

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

Definitions

- 1 In this policy,
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| “accredited program” | means an educational program approved by the Registrar or the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE); |
| “peer circle” | means a peer circle as defined in section 3 of this part. |
| “registration year” | means November 1 to the following October 31 in each year |

Approved Program and Program Provider

- 2 (1) In this section, “**approved program provider**” means the following bodies:
- (a) a program provider approved by the Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE);
 - (b) any other body that is approved by the Board.

Note: Commercial entity is not considered to be an “approved program provider”. Course instructors who apply to the Registrar 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) In this section, “**approved program**” means a continuing education program approved by the Quality Assurance Committee, under section 71 of the Bylaws, as follows:
- (a) an accredited program 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;
 - (b) peer circles; and
 - (c) the continuing education activities listed in section 4 of this part.

Accreditation Requirements

Accreditation will be granted in accordance with current COPE standards and requirements for course qualification 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. Refer to the Criteria for COPE Qualification of Continuing Education. Courses provided in an exclusive manner will not be deemed acceptable.

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 the subject of public notification, pursuant to inquiry or discipline proceedings; and
 - (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.

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:

Activity	Course category	Hours accredited
For each hour of attendance at or participation in an accredited program under section 2(2)(a) ¹	Ocular health ²	1 hour
	Other ³	1 hour
For each hour of instruction or formal presentation of an educational course under section 2(2)(a)	Ocular health	2 hours
	Other	2 hours
Publication of an article in a refereed optometric or ophthalmological journal	Ocular health	5 hours
	Other	5 hours
Publication of a case report in a refereed optometric or ophthalmological journal	Ocular health	2 hours
	Other	2 hours
For each hour of peer circle participation or peer circle facilitation	Ocular health	1 hour
	Other	1 hour
For serving the CEO/CACO as an exam question developer	Ocular health	No more than 10 hours per year

Achieving Fellowship in the American Academy of Optometry	Other	10 hours
Achieving Diplomate of American Academy of Optometry	Other	14 hours

Proof of Attendance of Completion

- 5 Continuing education program hours under section 4 must only be claimed by the registrant if the registrant is able to provide proof of having attended the program or completed the course for which continuing education program hours are sought. Acceptable proof includes the original continuing education attendance certificate or continuing education attendance recorded within OE Tracker.

Annual CE Requirements

- 6 In accordance with Part 5 of the Bylaws, the Quality Assurance Committee specifies the following continuing education hours for Full⁴ and Non-practising registrants:
- (1) In each registration year, no less than 20 accredited continuing education hours must be obtained.
 - (2) *A maximum of 10 hours out of the required 20 accredited continuing education 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 original continuing education 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 continuing education certificates. This will be carried out by, but not limited to, Continuing Competency Assessments and Audit by the Registrar.

Commencing November 1, 2017:

- Registrants will no longer be able to carry forward CE hours into the next registration year.
- Registrants who have authorized the College to enroll them in OE Tracker, or have provided the College with their current *OE Tracker* number, will not be required to self-report their continuing education hours. The College will use *OE Tracker* to confirm continuing education hours.
- Registrants who are not enrolled in OE Tracker will be required to submit proof of completing the requirements set out in section 63, along with the associated administrative fee, to the College by registered mail, prior to registration renewal for the next registration year.
- Although CPR is a requirement of registration, it no longer qualifies for CE.

¹Note: a registrant must not claim continuing education program hours for an educational program he or she repeats in the same registration year.

²“Ocular health” includes educational programs classified as clinical optometry, ocular disease and related systemic disease

³“Other” includes educational programs classified as optometric business management

⁴ Full registrant means:

- (a) a therapeutic qualified registrant who is a member of the class established by section 51(1)(a);
- (b) a non-therapeutic qualified registrant who is a member of the class established by section 51(1)(b); or
- (c) a limited registrant who is a member of the class established by section 51(1)(c);

Exemptions

8 Despite section 73(1) of the bylaws, registrants need not fulfil the requirements of the quality assurance program in the registration year if:

1. They successfully complete the national qualifying examination or national qualifying examination equivalent in the same registration year,
2. Completion of Optometric residency program

Note: A request for an exemption from fulfilling the requirements of the Quality Assurance Committee program must be delivered in writing to the Registrar.

