

CHAPTER 181
CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR OPTOMETRISTS

645—181.1(154) Definitions. For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:

“*Active license*” means a license that is current and has not expired.

“*Approved program/activity*” means a continuing education program/activity meeting the standards set forth in these rules.

“*Audit*” means the selection of licensees for verification of satisfactory completion of continuing education requirements during a specified time period.

“*Board*” means the board of optometry.

“*CELMO*” means the Council on Endorsed Licensure Mobility for Optometrists.

“*Continuing education*” means planned, organized learning acts designed to maintain, improve, or expand a licensee’s knowledge and skills in order for the licensee to develop new knowledge and skills relevant to the enhancement of practice, education, or theory development to improve the safety and welfare of the public.

“*Distance learning*” means a format that provides one-way content to the licensee without immediate interaction with the instructor, including but not limited to correspondence courses, online courses and local study group programs.

“*Hour of continuing education*” means at least 50 minutes spent by a licensee in actual attendance at and completion of an approved continuing education activity.

“*Inactive license*” means a license that has expired because it was not renewed by the end of the grace period.

“*Independent study*” means a subject/program/activity that a person pursues autonomously that meets standards for approval criteria in the rules and includes a posttest.

“*Interactive online CE*” means the format allows for immediate interaction and feedback between the audience and the instructor.

“*License*” means license to practice.

“*Licensee*” means any person licensed to practice as an optometrist in the state of Iowa.

[ARC 7975C, IAB 5/15/24, effective 6/19/24]

645—181.2(154) Continuing education requirements.

181.2(1) The biennial continuing education compliance period will extend for a two-year period beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30 of each even-numbered year. Each biennium, each person who is licensed to practice as an optometrist in this state will be required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of continuing education that meets the standards in this chapter. Continuing education hours cannot be carried over to the next biennium.

181.2(2) Requirements of new licensees. Those persons licensed for the first time shall not be required to complete continuing education as a prerequisite for the first renewal of their licenses. Continuing education hours acquired anytime from the initial licensing until the second license renewal may be used.

181.2(3) Hours of continuing education credit may be obtained by attending and participating in a continuing education activity.

181.2(4) The licensee is responsible for the cost of continuing education.

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645—181.3(154,272C) Standards.

181.3(1) General criteria. A continuing education activity that meets all of the following criteria is appropriate for continuing education credit if the continuing education activity:

- a. Is an organized program of learning fundamental to the practice of the profession that contributes directly to the professional competency of the licensee;
- b. Is conducted by individuals who have specialized education and training in the subject matter of the program. At the time of audit, the board may request the qualifications of presenters;
- c. Fulfills stated program goals, objectives, or both; and

d. Provides proof of attendance, including:

- (1) Date, location, course title, presenter(s);
- (2) Numbers of program contact hours; and
- (3) Certificate of completion or evidence of successful completion of the course provided by the course sponsor.

181.3(2) Specific criteria.

a. Continuing education hours of credit may be obtained by attending:

(1) The continuing education programs of the Iowa Optometric Association, the American Optometric Association, the American Academy of Optometry, and national regional optometric congresses, schools of optometry, all state optometric associations, and any accredited department of ophthalmology.

(2) Postgraduate study through an accredited school or college of optometry.

(3) Meetings or seminars that are approved and certified for optometric continuing education by the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry's Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) committee.

b. The maximum number of hours in each category in each biennium is as follows:

(1) Five hours of credit for distance learning.

(2) Fifteen hours of credit for interactive online CE.

(3) Twenty hours of credit for postgraduate study courses as referenced in subparagraph 181.3(2) "a"(2).

c. Required continuing education hours. Licensees shall provide proof of continuing education in all of the following areas:

(1) Current certification in CPR offered in person by the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross or an equivalent organization. At least two hours per biennium is required, but credit will be granted for four hours.

(2) Training on child abuse and dependent adult abuse identification and reporting through the department of health and human services for all licensees who examine, attend, counsel or treat children or dependent adults in the scope of the professional practice. Initial two-hour courses need to be taken with six months of employment. One-hour recertification training needs to be done every three years.

(3) A minimum of one hour of continuing education per renewal period regarding guidelines for prescribing opioids, including recommendations on limitations on dosages and the length of prescriptions, risk factors for abuse, and nonopioid and nonpharmacologic therapy options. Credit will be granted for up to two hours per renewal period. If the continuing education did not cover the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guideline for prescribing opioids for chronic pain, the licensee shall read the guideline prior to license renewal. "Opioid" means any drug that produces an agonist effect on opioid receptors and is indicated or used for the treatment of pain.

d. Current CELMO certification meets the continuing education requirements for licensees.
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◇ Two or more ARCs