

Alberta College of Optometrists Continuing Education Requirements



Effective: September 8, 2017

Alberta College of Optometrists

Continuing Education Requirements

The Alberta College of Optometrists (ACO) recognizes that competent and skilled practitioners require lifelong educational and learning experiences in a variety of settings that contribute to their continuing professional development.

Since its formal inception in 1890, the profession of optometry has undergone continual advancement and development. With the continual evolution of optometric knowledge, skills and clinical practice; all optometrists understand that it is their duty to add knowledge, maintain skills and participate in learning experiences that promote excellence in vision care to the public and the profession throughout their careers.

The types of learning activities approved by the ACO include:

Category 1 - Traditional & Self-Directed Continuing Education Activities

- a) COPE and ACCME accredited courses
- b) Courses sponsored by a COPE accredited provider, or, an approved local, provincial or national optometric organization
- c) Approved courses by other health care organizations or governments
- d) Approved electronic or internet courses
- e) Approved faculty and appointed teaching positions
- f) Approved research activities
- g) Attendance at hospital ophthalmic rounds or clinical workshops
- h) Approved clinical study groups
- i) Approved self-directed study activities
- j) Completion of an approved residency or fellowship program
- k) Preparation and publication of a journal article or case report
- l) Preparation and presentation of a lecture, wetlab or workshop
- m) Ophthalmic articles or books (electronic or paper) with a final exam
- n) Other educational activities approved by the Registrar

Category 2 - Optometric Appointments and General Activities

- a) Working on ACO or AAO Council or Committees
- b) Working as an assessor, at a workshop or on a committee of the Canadian Examiners in Optometry
- c) CPR certification or re-certification
- d) Product information courses by ophthalmic companies
- e) Attendance at the ACO and AAO Annual General Meetings
- f) Attendance at ACO and/or AAO sessions
- g) Participation in a Competence Committee practice review
- h) Supervision of an optometry student extern or intern
- i) Volunteer optometric service
- j) Ophthalmic articles or books (electronic or paper) without a final exam
- k) Other educational activities approved by the Registrar

Program Specifics:

- The ACO requires that all regulated members earn a minimum of 150 Continuing Education credits in each 3-year competency period. Regulated Members who register before the 2nd year of the 3-year ACO competency period will require 100 Continuing Education Credits and Regulated Members who register before the final year of the 3-year ACO competency period will require 50 Continuing Education credits.
- Under the new ACO database, the first ACO 3-year competency period ran from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2014. Subsequent 3-year competency periods will follow in successive 3 year cycles afterwards.
- A Regulated Members' competency period starts on the January 1 following registration with the ACO; however, a maximum of 50 CE credits that are earned in the period of time from registration with the ACO and the start of their first competency period (the January 1 following registration) may be carried forward to their first competency period.
- If a regulated member earns more than 150 CE credits in any 3-year competency period, a maximum of 50 CE credits will be carried forward to their next 3-year competency period.
- Each regulated member must complete a minimum of 30 CE credits in each of the first two years during each full competency period.
- Learning experiences acquired during optometry school programs, bridging programs, writing the national board exam or with respect to passing other ACO registration requirements are not allowed for CE credits.
- Should an extension to complete mandatory CE credits or a modification of CE content be requested (for any reason); a written request must be forwarded to the ACO Council for discussion. The decision of the ACO Council is considered final.
- Each individual learning experience is allowed to be counted only once in each 3-year competency period.

Category Restrictions:

Category 1

- 2 CE credits are awarded for each hour of education.
- Unlimited credit is allowed for each activity in this category.
- Official verification of attendance must be forwarded to the ACO office.

Category 2

- 1 CE credit is awarded for each hour of education.
- A maximum of 75 CE credits in each 3-year competency period is allowed for activities in this category.
- Guarantee of attendance must be provided by the practitioner during their annual Practice Permit renewal process.

If you have any questions regarding CE requirements, the proper way of filling out your CE Form or clarification of your responsibilities, please contact the ACO office.