

FACT SHEET



College of Opticians of British Columbia

Mandatory Continuing Education Program

- Each optician is required to complete a number of continuing education credits within a thirty-six month period. The number of credits varies for dispensers, contact lens fitters and, potentially, sight testers.
- Continuing Education programs require a large data processing effort on behalf of the College. To ease the load, all BC opticians are placed in one of three groups. This allows the office to serve one third of the province's opticians each year.
- Opticians can access continuing education through a wide variety of sources such as: publications, seminars, conferences, industry suppliers, self study groups, advanced education, personal improvement and practice management are just some of the sources for Continuing Education.
- The courses are delivered in a variety of settings and formats which include; fixed site seminars, conventions and conferences; formal education courses, paper based distance education courses and modules; self study groups; online courses and seminars; online virtual conventions
- To ensure universal accessibility of courses to all registrants the College requires that 70% of the credits be obtained through the professional providers of continuing education. These include opticians associations, teaching institutions and self study groups.
- Some larger organizations offer in-house training and upgrading to their employees. These are not open to registrants who do not work for these groups. The College believes that education opportunities must be available to all registrants. To ensure the equal access to all registrants these private setting seminars are limited to 30% of the credit totals.
- To assist registrants in multi-discipline practices, the College will recognize seminars accredited by other Colleges as being suitable for their registrants. This means that the College will recognize programs designed for Physicians and Optometrists. The College will not recognize programs designed for non-registrants.
- Some COBC registrants are not members of a professional association, such as the Dispensing Opticians Association of B.C. While these organizations have taken a lead role in supplying education to their members, non-members are eligible to take MCE courses from the organizations.
- The College of Opticians has taken a proactive role in ensuring universal access for all registrants. By working closely with the professional associations the COBC has ensured that registrants throughout the province can obtain the necessary education through a variety of modalities. By way of example the online courses sponsored by the Opticians Association of Canada are directly attributed to the offices of the COBC.