

Guidelines for continuing education development for registered optometrists

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Guidelines for continuing education development

1. Authority

These guidelines for continuing education, for practicing optometrists have been developed by the Optometry Council of India (OCI), a self - regulatory body established in September 2012. The OCI is a nonprofit company under section 25A of the Company Act of India.

2. Introduction

Continuing Education (CE) is essential for optometrists to maintain their competence and develop their skills required to deliver quality eye care to the community.

Once registered with the Optometry Council of India (OCI), optometrists are required to undertake CE activities to maintain their registration status, and for renewal of their registration status in future. The OCI have developed guidelines to assist Optometrists meet the standard requirements for registration to the OCI, and also provides guidance for providers of optometric education seeking accreditation of CE activities, and for accredited providers for maintaining their accreditation status.

3. Continuing education development activities

CE activities are classified broadly into four main sections, and several activities are available under each of the four sections. Points are allocated for each activity (see Tables below), depending on the feasibility, achievability, and difficulty. A minimum of 100 points, and a maximum of 50 points spread over at least two of the four main categories are expected to be completed within 3 years from the time of registration (see Appendix Section for examples). The Board will publish CE templates on its website to assist optometrists to meet this requirement. Still, individual Optometrists are responsible for developing his/her plan of activities to complete, and are encouraged to develop a balanced set of CE activities covering a range of activities, and catering to their professional role. Specifically, optometrists should make an assessment of gaps in their knowledge in both clinical and non-clinical areas, and identify areas in which skills needs to be improved. Additionally, optometrists should consider topics of interest to them, and format of activities that is offered.

Types of activities

The table below lists the activities: (Table 1)

I. Scholarly Activity

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	EXAMPLES
RESEARCH and PUBLICATION	Publication of an article in an international journal	10 pts 1 st AUTHOR 5 pts 2 nd AUTHOR	Optometry & Vision Science (OVS) Journal of BCLA, CL Spectrum
	Publication of an article in a national / state journal	5 pts 1 st AUTHOR 3 pts 2 nd AUTHOR	Indian Journal of Ophthalmology(IJO)/ Indian Optician or Optic Plus
PRESENTATION IN A CONFERENCE	In an international conference	(TALK) 10 pts 1 st AUTHOR / PRESENTER 5 pts 2 nd AUTHOR (POSTER) 5 pts 1 st AUTHOR / PRESENTER 3 pts 2 nd AUTHOR	American Academy of Optometry / ARVO/APOC/BCLA
	In a national / state conference	(TALK) 5 pts 1 st AUTHOR / PRESENTER 3 pts 2 nd AUTHOR (POSTER) 3 pts 1 st AUTHOR / PRESENTER 2 pts 2 nd AUTHOR	Indian Optometry Association / EV session/ AIOC meetings
PATENTS	After a patent has been filed and granted to single or group of optometrists	20 pts 1 st RESEARCHER 10 pts 2 nd RESEARCHER 3 pts each to all others in the group	Hand held Fundus Camera

II. Educational Activity

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	EXAMPLES
Educator in a Continuing Education Program OR Industry sponsored programs	Conducting a lecture or a tutorial	2 pts per hour of lecture + 2 pts if program has assessment at the end	Educators on behalf of corporate like B&L ALCON /J&J / ESSILOR / ZEISS
	Conducting practical or hands on trainings	4 pts per hour of lecture	Workshops on dispensing or CL etc
Cases	Submission of interesting case with all the details of the management of the case	2 pts per case submission and minimum 5 cases per year	Cases like Glaucoma/ Diabetic Retinopathy/Squint/High myopia etc
	In addition to submission also if, differential diagnosis / discussion of other cases with research reference / questions and answers	4 pts per case submission and minimum 10 cases per year	Elaboration of case presentation in comparison to earlier publications
Webinar	Conducting a webinar training	2 pts per hour of lecture	IACLE / IVI lectures

III. Recipient Activity

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	EXAMPLES
Webinars	Attending a webinar training	1 pt per hr of attendance	Attending any lecture on WebEx
Lectures in online platforms	Attending lectures online through internet	1 pt per hr of attendance	Attending any lecture on Skype
Attending Conferences	International Conferences	10 pts per day	AAO / ARVO / APOC / BCLA
	National Conference	5 pts per day	IOA / EV session / AIOC

Industry sponsored Continued Education Program		1 pt per hr of attendance + 1 pt if program has assessment at the end	Master Mind (B&L) / Corneal lens Clinic (ALCON) etc

IV. Skills Up gradation

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	POINTS	EXAMPLES
Fellowships	International	10 pt for completion of fellowship	FBDO / COVD etc
	National	5 pt for completion of fellowship of a minimum duration of 3 months	Fellowships on Low vision (Lotus college of optometry) / clinical optometry(LV Prasad eye institute) etc
Completion of additional degree	Completion of Bachelors / Masters or PhD	25 points for upgrading his / her qualification	Upgrading from Diploma to Bachelors or Bachelors to Masters or Masters to PhD

Records of CE credit points:

All optometrists must maintain up-to-date CE credit records

A CE portfolio that lists: (Template to be developed by OCI)

- The learning objectives of the activity
- How it relates to the individual CE needs
- An evaluation of the activities to determine whether the desired outcome have been achieved

Supporting documentation in the form of

- Receipt or other proof of attendance
- Case sheets /Examination forms
- Activity program brochures that describes the content and learning objectives of the activity

4. Re - Registration standard

To be eligible for renewal of registration, an Optometrist should have accumulated a minimum of 50 CE points through completion of various activities within three years from the date of registration. Of the minimum 50 points, a maximum of only 25 points can be accumulated from activities in a major four category. Documents are to be maintained regarding the activities being undertaken. At the time of renewal of an optometrist's registration as an OCI member, (s) he must make a declaration that (s) he has the required number of CE points, and provide documentation of CE points. Registered optometrists who do not satisfy the requirements may be denied renewal. However, in exceptional cases, the Board may provide exemptions

Absence from Practice:

All optometrists practicing the profession are expected to meet the requirements of the "Board CE credit registration Standards"

Optometrists who have notified the board, of an absence from practice for the majority of registration periods (12 months) do not have to meet the CE credit requirements for the period that they are not practicing the profession. Optometrists, absent from practice for a period greater than this should refer to the "Board CE credit registration standards".

This temporary absence from practice needs to be associated with special circumstances such as extended leaves (family leave / sick leave / maternity leave)

Exemptions:

The OCI believes the range of activities and time frame provided to meet the CE credit point, requirements is broad and flexible enough for all optometrists. However the board also appreciates that there are times when exceptional circumstances may make this difficult. In this case an optometrist may apply in writing to the board for an exemption.

The exceptional circumstances for exemptions will be limited and would only be considered where there is convincing evidence that the circumstances have created a significant hindrance to the optometrist's ability to complete the CE credit requirements.

Each case would be considered on its merits and depending on the particular circumstances, the board may decide upon a partial or complete exemption.

The OCI will only consider one exemption in any 3 yr period.

The OCI is of the view that where an optometrist is able to practice the profession, they also need to complete the CE credit requirements.

The decision of exemption will solely be on the OCI board and the board itself.

5. Compliance

The OCI may at any time request a registered optometrist to provide their CE records for audit by the members of the OCI Board. In the course of an investigation arising from a complaint against an optometrist, the board may require the registered optometrist to provide their CE records. Failure to comply may result in the OCI declining the renewal of an applicant's registration.

6. Providers of continuing education development activities

CE activities may be provided by a range of providers.

Approved providers

The OCI has developed criteria for CE points associated with activities and has published a list of current activities on its website. Activities provided by an approved provider are considered to be accredited activities and the approved provider will assign the applicable number of CE points.

Other providers

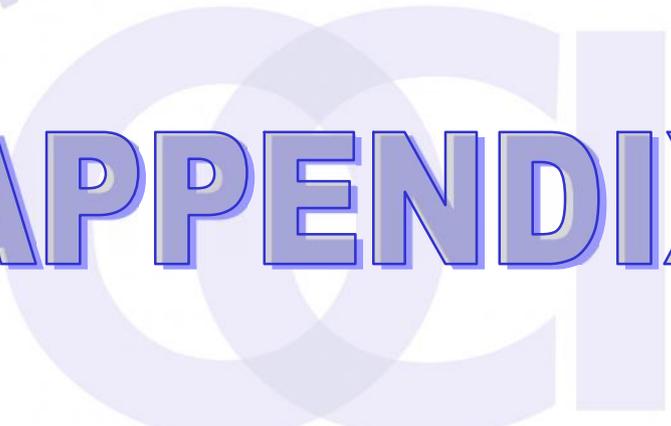
While it is not a specific requirement, all other providers are eligible to apply for accreditation of their CE activities by the OCI. This will assist optometrists in pre-assessing the standing of any activity. With the increased demand for CE, the OCI will encourage all providers to expand the availability of their activities to rural and remote practitioners.

Audit of providers

The OCI may at any time audit the accredited activities provided by CE approved providers to assess compliance with the criteria for continuing professional development activity accreditation. If it is determined by the OCI that a provider has failed to ensure the delivery of quality education, the provider may be ineligible for accreditation of future activities for a period determined by the OCI.

Feedback on quality of activities

The OCI is interested in ensuring that there is a range of quality activities for optometrists to meet the CE requirements. Optometrists concerned about the quality of the CE activity that they have undertaken are encouraged to notify the OCI in writing of their concerns.



OPTOMETRY

APPENDIX

COUNCIL OF INDIA

7. Descriptions

Appendix A:

Criteria for continuing education activity accreditation

These criteria are to be used by all providers of accredited CE activities. Further information on the accreditation process is available in the continuing education provider manual published on the Board's website.

A1 Continuing education activity

Providers should review Table 1: Continuing professional development activity types for examples of each activity type. All accredited activities should be clinical or nonclinical. Table 1 provides guidance as to nature of activity, point allocation and descriptions of activities.

A2 Quality of education

The content of the activity must reflect accepted optometric practice based on critical appraisal of the scientific literature. Activities promoting theories and techniques that are not supported by scientific evidence, nor generally accepted by the optometric profession will not be eligible for accreditation. Any materials presented should be current, relevant and at an appropriate level of education for Indian optometrists. It is unlikely that a course would be accredited if it was not intended for optometrists.

The educational format should reflect research-based, proven, best educational practice principles. In order to qualify for accreditation, providers will be encouraged to review their presentations and adopt progressive, up to- date educational principles. Adult learning theory and research suggests that effective CE activities should adopt innovative methods of presentation such as hands-on learning opportunities, peer-based study groups, small breakout sessions during large lecture-based presentations, and more interactive online seminars.

Activities should be engaging and effective in delivering the stated learning outcomes. Providers may be requested to make improvements to the delivery or content of any materials in order to have their activity accredited.

The Board may conduct random audits for educational quality. If it is determined by a committee established by the Board that a provider has failed to ensure the delivery of quality education, the provider may be ineligible for accreditation of future activities. The delivery of quality education includes ensuring attendance of optometrists during face-to-face CPD activities.

Appendix B:

Criteria for gaining approved provider status

- To be considered for approved provider status and to maintain this status, an organisation **must**:
 - Have education of optometrists as one of its principal activities
 - Have adequate expertise in providing quality education at a standard that is appropriate for Indian optometrists
 - Have a proven record of providing quality optometric CE and a history of complying with the criteria for CE activity accreditation, and
 - Notify the Board of any changes to the organization's details that were provided to the Board during the application process.
- Additionally, an approved provider **must not**:
 - Unreasonably prevent optometrists from enrolling in and attending their CE activities; unreasonable restrictions include employment status and geographic location, and
 - Delegate the task of developing or coordinating the educational content of its CE activities. The register of approved providers will be reviewed annually; approved provider status is granted at the discretion of the Board and can be revoked at any time.

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