁷.
 - (c) must, if they are not enrolled in *OE Tracker* continue to submit to the College proof of completing the requirements set out in section 63 of the Bylaws, along with the associated administrative fee; submission must be by registered mail, prior to registration renewal for the next registration year.
 - (d) no longer be able to claim a continuing education credit for CPR training (although it remains a requirement of registration).

Exemptions

- 10 Despite section 73(1) of the Bylaws, registrants need not fulfil the requirements of the Quality Assurance Program in a registration year if:
- (a) they successfully complete the national qualifying examination or national qualifying examination equivalent in the same registration year; or

⁵ A registrant must not claim continuing education program hours for an educational program he or she repeats in the same registration year.

⁶ Full registrant means:

- (a) a therapeutic qualified registrant who is a member of the class established by Bylaws section 51(1)(a);
- (b) a non-therapeutic qualified registrant who is a member of the class established by section 51(1)(b); or
- (c) a limited registrant who is a member of the class established by section 51(1)(c).

⁷ For these registrants the College will use *OE Tracker* to confirm continuing education hours.