

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Introduction

The quality assurance program is an important component of the self-regulation of optometry in BC. The college bylaws allow the quality assurance committee to assess the professional performance of registrants and to require them to fulfil the appropriate requirements.

The college strongly believes in a quality assurance program that meets the needs and expectations of patients and the community. Key elements of the Quality Assurance program are designed as proactive measures to foster continuing professional education and to improve the performance of registrants. The college believes that the promotion of continuous quality improvement of the profession will improve patient outcomes.

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 are 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.

PART 1—CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Definition

- 1 In this policy,
“peer circle” means a peer circle as defined in section 3 of this part.

Approved Programs

- 2 (1) In this section, “approved program provider” means the following bodies:
- (a) the Canadian Association of Optometry;
 - (b) a provincial optometric association;
 - (c) the American Optometric Association;
 - (d) a US state optometric association;
 - (e) a recognized school of optometry;
 - (f) a provincial optometric regulatory body
 - (g) the American Academy of Optometry;
 - (h) the Optometric Extension Program;
 - (i) the Better Vision Institute;
 - (j) the Vision Institute of Canada;
 - (k) the International Vision Expo;
 - (l) the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE);
 - m) the College of Optometrists in Vision Development (COVD), and
 - (n) any other body that is recommended by the quality assurance committee to the board, and is approved by the board.

NOTE: Commercial entities are not considered to be an “approved program provider”. Course instructors who apply to the College 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)

- (2) Continuing education programs approved by the board under section 73 of the bylaws include:
 - (a) an accredited educational course given by an approved program provider, whether given in person or by long-distance or self-study delivery methods such as correspondence, video, computer or internet; and
 - (b) peer circles.
 - (c) the continuing education activities listed in section 4 of this part.

College Accreditation Requirements:

A course may be accredited and become an approved continuing education program for a period of 2 years. Accreditation will be granted in accordance with current COPE course qualification standards 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. See the [COPE accreditation document](#), page 3 for course qualifications. Courses provided in an exclusive manner will not be deemed acceptable.

An OE Tracker number will be assigned to an approved course.

Peer Circles

- 3 (1) In this policy, “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.
- (2) A peer circle must have a facilitator.
- (3) A facilitator of a peer circle must
 - (a) be a therapeutic qualified registrant,
 - (b) be in good standing with the college,
 - (c) not be under investigation by the inquiry committee or the subject of a citation by the registrar under section 37 of the Act, and
 - (d) have successfully completed a training course offered under Part 4 (1) of this policy.
 - (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.

An OE Tracker number will be assigned to a peer circle.

Continuing Education Activities

- 4 For the purpose of calculating hours of yearly continuing education programs under section 73 of the bylaws, the following activities will be accredited the specified number of hours:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Course Category</i>	<i>Hours Accredited per year</i>
For each hour of attendance at or participation in an educational course under section 2(2)(a). (Note that a course may not be repeated for credit in the same registration year)	Clinical Optometry Ocular Disease Related Systemic Disease Optometric Business Management Other	1 hour
For each hour of instruction or formal presentation of an educational course under section 2(2)(a)	Other	2 hours
Publication of an article in a refereed optometric or ophthalmological journal	Other	5 hours
Publication of a case report in a refereed optometric or ophthalmological journal	Other	2 hours
For each hour of peer circle participation or peer circle facilitation	Clinical Optometry Ocular Disease Related Systemic Disease Other	1 hour
For one full year of full-time graduate optometric studies	Other	20 hours
For one full year of part-time graduate optometric studies	Other	10 hours
For one full year of ACOE accredited optometric residency training	Other	20 hours
Attendance at the annual general meeting of the College of Optometrists of British Columbia	Other	1 hour, to a maximum of 3 hours for the same meeting

<i>Activity</i>		
	<i>Course Category</i>	<i>Hours Accredited per year</i>
Attendance at the annual general meeting of the British Columbia Association of Optometrists	Other	1 hour, to a maximum of 3 hours for the same meeting
CPR initial course	Related Systemic Disease Other	6 hours
CPR renewal	Related Systemic Disease Other	2.5 hours
For serving the CEO/CACO as an exam question developer	Other	up to a maximum of 10 hours per year
Full-time faculty member at a recognized school of optometry	Other	20 hours
Achieving Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry	Other	20 hours
Achieving Diplomate of the American Academy of Optometry	Other	20 hours

Proof of Attendance or Completion

- 5 Continuing education program hours are only accredited under section 4 if the registrant provides proof of having attended the program or completed the course for which accredited hours are sought. Acceptable proof is the original CE certificate or CE recorded within OE tracker or equivalent approved program.

Annual CE Requirements

- 6 In accordance with Bylaw 73, the Quality Assurance Committee requires that:
- (1) Therapeutic qualified, non-therapeutic qualified and non-practising registrants must complete at least 20 hours of continuing education credits each registration year (November 1st - October 31st).
 - (2) No more than 10 of the 20 hours of continuing education referred to in subsection (1) may be on subjects other than ocular health.
 - (3) Therapeutic qualified, non-therapeutic qualified and non-practising registrants may carry forward up to 20 hours of continuing education program credits per year. No more than 10 of these hours may be on subjects other than ocular health.

CE Self-Recording and Self-Reporting

- 7 (1) Registrants are required to Self-record and Self-report their Continuing Education hours.
- (2) Registrants are required to retain all originals CE certificates for a minimum of seven (7) years commencing December 1, 2010.
- (3) Upon request of the Registrar, registrants are required to provide all original CE certificate. This will be carried out by, but not limited to, Continuing Competency Assessments and Random Audit

NOTE: After May 2, 2011 registrants are not required to submit CE certificates to the College and any received after that date will not be retained by the College.

Registrants who do not record their CE hours online must send the form to the College by registered mail.

Exemption

- 8 A registrant may apply in writing to the Board of the College for a CE exemption.

Exception

- 9 Despite section 73(1) of the bylaws, registrants need not fulfil the requirements of the quality assurance program in the first calendar year in which they graduate from a recognized school of optometry.

