

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Registration Committee

DATE: December 4, 2023

SUBJECT: 14.2 Addendum to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy

☒ For Decision ☐ For Information ☐ Monitoring Report

Purpose:

To consider an extension of the temporary addendum to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy.

Background:

In 2020, the Board of Directors approved a temporary addendum to the [Contact Lens Mentor Policy](#) to address the challenges being posed to students in obtaining the requisite number of contact lens fits as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The temporary addendum to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy extended eligibility to qualify as a contact lens mentor to include instructors teaching contact lens courses in academic settings.

For Consideration:

At its meeting on November 6, 2023, the Registration Committee considered the concerns identified by educational program coordinators about student fittings. The Committee recognized that students continue to face significant challenges in finding preceptors to supervise the required Rigid Gas Permeable (RGP) lens fits. The Committee, therefore, recommends extending the temporary addendum to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy to permit contact lens course instructors to act as contact lens mentors.

If approved, this temporary provision will remain in effect until December 31, 2024, at which time the Committee will reassess the necessity of further extension.

Public Interest Considerations

The College has a mandate to ensure that it continues to register qualified and competent opticians to ensure patient safety, and that it does so in a manner that does not create unnecessary or excessive barriers to registration.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Considerations

The Registration Committee considered that the proposed extension will ensure that graduating students are able to complete the required fittings within a reasonable timeframe and subsequently register as an optician, which will balance their need to enter the profession against the need for the COO to maintain financial stability by enabling a yearly influx of registrants.

Recommendation/Action Required:

That the Board approve the proposed extension to the addendum to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy as recommended by the Registration Committee.

REGISTRATION POLICY

Contact Lens Mentor

Contact Lens Fittings Requirements

It is a requirement under Section 5 (2) 3. of Ontario Regulation 869/93, that an applicant for a certificate of registration as a Registered Optician must have,

“... completed, and must present evidence of, at least twenty contact lens fittings, including at least five rigid gas permeable (RGP) contact lens fittings, under the supervision or direction of an optician who is certified in the fitting of contact lenses or an optometrist or an ophthalmologist.”

Supervision of Contact Lens Fittings and Signing of Logbooks

All registered opticians, who wish to supervise the contact lens fittings of student or intern opticians and sign the student or intern logbook, must be recognized by the College as a Contact Lens Mentor for either “soft” or “soft and rigid” fits.

Eligibility Criteria for Contact Lens Mentor Status

A Registered Optician who wishes to be recognized as a Contact Lens Mentor by the College must submit the appropriate application to the College, which confirms that they meet the following criteria, as set out by the Registration Committee:

1. Is a registrant in good standing with the College;
2. Currently works in a practice which includes the dispensing of contact lenses as part of the services offered to the public;
3. Has been registered as a Registered Optician for a minimum of one year with the authority to dispense contact lenses in Ontario and/or in another Canadian jurisdiction where opticianry is a regulated profession; and
4. Has fitted the minimum number of contact lenses in the previous three years, as follows:
 - a. In order to supervise soft contact lens fits: has fitted a minimum of 50 soft contact lenses (including 40 spherical and 10 non-spherical [toric or multifocal])
 - b. In order to supervise soft and rigid contact lens fits: has fitted a minimum of 50 soft contact lenses as described above and a minimum of 15 rigid contact lenses (including spherical and complex designs).

A registrant who is approved by the College as a Contact Lens Mentor must agree to the following:

1. That their name be added to an official registry of Contact Lens Mentors for the purpose of supervising student or intern opticians who wish to obtain contact lens fittings;
2. Permit the College to inspect contact lens files for verification of required fittings; and
3. Not charge a fee to sign logbooks or supervise student or intern opticians.

Registered Opticians may only begin supervising contact lens fits and signing student or intern logbooks after receiving confirmation from the College that their Contact Lens Mentor status has been approved. A letter will be provided by the College certifying the Contact Lens Mentor status.

Registered Opticians who are considered “soft Contact Lens Mentors” may only supervise and verify soft contact lens fits. Registered Opticians who are considered “soft and rigid Contact Lens Mentors” may supervise and verify both soft and rigid fits.

The Contact Lens Mentor status is valid for a period of three years from the date of approval. Registered Opticians are required to re-apply after three years in order to continue signing student logbooks.

The College is committed to adhering to the principles set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Registered Opticians who wish to be recognized as a Contact Lens Mentor may contact the College directly to request accommodation with respect to the criteria set out in this Policy.

Temporary Addendum to the Contact Lens Mentor Policy

From July 27, 2020 to December 31, 2023, the Registration Committee waives criterion #2 for eligibility to act as a Contact Lens Mentor (that the Registered Optician currently work in a practice which includes the dispensing of contact lenses as part of the services offered to the public) where the Registered Optician:

1. Is currently employed as an instructor in an opticianry program at an educational institute that has been accredited by the College.
2. Teaches one or more courses relating to contact lenses.
3. Meets all other requirements set out in the Contact Lens Mentor Policy.

Any Registered Optician who is approved as a Contact Lens Mentor in accordance with this addendum will be granted Contact Lens Mentor status until no later than December 31, 2023. Registered Opticians wishing to continue as a Contact Lens Mentor beyond December 31, 2023, must re-apply at that time and their application will be considered in accordance with the eligibility criteria that are in place at that time.