

REGISTRATION POLICY

Currency of Practice

Practising opticians are required to ensure that their knowledge and skills remain up to date, or current. This policy describes the minimum requirements for currency of practice experience for opticians who hold a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician.

Definition of Currency

In order to hold a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician, opticians are required to demonstrate that they are **current**.¹

“Currency” means a certain amount of recent practice hours that establishes that the optician’s knowledge and skills are up to date. Currency is a way to assess whether the optician will practice safely, competently and ethically on an ongoing basis.

Currency requirements for Registered Opticians

To be considered current, a Registered Optician must have engaged in at least 500 practice hours within the previous 3-year period.

The following activities will count as “practice hours” for the purposes of this policy:

1. Dispensing of eyeglasses, contact lenses and subnormal vision devices, and related duties (e.g. record keeping, laboratory work, repairs and adjustments, optical appliances, tools or equipment).
2. Teaching opticianry at an accredited opticianry program in Canada.
3. Supervising student and/or intern opticians in accordance with the Student/Intern Supervision Policy and/or the Contact Lens Mentor Policy.
4. Directly supervising, managing or assuring the quality of services of opticianry staff engaged in dispensing.
5. Completing advanced learning courses (including certificate programs) in opticianry or optical sciences at an educational institution accredited by the College (see [website](#) for a list of institutions).
6. Completing continuing education activities accredited by the College.
7. Presenting continuing education activities that have been accredited by the College (presentations that are delivered on multiple occasions may only be counted once).

¹ See section 8(1)

8. Completing up to a maximum of 4 hours of self-directed continuing education activities annually.
9. Collaborative Patient Care: Directly counselling patients on opticianry-related topics, such as lenses, visual acuity and visual comfort. This may include counselling that takes place in the context of optometry care and/or surgical procedures such as LASIK or cataract surgery and includes post-operative care.
10. Developing and/or presenting Optical/Optomety training resources: The training or presenting activity must have, as its primary purpose, the advancement of professional competency and knowledge in the practice of opticianry. The activity must not be primarily for the purpose of endorsing, marketing or selling a particular product, brand, service or service provider.

The following activities do NOT count as “practice hours” for the purposes of this policy:

1. Engaging in sales or marketing of eyewear or optical appliances, other than sales or marketing that is direct to patients.
2. Work in a dispensary that is not related to opticianry services (e.g. human resources, information technology, risk management, business administration).
3. Supervision of staff who are not providing opticianry services or engaging in dispensing (e.g. supervision of IT staff or reception staff).

How Currency is monitored

Registered Opticians must declare at annual renewal the number of practice hours that they engaged in during the previous calendar year. To be considered current, the total number of practice hours reported over any three-year period must be at least 500.

Registrants are responsible for accurately declaring their practice hours at annual renewal, and must maintain records to support their declaration (e.g. time sheets, schedules, etc.) for a period of 6 years. The College reserves the right to audit a registrant’s currency or request supporting information at any time, and registrants must provide such information or documentation upon request.

If a registrant declares less than 500 practice hours in the Registrant Portal over a three-year period, they will be given an opportunity to submit additional activities for consideration by the Registration Committee. The Registration Committee will determine whether the additional activities qualify as “practice hours” within the meaning of the policy. The Registration Committee’s decision is final and is not subject to appeal.

Opticians who cannot demonstrate Currency

Registrants who have not engaged in at least 500 practice hours within the previous 3 years will have the following options:

1. **Complete a [Refresher Program](#) approved by the Registration Committee.** The Refresher Program must be completed in the 12 months immediately preceding the renewal deadline for the relevant renewal year.

2. **Change their registration status to Inactive.** Opticians in the Inactive class are not entitled to practise opticianry or use the title Registered Optician. Inactive opticians may be re-issued a certificate as a Registered Optician if they meet the requirements set out in the Reinstatement and Changing from Inactive to Active Practice Policy.
3. **Resign their registration with the College.** Opticians who resign their registration will no longer be permitted to practise opticianry or use the title Registered Optician. In order to return to practice following resignation, they would be required to re-apply to the College as a new applicant and meet the registration requirements in place at the time of their re-application. For more information see the Retiring or Resigning Policy.

Registrants who do not take any of the above steps by the deadline specified by the College will be referred to the Quality Assurance Committee.