



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT  
OF STATE

Bureau of Professional & Occupational Affairs

**STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY**

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**Continuing Education Information for Optometrists**

As a requirement for optometry license renewal, licensees must complete at least **30 hours of Board approved continuing education** in each biennial renewal period. Optometry licenses expire on November 30th of even-numbered years. The following chart explains the requirements at each licensure level:

Licensed optometrist with an “L” license	Licensed for diagnostics only. “P” license	Licensed for therapeutics only. “T” license	Licensed for therapeutics and glaucoma. “G” license
Must take 30 hours of continuing education.	Must take 30 hours of continuing education.	Must take 30 hours of continuing education, at least 6 hours must be in therapeutics.	Must take 30 hours of continuing education. At least 4 hours must be in glaucoma, and at least an additional 2 hours must be in therapeutic pharmaceutical agents.

All courses, including pre-approved courses, must comply with the Board’s regulations regarding continuing education course content. 49 Pa. Code 23.83.

*§ 23.83. Continuing education subject matter.*

(a) Acceptable courses of study are limited to those pertaining to the use of means or methods for examination, diagnosis and treatment of conditions of the human visual system and may include examination for and adapting and fitting of all types of lenses. **The Board will not accept courses of study which do not relate to the actual practice of optometry such as studies in office management and financial procedures.**

(b) Courses that will meet the requirements for certification in the prescription and administration of pharmaceutical agents for therapeutic purposes in accordance with § 4.1 of the act (63 P. S. § 244.4a) shall concern the treatment and management of ocular or oculo-systemic disease.

(c) Courses that will meet the requirements for certification to treat glaucoma in accordance with § 4.2 of the act (63 P. S. § 244.4b) shall concern the treatment and management of primary open angle glaucoma, exfoliation glaucoma and pigmentary glaucoma.

### *Online Courses and Webinars*

Fifty percent of the required continuing education (15 hours) of the biennial requirement may be in approved “online or correspondence” courses. This includes webinars.

### *Other Methods of Continuing Education*

Twenty-five percent of the required continuing education (7½ hours) may also be credited for service as a teacher, preceptor, lecturer, or speaker and for publications, articles, books, and research relating to the practice of optometry. Applicants should apply to the Board prior to the performance of the above services to ensure that the service is creditable.

## **Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting and Opioid Continuing Education Requirements**

### *Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Continuing Education*

Per Act 31 of 2014, at least **two (2) hours of Board-approved continuing education in child abuse recognition and reporting** requirements must be completed for renewal or reactivation of a license. Details regarding the requirements of this continuing education and a list of Board-approved providers can be found at [www.dos.pa.gov](http://www.dos.pa.gov). **Verification of completion must be sent electronically and directly from the course provider. It may take up to seven days for the provider to submit the records to the Board’s office.** The continuing education requirements of Act 31 count towards the total number of continuing education credits required for renewal. If a three-hour Board-approved course is taken, the additional hour may also be applied towards the 30 hours of Board required continuing education.

### *Opioid Continuing Education*

Section 9.1(a)(2) of The Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Program Act 124 (ABC-MAP) requires all prescribers and dispensers to complete at least **two (2) hours of continuing education in pain management, the identification of addiction or the practices of prescribing or dispensing of opioids during each biennial period.** Individuals who do not have a DEA registration and do not use another person or entity’s DEA registration to prescribe any controlled substances do not need to complete the opioid CE. The continuing education requirements of ABC-MAP count towards the total number of continuing education credits required for renewal; however, the opioid continuing education may not be applied toward the six hours required to maintain therapeutic certification. The opioid continuing education must be taken from a Board-approved continuing education provider listed in Section 23.86(a) of the Board’s regulations.

## **Exemption and Waiver of Continuing Education Requirements**

### *Exemption*

If you are a new licensee who graduated from optometry school during your first biennial renewal period, you are exempt from optometric continuing education requirements for your first renewal period. **Please note that this exemption does not apply to the Act 31 child abuse recognition and reporting continuing education and Act 124 opioid continuing education, which are required for every renewal.**

## *Waiver*

Waiver of the continuing education requirements may be permitted as follows:

- The board may grant a hardship waiver of all or a part of the continuing education requirement in cases of certified illness or undue hardship.
- A request for waiver must be made in writing, with appropriate documentation, and include a description of circumstances sufficient to show why compliance is impossible.
- Waiver requests will be evaluated by the board on a case-by-case basis. The board will send written notification of its approval or denial of a waiver request.
- **The waiver request should be submitted to the Board prior to the end of the biennial renewal period for which the waiver is being sought.**

## **Certificates of Attendance**

Be sure to obtain official Certificates of Attendance from the sponsor of the course which indicate: the name of the sponsor; name of attendee; title and date of the course; number of clock hours; signature of person authenticating attendance; **which courses are designated as therapeutic and/or Glaucoma; and the PA Board Approval number (if applicable), as follows:**

1. A Pennsylvania Board Approval Number must be indicated on the Certificate. Please note that it is your responsibility to verify the PA Board Approval number with the sponsor **prior to taking the course.**
2. Pre-approved courses do not have a Pennsylvania Board Approval Number. Instead, through its regulations, the Board has granted pre-approval to the following providers: American Optometric Association; PA Optometric Association; accredited colleges of optometry; College of Optometrists in Vision Development; Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE# required); eye and vision related continuing education courses offered by accredited medical colleges as defined in Section 2 of the Medical Practice Act of 1985 (63 P.S. Section 422.2); Optometric Extension Program; American Academy of Optometry and its state affiliates; American Academy of Ophthalmology and its state affiliates; eye and vision-related courses offered by the American Medical Association and its state affiliates.

**It is the licensee's responsibility to maintain and track personal continuing education credit hours.** Licensees must keep official Certificates of Attendance for six years after the biennial expiration date because the Board will conduct a random audit. **Do not send any Certificates of Attendance to the Board unless you are selected for the audit.**

## **Failure to Comply with Continuing Education Requirements**

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION WHICH MAY ALSO BE REPORTED TO THE NATIONAL PRACTITIONER DATA BANK.**