



Quality Assurance Program

Frequently Asked Questions

The goal of the College’s Quality Assurance Program is to protect the public. This is done by supporting and providing opticians with resources and tools to demonstrate their ongoing competence. These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) will answer your questions about QA Competency Enhancement and QA Competency Review and Evaluation.

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QA 2020 CHANGES

What are the major differences in the QA process?

Previous Requirement	Requirements (2020)
Form 1: Member Demographic Information	Form 1: Member Demographic Information
Form 2: Competency Self-Assessment	Form 2: Competency Self-Assessment
Form 3: Professional Improvement Plan with 8 SD Hours	Form 3: No Goal Required with 4 SD Hours
Form 4: 8 CE Hours (4 EG, 4 CL) (an additional 2 hours pertaining to refraction are needed for refracting opticians)	Form 4: 12 CE Hours (4 EG, 4 CL, 4 PG) (an additional 2 hours pertaining to refraction are required for refracting opticians)
Form 5: Professional Activities Tracking Sheet	Form 5: No longer required
Jurisprudence: Every three years	Jurisprudence: Every three years, counts as 1 PG hour the year it was completed.
	QA Portal: Opticians are required to upload their accredited in the QA section of the member portal online

QA Program Overview

OVERVIEW

What are the components of the College's Quality Assurance Program?

There are three components:

- 1. QA Competency Enhancement:** focuses on Continuing Education (CE) and professional development activities. This defines your ongoing QA requirements. As part of this component, you engage in CE activities, maintain a Professional Portfolio, and complete the Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Self-Evaluation Tool. All registered optician members must engage in this component.
- 2. QA Competency Review and Evaluation (CRE):** is a process that encourages practice improvement by providing feedback to members. It engages opticians in a review of their Professional Portfolio materials and, potentially, a Multi-Source Feedback (MSF) survey process. For some opticians, this component may also involve an in-depth peer and practice assessment. Registered opticians must engage in this process if randomly selected by the College.
- 3. QA Competency Improvement:** engages the opticians that were identified in the CRE process as requiring educational support.

Do other regulated health professionals engage in QA activities?

Yes. Under the *Regulated Health Professionals Act, 1991*, all regulated health professionals must demonstrate engagement in self-assessment and professional development and/or continuing education. The majority of Colleges have implemented a Professional Portfolio component as well as a peer and practice assessment.

What are the Professional Portfolio requirements?

- Completion of Form 1: Member Demographic Information
- Completion of Form 2: Competency Self Assessment
- Completion of Form 3: Professional Improvement consisting of 4 non accredited self-directed hours
- Completion of Form 4: 12 Accredited CE hours, which includes 4 contact lens (CL) hours, 4 eyeglass (EG) hours and 4 professional growth (PG) hours (annually). This is for your records.
- Reporting accredited hours in the QA section of the member portal online
- Refracting opticians are required to complete two additional accredited CE hours related to refracting
- Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Self-Evaluation Tool (every three years)

Who is required to engage in QA Competency Enhancement?

All registered opticians (those who paid their registration fee and hold a registration with the College) must participate. You do this by completing all of the required Portfolio materials and CE activity hours. If you are randomly selected for the CRE, you must submit your Professional Portfolio to the College. You may be asked to submit Portfolio materials for up to two years.

QA Program Overview

I am a newly registered optician (I have not previously held registration with the College as an RO) and I registered partway through the year (e.g. June). Am I exempt from the QA Program?

No. You are still required to begin the QA Competency Enhancement tools (Professional Portfolio, CE activity hours, and the Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Self-Evaluation Tool). Depending on the date you were registered, you may not have to complete all 16 CE activity hours. Please refer to the prorated CE requirements below to determine how many CE hours you are required to complete in your first year of registration.

Date Registered	Accredited CE Required	Unaccredited CE required
January 1 – March 31	12 (100%)	4 (100%)
April 1 – June 30	9 (75%)	3 (75%)
July 1 – September 30	6 (50%)	2 (50%)
October 1 – December 31	3 (25%)	1 (25%)

This schedule applies to the first calendar year of registration only. Starting in your second year of registration, you will be required to complete all 16 CE activity hours.

I have just reinstated my license as an optician (RO). Am I exempt from the QA Program?

No. You are still required to complete the QA Competency Enhancement tools (Professional Portfolio, CE activity hours, and the Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Self-Evaluation Tool). You are required to complete these tools within your first calendar year of reinstatement, regardless of when in the year you reinstate.

I'm an optician nearing retirement. Can I be exempt from the QA Program?

No. Without exception, all opticians must comply with the QA Program. The College must be able to assure the public that all registered opticians are competent and engage in ongoing learning and professional development.

I have transferred to Ontario from another province. Am I expected to participate in the QA Program?

Yes. You are expected to complete the QA Competency Enhancement materials within the first 12 months of your registration date in Ontario.

I am an optician expecting to go on a leave of absence (either for a maternity leave or otherwise). Am I exempt from QA requirements and doing a Portfolio?

No. If you are registered (paid for your registration), practicing or not, you need to maintain the Portfolio.

How long should I retain my QA Competency Enhancement materials?

Six years. These materials include your completed Professional Portfolio, evidence of completing accredited CE hours, and the Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Self-Assessment Tool certificate.

QA Program Overview

What will happen if my portfolio is incomplete/not submitted to the College if requested?

All opticians who are randomly selected are required to participate in the College's CRE. If the forms are incomplete or inadequate or you have not met the CE hour requirements, the QA Committee may request you engage in additional activities or a practice assessment, or submit future Portfolios. In instances where a member has not completed the QA requirements, the QA Committee may refer the member to the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC). This could result in a referral to discipline and a finding of professional misconduct.

PEER AND PRACTICE ASSESSMENT

How does the QA Committee determine who must undergo a peer and practice assessment (PPA)?

The College's Quality Assurance (QA) program allows for a peer assessor to be appointed to assess a member's practice, including the member's knowledge, skill and judgment. There are a number of ways that the QA Committee determines that a member should undergo the assessment. Some examples include, but are not limited to: random selection, failure to adequately complete the QA requirements (including the portfolio or the MSF), or if deficiencies are identified in the MSF process. For the complete Peer Assessment Selection criteria, please refer to the [document on the College's website for more information](#).

What is involved in a peer and practice assessment (PPA)?

The format of the PPA includes:

- A behavioral-based interview meant to assess the optician's knowledge, skill and judgement in the context of the National Competencies for Canadian Opticians, 3rd ed.
- A chart review of 5 selected patient records, which is meant to ensure the optician's practice is in keeping with the Standards of Practice.
- A premises inspection, during which the assessor will visually assess certain aspects of the dispensary to ensure that they comply with the Standards and the Regulations.

Professional Portfolio

PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

What is a Professional Portfolio?

It is a collection of documents that reflect your career history and demonstrate your ongoing learning and continuing competence. Your Professional Portfolio is a required element of the new QA Program's Competency Enhancement component.

What is the purpose of the Professional Portfolio?

Engaging in a self-assessment and professional development is a legislative requirement of *the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*. To help members meet this obligation, the College has developed the QA Competency Enhancement component. By requiring opticians to develop a Professional Improvement Plan and monitoring ongoing engagement in QA, the College assures the public that opticians are consciously engaging in ongoing learning and professional development. A record of your personal learning activities is a much better reflection of the various ways in which you enhance your professional development. As opticians, we receive both formal, structural learning as well as informal, independent learning.

What materials are in the Professional Portfolio?

The Portfolio includes:

- **Form 1:** Member Demographic Information
- **Form 2:** Competency Self-Assessment
- **Form 3:** Professional Improvement Plan
- **Form 4:** Continuing Education Activity Log
- **Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Completion Certificate**

Where can I get the Portfolio forms?

All the Portfolio forms are available for download on the College's website in a fillable PDF format.

How do I complete the Portfolio forms?

The College has developed a detailed Professional Portfolio guide, which outlines the step-by-step process. This guide is available on the College's website.

When do I fill out the Portfolio forms?

You are expected to document your completed CE hours and reflect on your learning throughout the year, as the learning occurs. In January, you should complete your Competency Self-Assessment (Form 2) On Form 3, list non-accredited, self-directed CE activities as you complete them, and document the changes to your practice. On Form 4, list the accredited CE activities as you complete them. By December 31, finalize your Professional Portfolio materials and report accredited continuing education activities in the QA section of the member portal.

How often do I need to complete a Professional Portfolio?

You must complete a Professional Portfolio every year and maintain a copy of your Portfolio materials for six years.

Professional Portfolio

Can the College request to review my Portfolio at any time?

Yes. The QA Committee can ask to review your Portfolio at any time and will provide 30 days' notice.

Do I submit my completed Professional Portfolio to the College every year?

No. You should submit your Professional Portfolio only when you are randomly selected to engage in the CRE process. At that time, you will have 30 days to submit your Portfolio to the College. Each year, the QA Committee will randomly select a percentage of registered opticians to participate in the CRE process. The College's goal is to engage opticians in the CRE process every five years.

JURISPRUDENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION SELF-EVALUATION**What is the Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Self-Evaluation?**

The jurisprudence module consists of a handbook and an online, multiple choice test, which serves to assist members in understanding the concepts of professional boundaries and help members develop ways to prevent the crossing of professional boundaries, including those related to sexual abuse.

How often do I have to complete the Jurisprudence and Sexual Abuse Prevention Self-Evaluation?

Once every three years. Jurisprudence Chapter One, Sexual Abuse Prevention is included in the members accredited Professional Growth (PG) activity the year it was completed. The member would only need to complete 3 additional professional growth activities that year.

Professional Portfolio Requirements

CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE)

How many CE activities do I need to complete each year?

As part of the QA Competency Enhancement process, each year members are required to complete:

- 4 non-accredited, self-directed CE hours;
- 12 accredited CE hours, which includes:
 - 4 hours specific to eyeglasses (EG); **and** 4 hours specific to contact lenses (CL); **and** 4 hours specific to professional growth (PG)
- Refracting opticians are required to accumulate 2 additional accredited CE hours specific to refracting (RF).

Can I use some accredited CE for my non-accredited portfolio requirements?

Yes. You may choose to use accredited CE to fulfill your self-directed CE hour requirements. You must still ensure 12 accredited CE hours are completed for your accredited requirements.

Can all of my 16 hours be accredited CE?

Yes. The College would, however, encourage opticians to engage in self-directed types of learning. Research suggests that individuals who actively engage in self-directed learning acquire and retain more knowledge than from other types of learning.

If I earn more than 16 hours of CE in a year, am I able to use those hours to fulfil future Portfolio requirements?

No. CE hours cannot be carried over to future Portfolios; you must complete 16 hours of CE every year. By completing 16 hours of CE every year you demonstrate your ongoing learning and are maintaining competence.

Is online CE available?

There are many providers who offer online CE. A list of accredited CE, including the delivery method (distance learning or live presentation) is available on the College's website.

ACCREDITED CE HOURS

What are accredited CE activity hours?

Accredited CE hours are learning activities, that have been reviewed by the College's QA Committee and granted accreditation status. Accredited CE is related to contact lenses, eyeglasses, and refracting, and is achieved on an hour-for-hour basis. A list of all accredited CE published on the College's website.

Are any accredited CE activities available online?

Yes. The College has accredited many online CE activities. Any activity that is listed as 'Distance Learning' on the College's list of accredited activities can be completed online.

What are accredited Professional Growth CE activity hours?

Professional Growth (PG): CE content may include but is not limited to topics associated with professional practice such as patient relations, regulatory updates, health and safety, jurisprudence, communications, economic trends to adapt to change, business management, CPR & first aid courses.

Professional Portfolio Requirements

NON-ACCREDITED, SELF-DIRECTED CE HOURS

What are self-directed, non-accredited CE hours?

In general, the following activities are considered to be non-accredited, self-directed CE, that are earned on an hour-for-hour basis:

- Live and/or multimedia presentations (seminars, lectures, workshops)
- Distance learning activities (print, internet, video, television)
- Scholastic (courses based at an educational institution)
- Self-study or organized study groups
- Emergency medical course (such as first aid/CPR)

How many non-accredited hours can I claim each year for activities such as dispensing, teaching, examining or participating in a volunteer event?

You can achieve non-accredited, self-directed hours for the following activities:

- 1 non-accredited, self-directed hour for 1000 dispensing hours in a year (max. 1 hour per year)
- 1 non-accredited, self-directed hour for 500 supervising hours in a year (max. 2 hours per year)
- 1 non-accredited, self-directed hour for 500 teaching hours in a year (max. 2 hours per year)
- 1 non-accredited, self-directed hour total for participating as a Council member, an appointed Committee member, or a professional association board member in a year
- 1 non-accredited, self-directed hour for one volunteer event (includes uncompensated opticianry volunteer missionary work abroad, provided supporting documentation is submitted such as a letter of deployment/time abroad from the organization or a certificate of verification) to a maximum of 2 hours (events) in each year
- 1 non-accredited, self-directed hour for examiners or peer assessors hours in a year (max. 2 hours per year)

What information/documentation do I need to collect regarding my non-accredited, self-directed CE hours?

It is important to record the name of the activity or resources used on the Professional Improvement Plan (Form 3). For example, if you visited a website, you can simply record the web address and the date you visited the site; if you spoke to a content expert (e.g. an optometrist or sales representative), you can record the individual's name and the date of the conversation. If you read an article, record the author, title, source and date of publication. If you are randomly selected to submit your portfolio to the College you do not need to submit photocopies of articles, or letters confirming that you completed the self-directed CE, unless specifically requested by the College. You may wish to keep articles, etc., for your own Portfolio records.

Who chooses non-accredited, self-directed CE activities?

You choose these activities.

Are workplace education sessions eligible as non-accredited, self-directed CE activities?

Yes. Workplace activities – such as CPR classes and product information sessions – can count for non-accredited, self-directed CE hours.