



COLLEGE *of* OPTICIANS
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
a B.C. Health Regulator

Frequently Asked Questions



**A Support Tool for the Continuing
Competency Program (CCP)**

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General

What is it?

The CCP is the new education program administered by the College of Opticians of BC (COBC), required to be completed by all registrants. It is a quality assurance tool that supports registrants in their professional development, to ensure they maintain a level of quality practice throughout their careers. The program includes a method of competency assessment and enables registrants to enhance competence within the context of their practice. The CCP is being launched in phases and is replacing the existing credit-based education program.

Why the change? Where did it come from?

The COBC gathered feedback from opticians about the existing continuing education program over many years to understand what needed to be changed. While a credit-based program focused on the completion of certain activities, it did not always equate to learning and development. In collaboration with other regulators and opticians across Canada, this new program was developed to focus more on helping opticians continue their competency.

When can I start the new CCP?

The new program launched for registrants that were starting a new cycle in 2018. Once registrants have finished their final credit cycle, at the end of either 2017, 2018, or 2019, they will begin on the new program to start their new cycle. Depending which cycle you are on, you will start when your new cycle begins, in either 2018, 2019, or 2020. Please contact the COBC if you need clarification on your cycle.

Do I still have to complete my current credit cycle?

Yes. If your current cycle doesn't end until December 2018 or 2019, you will still need to complete your current cycle and submit the required credits. Once your current cycle has been completed, you will start the new program for your next cycle:

- **For registrants whose cycle ended in 2017:** start the new CCP in April 2018 (when the online assessment first becomes available)
- **For registrants whose cycle ends in 2018:** submit required credits by December 2018, and then start your new cycle on the CCP in January 2019
- **For registrants whose cycle ends in 2019:** submit required credits by December 2019, and then start your new cycle on the CCP in January 2020

Can I end my current cycle early, so I can start on the new CCP? I don't want to continue acquiring credits.

Yes, if your cycle ends at the end of 2018 or 2019 you can volunteer to change to the new CCP to start the program sooner. However, you must contact the COBC to discuss.

For more information on the development of the CCP, please review the *"Continuing Competency Program (CCP): Information Guide"*.



Will I still be on a 3-year cycle with the new program?

Yes. You will be working on the program throughout the cycle and will be expected to complete it by the end of your 3-year cycle.

If I'm a non-practicing registrant, do I still have to complete the program?

Yes. Just as before, both practicing and non-practicing registrants will need to complete the requirements of the education program. Non-practicing status is designed for registrants who are temporarily not working as an optician, but who plan to return to practice. These opticians must maintain the same requirements as those who are practicing, to ensure that their skills and knowledge will be current when they return to practice.

I am still on my credit cycle - will there still be accredited activities available for me to get credits, even though there is now a different program?

Yes. Although the program is changing, many of the available opportunities for education will remain the same. If you are still finishing your credit-based cycle you will still be able to find accredited activities with credits assigned to them, while opticians on the new competency-based cycle will find those same activities with competencies assigned to them. You will find the credits you need, while they will find the activities they need to help them work on their chosen competencies. They will also have the freedom to find their own activities and incorporate them into their plan as they wish.

Is there a cost?

No, opticians do not have to pay the COBC anything for the assessment or use of the program. However, activities you may choose to do as a part of your learning plan, such as courses or seminars, may have a cost, just as before.

Do I have to use a computer to work on and complete the program? I don't like technology.

Yes. While the program has been created to be as simple as possible, we do understand that everyone has differing levels of comfort with technology and computers. We are happy to provide as much help as needed for any registrant who requests it. If you are concerned about getting started, or unsure how to use it properly once you have started, please contact the COBC at (604) 742-6472.

Is there an instruction manual for the online program?

Yes. There are actually two: a step-by-step manual for login and taking the assessment, and a step-by-step manual for creating and completing the online learning plan. You can access the manuals and other helpful resources once you are logged into the program, but also on our website at any time.

Login & Assessment

Where do I go to login?

Go to the COBC website at www.cobc.ca, and click "Opticians Login" on the top-right corner of your screen.

Where do I find my login information?

Your login information will be the same information you use when you login to renew your license. You will need to remember the information as you will be logging in several times throughout your cycle. If you cannot remember your login information, please contact the COBC.

My login information isn't working - what do I do?

Contact the COBC at (604) 742-6472 or reception@cobc.ca for assistance.

Once I'm logged in, where do I go? Where do I start?

When you have successfully logged in, click "QA" at the top of your screen to access more instructional information, and the assessment, which is the first step in the program.

How often do I have to take the assessment?

You will have to complete the assessment portion of the program just once every 3 years, at the beginning of each cycle.

Do I have to study or prepare for the assessment?

No. The assessment is meant to gauge your current level of competence in the different areas you practice, to determine where you might need to focus your development at this moment in time. There is no need to prepare for it.

How long is the assessment? How long does it take?

It depends. There are 4 different parts to the assessment, measuring different sets of competencies, and each registrant is only assessed in their own specific areas of practice. As a result, the time it takes will be different for everyone. For each section mentioned below, you are allowed a specific amount of time. However, it may take you less time to complete:

Assessment Section	Time Allotted
Core (80 questions)	90 minutes
Eyeglass (60 questions)	70 minutes
Contact Lens (50 questions)	60 minutes
Refracting (50 questions)	60 minutes

Do I have to take all 4 sections?

No. You will only take the sections that are specific to your own areas of practice. All registrants will be assessed on core and eyeglass competencies, while contact lens practitioners will take the additional contact lens assessment, and refracting opticians will take the additional refracting assessment.

Can I start the assessment and come back to it later?

Each section of the assessment is timed, so the clock will keep ticking once you have started. You can technically log out and it will save your completed answers, but the clock will continue to countdown and eventually timeout, ending your ability to complete it. You need to complete the section you started in one sitting to ensure you get your proper results.

If I am required to take different sections, do I have to complete them all in one sitting?

No. You can take whichever sections are required of you at separate times, when convenient for you.

What happens if my Internet goes down, or something else happens with my computer that interrupts my assessment, preventing me from properly finishing it?

Contact the COBC right away at (604) 742-6472 to explain what is happening. You may be asked to take a screenshot of your computer screen.

What happens if I run out of time when completing the assessment?

If you have not completed the assessment in the timeframe given, the assessment will end, and your results will be generated.

Can I fail the assessment? If so, will I lose my license?

No, you cannot fail the assessment. Although it is timed and uses multiple-choice questions, it is not an exam, so you cannot pass or fail. No matter the results, you cannot lose your license.

What will my results look like? Will I get them right away?

After you have completed a section of the assessment, you can view your results right away. Your results will tell you which competencies you are *Exemplary* in, are *Moderate* in, and those you *Need to address*.

What if my assessment results tell me I “Need to address” every competency?

The results are meant to direct you toward the competencies you may need to address, to focus and plan your learning for the remainder of your cycle and develop your competency in those areas. If you are advised that you need to address every competency, your program requirements will still be the same. Choose which competencies you want to develop first and create a learning plan around those goals.

What if my assessment results are all “Exemplary”? Do I still have to continue learning?

Yes. Learning is a life-long process, and even the most skilled and knowledgeable people can continue to improve. If the results have identified that you have exemplary knowledge in each of the competencies, your program requirements will still be the same. However, without the program identifying for you which competencies you need to address, you are free to explore a wider range of areas where you want to learn.

Can I have a copy of the answers to the assessment?

As the assessment will be taken by all registrants, we are unable to provide an answer key for circulation. The assessment is meant to be taken fairly by each registrant to properly gauge their level of competence.

I disagree with my results. What can I do?

If you feel your results are not indicative of your competency level, you can certainly call the COBC to discuss. However, please remember these results are simply to help you determine where to focus your learning when creating your goals.

My assessment results are telling me to improve a competency that I don't understand. What should I do?

You should review the national competency document, which provides specific performance indicators and examples of practice for each competency. The complete breakdown of competencies can be found on the NACOR website.

Do I have to share my assessment results with my employer?

Not if you don't want to. However, we would encourage you to consider it - employers often have professional development programs or assistance they can offer, and by discussing your results or goals with them, it could open new opportunities for you to learn. Your learning will also benefit your employer, so working together on your growth makes sense.

Learning Goals & Plans

How do I create learning goals for myself once I have my assessment results?

When you are logged into the program, you can click the "Online Learning Plan" to create and manage your goals. You will create a goal to improve on a competency that you need to address. Your goal should be a SMART goal – for an explanation and examples, please review the "*SMART Goals: Guidelines & Examples*" document.

How many goals do I need to achieve?

In your 3-year cycle, you should try to complete 2 goals per year, as your requirement is to complete a total of 6 goals by the end of your cycle.

What if I can't think of any good goals? What if they aren't as SMART as they should be?

Think about the competency that you are needing to improve on; ask yourself what you want to learn and accomplish in that area, and how you can make that happen within the year. If you are still struggling to create goals, please review the "*SMART Goals: Guidelines and Examples*" document for some help. You may also contact the College at (604) 742-6472 for some assistance.

Can one of my goals be the same as my co-worker/colleague's?

Yes. If the results of your assessment have identified the same competency to work on, it is likely that your goal to improve that competency will be similar. Having a colleague with the same goal could also be beneficial - it could provide even more opportunity for growth, as you would have someone to discuss your learning and share ideas with.

For a complete set of Continuing Competency Program Tools, access the Quality Assurance section on our website at www.cobc.ca.

Do I need to contact the COBC to get my chosen activities approved, if I choose to do something different/not on the list?

No. The new program allows you more freedom to seek out different ways to learn what you set out to learn. If your chosen activities directly relate to learning more about the chosen competency for that goal, and you are able to reflect on what you learned and how to put it into practice, it will be an acceptable activity.

For Example: If your goal relates to customer service, and part of your plan includes shadowing a respected colleague when they interact with the public, you will be able to identify appropriately upon reflection what you learned and how you can put it into practice.

However, if your plan includes watching an instructional video on using a new piece of technology, your goal to improve your customer service skills will not be achieved, and therefore is not an acceptable activity toward developing in that area.

I changed my role at work and want to change my goal midway through the year. Can I do that?

Yes. The goals are yours and should be applicable to your own situation and needs for growth. You will have access to your online program throughout your cycle and can update your goals and plans whenever you need to, before you decide to submit your information.

Will there be suggested activities for me to accomplish my goal?

Yes. Once you have selected a competency to work on, you will see a list of known activities, aligned to that specific competency. The list is meant to be a helpful guide, but not at all restrictive. You are encouraged to seek out different activities of interest that align with your goal and incorporate them into your plan.

Do I have to select activities from the list provided?

No. The list of activities, aligned with the competency you have chosen to work on, is only provided as a helpful tool; you may choose something from the list or decide not to. If there are activities listed that are not convenient for you, or of no interest, you will need to seek out other ideas for learning, depending on your goal. When it comes to learning, the possibilities are endless.

How many activities do I need to complete, to achieve or submit a finished goal?

It depends on your goal, and what you think will be necessary to achieve it. Remember, a SMART goal should be part Measurable and Realistic, therefore your plan to achieve the goal should include activities you can realistically complete in the time you have allotted. While one goal might only require one activity, such as a lengthy course with enough learning involved to achieve your desired outcome, other goals might require 4 or 5 different activities to contribute to your overall growth in that chosen area.

Do I need to provide proof that I completed an activity?

Your Online Learning Plan will allow you to upload anything you deem relevant to show you have completed an activity. We would encourage you to provide these details should your program be audited for review. In some cases, documented proof of completion will not be available for you to submit or applicable; in these cases, the COBC will be relying on your detailed Reflection summary to see that you have participated in your chosen activities.

Reflection

What happens when I finish my activities; when my plan has been completed?

When you have finished your activities set out in your learning plan, you will log back into your program and complete the final step: Reflection. You will be asked some guided questions to help you reflect on your learning - what you accomplished, whether you learned what you had hoped to, how you can put your new skills into practice, etc.

How much information do I have to provide in the Reflection portion?

There will be some guided questions for you to consider, but you are encouraged to provide as much detail as necessary to demonstrate your experience. Use this section to explain what you learned and how you can put this knowledge to use, or how your competency in that area has improved, or how your plan didn't work out as hoped and what you would've done differently, etc. The more information the better - if the COBC doesn't understand or have enough information, you may be contacted for clarification.

Who decides whether I accomplished my goal/improved my competency?

You do. The program is very much self-directed; you created a goal for yourself, to strive towards becoming more competent in a chosen area of practice. You created a plan to achieve that goal, and you will reflect on whether your plan worked and if you learned what you set out to learn.

What if my plan was a failure? What if I didn't learn what I had hoped, or won't be able to put any of the learning into practice?

In the context of the program, that's okay. The intention, of course, is to learn and develop the competencies, but you may find that you did not learn very much from the activities you participated in or ultimately achieve your goal. The final stage in each learning plan, Reflection, asks you to reflect and share your experience before you submit. This section will allow you to identify what you went through and why you felt it was not successful.



Completing & Submitting Requirements

Do I submit completed activities/goals as I go along in the program, or do I submit everything all at once at the end of my cycle?

Each goal will be considered complete as long as you make sure to mark the activities in your plan as “completed” for each goal. You should also make sure you have properly filled out the Reflection section. If all of this is done, the goal will be considered completed/submitted and you simply need to move onto your next goal. Once you have completed at least 6 goals, the COBC will know that you are finished your requirements for the cycle.

What happens after my final submission at the end of my cycle?

After your final submission, the COBC may review your information to ensure completion. The COBC will be auditing a random number of accounts throughout the cycle as well to review registrants’ reflections, to ensure that the program is being used appropriately, and that requirements are being met. This is not meant to be a corrective or threatening process but is necessary to identify where improvements may need to be made.

What if I don’t complete the program/submit any completed goals?

Failure to complete the program by the end of your cycle will result in a suspended license. The CCP is a mandatory QA program for all registrants, just like the previous credit-based program.

What if I have more questions, or find the program confusing/difficult/overwhelming?

Please don’t hesitate to contact the COBC for any assistance or guidance as needed. This program is meant to be engaging and easy, so please reach out and we’ll be happy to help!

Contact the COBC at (604) 742-6472 or
reception@cobc.ca for assistance.