

California State Board of Optometry

Amend Section 1536 of Article 6.5 of Division 15 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations as follows:

New text is underlined, existing text which is removed is ~~strikethrough~~.

§1536. Continuing Optometric Education; Purpose and Requirements.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in Section 1536(b), each licensee shall complete 40 hours of formal continuing optometric education course work within the two years immediately preceding the license expiration date. Such course work shall be subject to Board approval. Up to eight hours of course work may be in the area of patient care management or ethics in the practice of optometry. Business management courses are not accepted by the Board.

(b) An optometrist certified to use therapeutic pharmaceutical agents pursuant to Business and Professions Code Section 3041.3 shall complete a total of 50 hours of continuing optometric education every two years in order to renew ~~his or her~~ their license. Thirty-five of the required 50 hours of continuing optometric education shall be on the diagnosis, treatment and management of ocular disease and consistent with Business and Professions Code section 3059, subdivision (e).

(c) Up to ~~20~~ 25 hours of required biennial course work may be accomplished by using any or all of the following alternative methods:

(1) Documented and accredited self-study through correspondence or an electronic medium that is completed by successfully passing a test of the subject matter. The test may include: (1) an interactive test where the licensee submits answers electronically to the educational provider and receives instant feedback on whether the answer chosen by the licensee is correct and why, and whether they have passed the test; or (2) through self-assessment testing (open-book tests that are completed by the licensee, submitted to the provider, graded, and returned to the licensee with correct answers.

For the purposes of this section, "self-study" means a form of learning that does not offer participatory interaction between the licensee and the instructor during the instructional period. This may be accomplished via the following methods:

(A) Audio or video pre-recorded teleconferences, webinars, seminars, podcasts, broadcasts, or lectures via the internet.

(B) CD-ROMs played on a computer.

(C) Digital video discs.

(D) Books or materials as part of an independent or home study program.

(E) Programs or applications on a data-enabled device, such as a computer, tablet, or cellular phone specifically designed for this purpose.

(2) Teaching of continuing optometric education courses if attendance at such course would also qualify for such credit, providing none are duplicate courses within the two-year period.

(3) Writing articles that have been published in optometric journals, magazines or newspapers, pertaining to the practice of optometry (or in other scientific, learned, refereed journals on topics pertinent to optometry), providing no articles are duplicates. One hour of credit will be granted for each full page of printing or the equivalent thereof.

(4) A full day's ~~in-person~~ live attendance at a California State Board of Optometry Board meeting as verified by the Board. Every two hours of open session equates to one hour of credit, up to a maximum of four credit hours.

(5) Completion of a course to receive certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) from the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or other association approved by the Board. Up to four credit hours shall be granted for this course.

(6) Any continuing education course approved for category 1 of the American Medical Association or category 1A of the American Osteopathic Association Continued Medical Education credits that contributes to the advancement of professional skill and knowledge in the practice of optometry.

(7) Participation as a subject matter expert in the creation of the Board's California Laws and Regulation Examination. Subject matter experts will receive one hour of continuing education credit for each hour attending a Board sponsored workshop, not to exceed ~~eight~~ twelve credits per renewal cycle.

(d)(1) A credit hour is defined as one classroom hour, usually a 50-minute period, but no less than that.

(2) All remaining hours of continuing optometric education shall be obtained through live and interactive course study. For purposes of this section, live and interactive course study is defined as:

(A) In-person lectures, in-person workshops, in-person demonstrations, or in-person classroom studies which allow participatory interaction between the licensee and the instructor during the instructional period; or

(B) Lectures, webinars, workshops or audio or video conferences delivered via the internet or computer networks in real time, which means online meetings with participatory interaction between the licensee and the instructor presenting the content during the instructional period at the same time.

(e) Continuing optometric education programs which are approved as meeting the required standards of the Board include the following:

(1) Continuing optometric education courses officially sponsored or recognized by any accredited school or college of optometry. For the purposes of this section, "accredited" means recognition from an accrediting agency recognized by the Secretary of the United States Department of Education.

(2) Continuing optometric education courses provided by any national or state affiliate of the American Optometric Association, the American Academy of Optometry, or the Optometric Extension Program.

(3) Continuing optometric education courses or activities approved by the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry committee known as COPE (Council on Optometric Practitioner Education).

(f) Other continuing optometric education courses shall be approved by the Board as upon meeting the criteria set forth in paragraph (g) below, and after submission of the fee in section 1524, a completed Continuing Education Course Approval Application (Form CE-01, Rev. ~~5/16~~ 11/21), hereby incorporated by reference, course schedule, topical outline of subject matter and curriculum vitae of all instructors or lecturers involved; Form CE-01 shall be submitted to the Board not less than 45 days prior to the ~~date~~ commencement of the program. The Board may, upon application of any licensee and for good cause shown, waive the requirement for submission of advance information and request for prior approval. Nothing herein shall permit the Board to approve a continuing optometric education course which has not complied with the criteria set forth in paragraph (g) below. Course approvals shall be valid for two years from the date as approved by the Board. Each individual course shall be assigned a course approval number by the Board.

(g) The criteria for judging and approving continuing education courses by the Board for continuing optometric education credit will be determined on the following basis:

(1) Whether the program is likely to contribute to the advancement of professional skills and knowledge in the practice of optometry; including the following subject matter areas:

(A) Patient care management,

(B) Ocular and systemic signs or symptoms of related disease,

(C) Child abuse detection,

(D) Clinical optometry,

(E) Ethics in the practice of optometry,

(F) Elder abuse detection,

(G) Pharmacology/Schedule II Drug Prescribing and Abuse Prevention,

(H) Any categories in the diagnosis, treatment, and management of ocular disease as set forth in Section 3059(e) of the Business and Professions Code.

(2) Whether the instructors, lecturers, and others participating in the presentation are recognized by the Board as being qualified in their field.

(3) Whether the proposed course is open to all optometrists licensed in this State.

(4) Whether the provider of any mandatory continuing optometric education course agrees to maintain and furnish to the Board and/or attending licensee such records of course content, dates and places of the course, course completion certificates as specified in subdivision (h), and attendance as the Board requires, for a period of at least ~~three~~ four years from the date of course presentation.

(5) The provider does not use the Board's letterhead, seal, or logo on any course certificates, advertising, or solicitation.

(6) If the proposed course is live and interactive as defined in subsection (d), whether the proposed course has measures for participatory interaction, including participant attendance reports, in-content quizzes, participant polls, real time participant video requirements, and records of participant log in and log out times.

(h) Proof of continuing optometric education course attendance shall be provided in a form and manner specified in writing by the Board and distributed to all licensed optometrists in this State. Certification of continuing optometric education course attendance shall be submitted by the licensee to the Board upon request, and shall contain the following minimal information:

(1) Name of the sponsoring organization.

(2) Name, signature, practice address, and license number of the attending licensee.

(3) Subject or title of the course.

(4) Number of continuing optometric education hours provided for attending the course.

(5) Date the course was provided.

(6) Location where the course was provided.

(7) Name(s) and signature(s) of the course instructor(s).

(8) Such other evidence of course content or attendance as the Board may deem necessary.

(9) Course approval number as assigned by the Board, if applicable.

(10) Whether the course was pre-recorded or live.

~~Use of a A certificate of course completion generated by the provider provided by the Board is recommended required to be issued to any licensee who completes any continuing optometric education course approved by the Board pursuant to the above. Such forms will be furnished by the Board upon request.~~

The Board will also recognize and utilize the Association of Regulatory Boards in Optometry's online Optometric Education (OE) Tracker system as proof of continuing education course attendance.

(i) The following licensees shall be exempt from the requirements of this section:

(1) Any licensee serving in the regular armed forces of the United States during any part of the two years immediately preceding the license expiration date.

(2) Any licensee who is renewing an active license for the first time, if ~~he or she~~ they graduated from an accredited school or college of optometry less than one year from the date of initial licensure.

(3) Those licensees as the Board, in its discretion, determines were unable to complete sufficient hours of continuing optometric education courses due to illness, incapacity, or other unavoidable circumstances. An extension may be granted if the Board, in its discretion, determines that good cause exists for the licensee's failure to complete the requisite hours of continuing optometric education.

(j) The Board, in its discretion, may exempt from the continuing optometric education requirements of this section licensees who for health reasons or other good cause cannot meet these requirements. Licensees requesting an exemption shall complete a Continuing Education Exemption Request (Form CE-E, Rev 2/2016) and submit it, along with all required supporting information, to the Board for its consideration at least thirty (30) days prior to the expiration of the license.

(1) The Board may deny a request for exemption but at its discretion may grant the licensee an extension of up to one year to obtain the necessary continuing optometric education.

(2) A licensee whose requests for an exemption is denied and an extension is not granted shall otherwise comply with the provision of this section.

(k) The Board may conduct an audit of any licensee's attendance of a continuing optometric education course as a means of verifying compliance with this section. A licensee shall maintain all course completion certificates on file which are used for renewal purposes for a period of four (4) years from the license renewal date and shall provide these records to the Board upon request or in the event of an audit, if requested, within ten (10) days of the date of the Board's written request for such records.

(l) Licensees that are glaucoma certified pursuant to BPC section 1571 shall be required to complete 10 hours of glaucoma specific optometric continuing education every license renewal period. These 10 hours shall be part of the required 35 hours on the diagnosis, treatment and management of ocular disease.

(m) A licensee may not repeat for credit the same course more than once within the two-year renewal timeframe.

Note: Authority cited: Section 3059, Business and Professions Code. Reference: Section 3059, Business and Professions Code.