

Continuing Education Policy 2009-2011

Council, Sept. 2008

Participation in Continuing Education

One component of the Quality Assurance Program is mandatory Continuing Education (CE) (O. Reg. 119/94).

Current Cycle

The current cycle runs from January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011.

The current CE policy stipulates that each member is required to participate in a minimum of **seventy (70)** credit hours of continuing education related to the maintenance of his/her standards of practice or continuing competence from an **organized program of learning** during every three-year cycle.

The College considers an organized program of learning to be:

- a structured learning experience that is presented as a group lecture, a group or individual workshop, or as a text or an electronically provided course.

The CE policy recognizes two categories of continuing education – categories A and B, the criteria of which are outlined below.

Members are required to participate in CE activities that would amount to **a minimum of 50 Category A credit hours*** while credit for **the remaining 20 credit hours may be obtained by participating in either Category A or B** Continuing Education activities. (*One credit hour is equal to 50 minutes with each course being a minimum of 1 credit hour and additionally in half hour increments).

Of the 50 Category A hours required, a minimum of 20 hours must be in topics reasonably related to ocular disease and management or related systemic disease.

New Registrants

New members will be required to complete a pro-rated number of hours based on the number of complete years remaining in the reporting cycle following the year they register. For instance, members registered in the first year of the three-year cycle, i.e. 2009, must obtain 47 credit hours and members registered in the second year, i.e. 2010, of the three-year cycle must obtain 24 credit hours. Members registered in the third year, i.e. 2011, of the three-year cycle have no requirements to obtain credit hours for the remainder of the cycle. The number of credit hours that must be obtained from Category A and B providers, respectively, is in the same ratio as specified in the Policy for 70 credit hours.

Category A Providers:

In order for a CE provider to be considered for inclusion in Category A, the provider must be:

- A Canadian or American national, provincial or state Optometric Association or Regulator; or
- A Canadian or American school or college of optometry, or an accredited university in another health discipline; or
- A not-for-profit Optometric organization where the primary goal of the organization is to provide or promote optometric educational opportunities or provide clinical care; or
- Any other provider in the provision of COPE approved Continuing Education activities

Category A Continuing Education:

The College recognizes that a Category A provider can provide either Category A or Category B CE. A Category A educational opportunity must meet the following criteria:

- Must be directly provided by a Category A provider
- Must not be directly sponsored by a commercial entity. However, commercial entities can provide sponsorship money to an event held by a Category A provider but not to directly pay for a speaker, the venue etc. Evidence of sponsorship (ie advertising) can be present on a trade show floor or outside a lecture hall but not within the lecture/workshop itself.
- Qualifications of presenter(s) must be disclosed.
- Presenters must disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest.
- Material presented must have scientific and educational integrity.
- Must have an outline, which demonstrates consistency with the course description and reflect the course content.
- A course handout listing the course outline and objectives must be provided to all participants either electronically or through hard copies.
- Providers must control access to the lecture/workshop to ensure that attendees are present for the entire program with reasonable exceptions.
- Groups that have restricted memberships must allow non-members the opportunity to also participate in courses offered. The non-members should be charged an appropriate fee as determined by the provider of the course.
- A participation verification certificate must be issued and must indicate:
 - The name and address of the participant
 - Certificate of registration number
 - Location and date of the course
 - Course Title
 - Name of the Instructor
 - Name of the provider
 - Number of CE hours awarded (note: One credit hour is equal to 50 minutes with each course being a minimum of 1 credit hour and additionally in half hour increments).
 - Authorized signature or symbol of verification

Continuing education equivalencies:

The College recognizes the following as Category A credit hours:

- Graduate Studies in optometry or a related health discipline – one full year of full-time graduate studies is equivalent to the 70 hours of the cycle requirements – one year of part-time studies is equivalent to 24 hours of the cycle requirements.
- Residency at an ACOE accredited School– one full year of residency training is equivalent to 70 hours of the cycle requirements.
- Faculty Appointment at an ACOE accredited School – an appointment as a full-time faculty member is equivalent to 24 credit hours per year. An appointment as a part-time faculty member is equivalent to a pro-rated 24 credit hours per year.
- Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry – is equivalent to 30 hours during the cycle the fellowship is awarded.
- Diplomate of the American Academy of Optometry – is equivalent of 70 hours during the cycle that the diplomate is awarded.
- Publication of an article in a refereed optometric journal is equivalent to 10 hours.
- Publication of a case report in a refereed journal is equivalent to 2 hours.
- Lectures given to Regulated Health Professionals for their primary continuing education or Regulated Health Professionals in training education are equivalent to 3 credit hours/hr – each lecture may be counted one time only.
- Appointment as a Clinical Supervisor at an ACOE accredited School is equivalent to 7 hours of continuing education credit per academic year.
- Supervising Optometrist in an Extern Rotation for students from ACOE Schools- one rotation in an academic term is equivalent to seven (7) hours to a maximum of 21 hours in a CE cycle.
- Participation in the Indicator of Current Learning in Optometry (ICLO) is equivalent to a reduction of 10 hours in a CE cycle.
- Participation in the Canadian Standard Assessment in Optometry (C.S.A.O.):
 - Clinical Assessor: 1 credit hour per two hours spent assessing or training to assess candidates for the Canadian Standard Assessment in Optometry (C.S.A.O.) to a maximum of 24 hours per three-year period.
 - Question Author: 1 credit hour per question accepted to the database to a maximum of 24hours per three-year period.
 - Question Item Selector: 1 credit hour per two spent selecting questions for the examinations to a maximum of 24 hours per three-year period.

Category B Continuing Education

The remaining 20 credit hours may be obtained from **ANY** provider. Category B credit hours represent participation in an organized program of learning that is relevant to a member's maintenance of his/her standards of practice and/or continuing competence.

A participation verification certificate must be issued and must indicate:

- The name and address of the participant
- Certificate of registration number
- Location and date of the course
- Course Title
- Name of the Instructor
- Name of the provider
- Number of CE hours awarded (note: One credit hour is equal to 50 minutes with each course being a minimum of 1 credit hour and additionally in half hour increments.
- Authorized signature or symbol of verification

Category B equivalencies

The College recognizes the following as Category B credit hours:

- Study Groups: The College will accept 1 CE credit hour for each study group meeting. Study Groups guidelines and the Report Form can be found on the College website.

Reporting of Continuing Education activities:

Members are required to report their continuing education activities on the Annual Report. It is the responsibility of the member to only claim credit hours that represent an organized program of learning which is relevant to the member's maintenance of practice and/or continuing competence. Members will be advised of how many hours of CE they have reported on the second and third Annual Report to be completed in each cycle.

Random CE Audits

The College randomly selects members at the conclusion of each 3-year reporting cycle to determine the accuracy of reporting. Accordingly, all members are encouraged to retain proof of continuing education activities for at least 6 months after the completion of a reporting cycle. For example, for the last CE period (January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2008) members should retain certificates of validation for all CE activities until at least June 2009.

The Regulations under the Optometry Act require the Registrar to refer members who fail to acquire the required number of CE credit hours to the Quality Assurance Committee for practice assessment.