



General Standards of Practice - Optometry

Preamble

All registrants of the College are required to comply with the College's Standards of Practice. The standards are written in plain language, spanning the full scope of the practice of optometry. They apply to all activities undertaken as a registrant of the College, including – and beyond – the provision of patient care.

Every registrant must determine – and accept accountability for – how they implement each Standard of Practice. The College provides Statements of Guidance to assist this process.

The College views compliance with all Standards of Practice as fundamental in the delivery of current, high quality optometric services that are safe, effective and ethical. This is in the joint interest of the public and the profession.

1. ACT WITH PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that in all professional dealings you act with honesty and adhere to moral and ethical principles. You accept responsibility for your actions. You maintain appropriate professional boundaries and are sensitive to power imbalances. You model behaviors which portray a positive image of the profession. You seek to avoid conflicts of interest and address them in an appropriate manner if they arise. You foster trusting relationships with patients, colleagues and co-workers. You maintain professional presentation appropriate to your workplace.

2. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you provide others with information in a way that they can understand, and with cultural sensitivity. You adapt your language and communication approach as appropriate. You communicate clearly and take steps to ensure that you are understood. You communicate with empathy. You listen carefully to what others have to say; you are alert to non-verbal signals that suggest unspoken concerns, and address these. You identify and take action to resolve conflicts. You respond appropriately to feedback.

3. COMPLY WITH LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you are aware of how to access current information about laws, rules, regulations and other requirements established by those with authority to govern the practice of the profession and the professional workplace. You comply with such requirements. (This includes federal, provincial / territorial, municipal and local governments, regulatory bodies, and professional authorities).



4. FUNCTION IN A PATIENT-CENTRED MANNER

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you ensure patients and patient wellbeing are at the centre of your decisions. You give each patient your complete attention and allow sufficient time to fully address their needs. You respect patient uniqueness and take into account patient views, preferences and concerns. You provide complete information to patients about assessment, treatment and management options, and encourage and respond to their questions. You actively involve patients (and others when appropriate) in decision making, ensuring that they are fully informed about their clinical status and care needs. You respect your patient's right to privacy and confidentiality. You ensure ongoing informed consent to the services you provide.

5. INTEGRATE PATIENT CONTEXT, CLINICAL EXPERIENCE, AND RESEARCH, IN DECISION MAKING

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you take an evidence-informed approach in professional decision making. Evidence may include research information, your own professional knowledge and experience, patient perspective, and practice context.

6. INTERACT EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you maintain good working relationships both inter- and intra-professionally. You regularly network with others for professional development purposes. You have general knowledge of the scope of practice of healthcare professionals and community services, beyond the profession of optometry. You collaborate to ensure the best interests of your patient.

7. MAINTAIN A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Statement of Guidance

By this, we mean that you regularly check your physical workplace for hazards and take action as necessary to maximize the safety of all users. You maintain routine cleanliness and hygiene protocols. You promote the physical and emotional safety of all persons involved in patient care. You take action to ensure that all persons treat others in a respectful manner.



8. MAINTAIN AND MANAGE ACCURATE, COMPREHENSIVE RECORDS

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you ensure that complete, accurate, clear, and legible patient records are documented in a timely manner. You ensure that complete, accurate, clear, legible and timely records are kept of all your professional and business activities. You retain all records at least the period of time legally required. You make clinical records available to patients and other authorized persons upon request.

9. MAINTAIN PERSONAL WELLNESS CONSISTENT WITH THE NEEDS OF PRACTICE

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you maintain your own health and wellbeing to enable safe and effective practice. This includes maintaining your physical, mental and emotional health and refraining from practice when you are unfit to provide optometric services. You maintain a work-life balance.

10. MANAGE PRACTICE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you optimize the use of physical and human resources. You appropriately and responsibly utilize practice, patient, third-party and public resources.

11. PRACTICE IN A REFLECTIVE MANNER

Statement of Guidance

By this, we mean that you regularly take time in a structured process to critically analyze your service delivery, and determine your strengths and areas for improvement. You seek input from others, and external information sources, to gain insights about your assumptions and unconscious biases that may impact your approach to situations. You develop, document and implement a professional development plan that focuses on areas for improvement. You track your learning and its impact on your practice activities. You document progress and update your professional development plan accordingly.



12. REMAIN CURRENT WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN OPTOMETRY

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you take regular, active steps to keep your knowledge and skills up to date. You utilize diverse resources (both formal and informal) such as: reading professional literature, participating in peer review groups, workshops, and consulting with colleagues. You use your interactions with colleagues both to enhance your own professional development and to contribute to theirs. You apply current knowledge and techniques in your practice, as appropriate to your workplace.

13. TREAT OTHERS RESPECTFULLY

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you recognize and value the uniqueness of others as individuals. You treat others with respect and fairness, and in a manner that is consistent with your obligations to respect human rights and to act in a non-discriminatory fashion. You ensure that your own beliefs and values do not prejudice the services you provide. You act with sensitivity towards diverse groups and cultures.

14. WORK WITHIN AREAS OF INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Statement of Guidance

By this we mean that you clearly identify the parameters of your work, based upon a realistic understanding of the extent of your knowledge, skills and experience. You recognize the limits of your experience and expertise and seek assistance or refer patients to others when their needs exceed your level of knowledge and skills.