

Policy

Type:	Quality Assurance Program		
Name:	Continuing Education: January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026		
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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements of continuing education that must be met by optometrists in the three-year continuing education cycle: January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026.

Participation in Continuing Education

As per the [Optometry Act, 1991. O. Reg. 119/94](#), a key component of the College’s Quality Assurance Program is mandatory Continuing Education (CE). Optometrists are required to participate in the CE component to ensure their continuing competence and quality improvement, to address changes in practice environments, and to ensure they remain current with changes in technology, scope and standards of practice.

Current Cycle

The current cycle runs from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026.

Optometrists must complete a minimum of **seventy (70)** credit hours of continuing education related to the maintenance of their standards of practice or continuing competence by the end of the three-year cycle.

Breakdown

Of those 70 hours, an optometrist must complete:

- **a minimum of 50 (fifty)** hours of Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) accredited CE;
 - **20 (twenty)** of those COPE accredited hours must be in topics reasonably related to ocular disease and management or related systemic disease;

- an optometrist may claim **30 COPE-equivalent hours** during the cycle a Fellowship or Diplomate in the American Academy of Optometry (FAAO) or a Fellow of the Optometric Vision Development & Rehabilitation Association (FOVDR) is awarded; and
- **the remaining 20 (twenty) hours** may be obtained by completing COPE accredited CE or other learning opportunities, which give optometrists a wider range of options and the opportunity to make flexible selections that suit their learning needs and practice.

Accepted learning opportunities for the remaining 20 hours include:

Learning Opportunities	Calculation of CE Credit Hours
Organized events: conferences, education, events, and lectures that are not COPE-accredited	Hour-for-hour
Professional journals: reading of articles in refereed optometric, ophthalmologic, or medical journal	Hour-for-hour
Distance learning activities: print, internet, video that are not COPE accredited	Hour-for-hour
Graduate studies in optometry or a related health discipline preapproved by the Quality Assurance Panel	Full-time studies (5 days/week): 20 hours per year Part-time studies (less than 5 days/week): 10 hours per year
Residency at an ACOE-accredited school	20 hours per cycle
Faculty/staff optometrist appointment at an ACOE-accredited school	Full-time (5 days/week): 20 hours per year Part-time (less than 5 days/week): 10 hours per year
Publication of an article in a refereed optometric, ophthalmologic, or medical journal	10 hours
Publication of a case report in a refereed journal	2 hours

Lectures prepared and given to regulated health professionals for their primary continuing education or regulated health professionals in training education at a Canadian or American accredited school. If a faculty member prepares and gives lectures to regulated health professionals as part of their appointment, they may claim CE credit hours either for their faculty appointment or lectures prepared and given to regulated health professionals, but not both.	3 credit hours/hour of lecture—each lecture may be counted one time only
Supervising optometrist for students from ACOE-accredited schools (including external clerkship)	Full-time (5 days/week): 1 hour per week Part-time (less than 5 days/week): 0.5 hour per week
Participation in an organization approved to administer an entry-to-practice examination or an evaluating examination for foreign-trained practitioners.	Clinical Assessor: 1 credit hour per two hours spent assessing or training to assess candidates Question Author: 1 credit hour per question accepted to the database Question Item Selector: 1 credit hour per two hours spent selecting questions for the examinations
Certification in a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Heart Saver AED (C) or CPR HCP (Health Care Provider) level with AED	5 hours per cycle

New Registrants

Optometrists may only claim CE credit hours that have been completed following their initial registration with the College. Newly registered optometrists during the current cycle will be required to complete a prorated number of hours based on their registration year as follows:

Year of Registration	Total Hours	COPE Accredited Hours (*)	Other Learning Opportunities Hours
2024	47	34 (14)	13
2025	24	17 (7)	7
2026	Minimum requirements (see page 5)	Minimum requirements (see page 5)	Minimum requirements (see page 5)

*Number of COPE accredited hours that must be in topics reasonably related to ocular disease and management or related systemic disease

Inactive Class Requirements

Registrants who have held an Inactive class of registration during a three-year cycle must complete CE hours prorated to their periods of Active registration.

Calculation Method

CE requirements will be calculated using the following steps:

1. **Baseline Requirement**
The full-cycle CE requirement is 70 hours over 36 months, which equals **1.94 hours per month**.
2. **Determine Active Months**
Count the number of months in which the registrant held Active status during the cycle.
3. **Apply Proration**
Multiply the number of Active months by **1.94** to determine the registrant's prorated CE requirement.
4. **Round Up**
Always round the result up to the nearest whole number.
5. **Apply Minimum Requirement**
Any registrant who has held Active status for **one full month or more** during any portion of a three-year cycle must complete **a minimum of 5 COPE accredited hours**, even if the prorated total is lower.

Partial Month Rules

When determining Active months:

- **14 days or less:** Count as **0.5 month**.
- **15 days or more:** Count as **1 full month**.

Example Calculation

Registrant's Status: January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026

Period	Duration	Status	Total CE Hours Required	Minimum COPE Hours	Remaining Other Learning Opportunities/COPE Hours
Jan. 1, 2024 – Aug. 31, 2025	20 months	Active	$20 \times 1.94 = 38.8$	$38.8 \times (50/70) = 27.7$	$38.8 \times (20/70) = 11.1$
Sept. 1, 2025 – Dec. 31, 2025	4 months	Inactive	0		
Jan. 1, 2026 – Dec. 31, 2026	12 months	Active	$12 \times 1.94 = 23.3$	$23.3 \times (50/70) = 16.6$	$23.3 \times (20/70) = 6.7$
Total Active	32 months		$38.8 + 23.3 = 62.1 \rightarrow 63^*$	$27.7 + 16.6 = 44.3 \rightarrow 45^*$	$11.1 + 6.7 = 17.8 \rightarrow 18^*$

**Totals are rounded up to whole numbers to meet policy requirements.*

Example Calculation for New Registrant:

For new registrants, the same method applies but using the **prorated CE requirement** defined in the policy. For example:

- If the cycle requirement is **24 hours** (e.g., for initial registration in 2025), use **24** as the baseline instead of 70.

Minimum Requirements

To ensure continued professional competence, a **minimum of 5 COPE accredited hours** is required for any registrant who has held Active status for **one full month or more** during any portion of a three-year cycle, regardless of prorated calculations.

Administrative Cutoff Date (for Internal Use Only)

To support proactive communication, the College may establish an internal administrative deadline (e.g., September 30, 2026) for generating reports and conducting calculations. This enables timely outreach to registrants who appear to be at risk of not meeting their CE hours requirements by the end of the cycle. However, final determinations and any referrals will only occur **after December 31, 2026**, once all hours have been accounted for.

Participation Verification Certificate

A participation verification certificate must be issued for COPE accredited CE activities.

For other learning opportunities, optometrists must complete the 'Continuing Education: Other Learning Opportunities' form, which requires the following information:

- **Activity:** select one of the accepted learning opportunities;
- **Instructor:** name of the instructor of the CE activity or "Self" if there is no instructor;
- **Provider/resource used:** name of the provider of the CE activity or the resource material used;
- **Format:** select one of the activity formats. There are two options for online formats:
 - **Online – Interactive:** webinar, video conference, teleconference, or other format that allows for immediate interaction and feedback between the audience and the instructor. Once the event has taken place, optometrists may no longer participate in that activity; and
 - **Online – Enduring:** webcast, podcast, video, journal, website, written or other format that provides one-way content to the audience without immediate interaction with the instructor. There is not just one time on one day to participate in the activity, rather, the optometrists determine when they participate;
- **Presentation (if applicable):** select one of the activity presentations or leave blank if not applicable;
- **Category:** select one of the activity categories. See "COPE Categories" for description of each category;
- **Date:** date of completion of the activity;
- **City, Province/State, Country:** location of the activity; and
- **Number of credit hours claimed:** number of credit hours claimed for the activity.

CE Exclusions

Although the College recognizes the value in trade show participation, this activity does not qualify for CE.

Reporting of Hours

Optometrists must **submit all CE credit hours to OE TRACKER**. It is the responsibility of the optometrist to claim only credit hours that is relevant to their maintenance of practice and/or continuing competence. Some CE providers send COPE accredited attendance information directly to OE TRACKER. Otherwise, the optometrist must submit their own certificates for COPE accredited CE activities. For other learning opportunities, optometrists must submit completed [‘Continuing Education: Other Learning Opportunities’ forms](#) to OE TRACKER. The College will verify optometrists’ reporting hours through individual OE TRACKER profiles. It is incumbent upon optometrists to ensure that their OE TRACKER profiles are up to date, particularly toward the end of the CE cycle.

Deficiency Audit

The College will perform a deficiency audit at the conclusion of this three-year reporting cycle. The deficiency audit identifies those who fail to meet the CE hour requirement.

As per the *Optometry Act*, the Registrar may refer optometrists who fail to acquire the required number of CE credit hours to the Quality Assurance Committee for a practice assessment. As such, optometrists found to be deficient in CE hours based on the breakdown above may be required to participate in a practice assessment at their own cost according to the College’s Schedule of Fees and Penalties.