

## Chapter Opt 8

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

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**Note:** Chapter Opt 8 was created as an emergency rule effective November 8, 2006.

#### Opt 8.01 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

(1) “Biennium” means a 2-year period beginning December 16 of odd-numbered years.

(2) “COPE” means the council on optometric practitioner education.

(3) “Hardship” means serious illness, as determined by a licensed health care provider, or some other personal adversity, as determined by the board.

(4) “Hour” means a minimum of 50 minutes of lecture.

**History:** CR 06–116: cr. Register May 2007 No. 617, eff. 6–1–07; CR 18–021: cr. (4) Register August 2019 No. 764, eff. 12–15–19.

**Opt 8.02 Continuing education requirements. (1)** A licensee shall complete 30 hours of approved continuing education in each biennial registration period.

(1m) Each biennium, except as provided in sub. (1s), and unless granted a hardship waiver in accordance with sub. (3m), the 30 required hours of continuing education shall include 1 hour on the topic of responsible prescribing of controlled substances.

(1s) The board shall provide an exemption to any licensee under sub. (1m) if the optometrist does not hold a federal drug enforcement administration registration number and does not prescribe controlled substances.

(2) A minimum of 20 of the 30 hours of approved continuing education hours, as specified in sub. (1), required for optometrists who are allowed to use diagnostic and therapeutic pharmaceutical agents shall relate to ocular health, conditions, or disease management, or the removal of superficial foreign bodies from an eye or from an appendage to the eye.

(3) A minimum of 20 of the 30 hours of approved continuing education hours, as specified in sub. (1), required for optometrists who are not allowed to use diagnostic and therapeutic pharmaceutical agents shall relate to ocular health, conditions, or disease management.

(3e) At least 20 of the 30 hours of approved continuing education required under sub. (1) shall be completed by attending programs in person. Any programs not completed in person shall be COPE or Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education approved programs, in accordance with s. Opt 8.03 (1) (a), or programs approved under s. Opt 8.03 (2).

(3m) In cases of hardship, a licensee may apply to the board for any of the following:

(a) Approval of less than the 20 hours of in person continuing education required under sub. (3e).

(b) Approval of a continuing education program under s. Opt 8.03 (2).

(3s) An optometrist who by the renewal date has been licensed for one year or less from the date issued shall not be required to report continuing education for the first renewal of the license. An optometrist who by the renewal date holds a license for more than one year and less than 2 years shall be required to report 15 hours of approved continuing education for the first renewal of the license. A minimum of 10 of the 15 hours shall be attended in person.

(5) Except for purposes of obtaining continuing education in order to satisfy the requirements for late renewal under s. Opt 7.05, continuing education hours may be applied only to the biennial registration period in which the continuing education hours are acquired.

(6) To obtain credit for completion of continuing education hours, an optometrist shall, at the time of each renewal of registration, sign a statement certifying that the course work has been completed. If audited, an optometrist shall submit certificates of attendance issued by each course provider or other evidence of attendance satisfactory to the board.

(7) An optometrist who fails to meet the continuing education requirements by the renewal date may not engage in the practice of optometry until his or her registration is renewed under s. Opt 7.05.

**History:** CR 06–116: cr. Register May 2007 No. 617, eff. 6–1–07; correction in (9) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats., Register December 2007 No. 624; CR 18–021: am. (title), (1), cr. (1m), am. (2), (3), cr. (3e), (3m), (3s), r. (4), (8) to (10) Register August 2019 No. 764, eff. 12–15–19; CR 23–040: am. (1), (1m), cr. (1s), am. (3s) Register August 2024 No. 824, eff. 9–1–24; correction in (1s) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 12., Stats., Register August 2024 No. 824.

**Opt 8.03 Continuing education approval. (1)** The board shall accept the following in satisfaction of continuing education for each biennium:

(a) Any continuing education program approved by COPE or Joint Accreditation for Interprofessional Continuing Education.

(b) Any in-person continuing education program relevant to the practice of optometry provided by one of the following organizations:

1. Wisconsin Optometric Association.
2. American Optometric Association.
3. American Academy of Optometry.
4. Optometric Extension Program Foundation.
5. Neuro-Optometric Rehabilitation Association.
6. College of Optometrists in Vision Development.
7. A school or college of optometry accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education.

(2) The board may approve a continuing education program not accepted under sub. (1). To apply for approval of a continuing education program, a provider shall submit to the board an application on forms provided by the department at least 30 days prior to the program. An application filed under this subsection or s. Opt 8.02 (3e) or (3m) (b) shall include all of the following:

- (a) Title of the program.
- (b) Date of the program.
- (c) General description and timed outline of the program.
- (d) Name and qualifications of the instructor.
- (e) Sponsoring organization of the program.
- (f) Category of the program relevant to the practice of optometry.
- (g) Approved number of continuing education program hours requested.
- (h) Delivery method of the program.

(3) The provider of the continuing education program under sub. (1) (b) or (2) agrees to monitor the attendance and furnish a

certificate of attendance to each participant. The certificate of attendance shall certify successful completion of the program.

**(4)** In cases of hardship under s. Opt 8.02 (3m), the board may waive any requirement under this section or s. Opt 8.02 (3e) as deemed appropriate by the board.

**Note:** Application forms for continuing education program approval are available on the department's website at [dps.wi.gov](http://dps.wi.gov), or by request from the Department of Safety and Professional Services, P.O. Box 8366, Madison, Wisconsin 53708, or call (608) 266-2112.

**History:** CR 06-116: cr. Register May 2007 No. 617, eff. 6-1-07; CR 18-021: r. and recr. Register August 2019 No. 764, eff. 12-15-19; correction in (1) (b) (intro.) made under s. 35.17, Stats., Register August 2019 No. 764.