

6500.3000 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

Subpart 1. **Required hours and compliance period.** An optometrist licensed in Minnesota is required as a condition of licensure and license renewal to complete 40 hours of board-approved continuing optometric education every two years. The two-year cycle begins on January 1 and ends on December 31 of the second year.

Subp. 2. **Continuing education reporting.** At the time of license renewal, each licensee shall demonstrate, either through a board-approved electronic tracking system or paper documentation, completion of the minimum of 40 approved continuing education hours since the last renewal. A maximum of 15 hours per reporting period may be satisfied by board-approved noninteractive, independent study. A maximum of six hours per reporting period may be satisfied by continuing education in practice management.

It is the licensee's responsibility to maintain proof of continuing education compliance in either paper or electronic format. Failure to demonstrate proof of the required continuing education compliance shall result in nonrenewal of the license pursuant to part 6500.2000.

Proof of attendance, in either electronic or paper form, must include:

- A. the name of the sponsoring organization;
- B. the name of the licensee;
- C. the course title and instructor's name;
- D. the number of hours in attendance; and
- E. the date of the program.

For purposes of this subpart, a receipt for payment of the fee for the continuing education program or activity is not sufficient evidence of completion.

Subp. 3. **Audits of continuing education.** The board may conduct random audits for the purpose of verifying continuing education each reporting year. A licensee who is being audited must provide verification of the required number of continuing education hours by submitting the documentation described in subpart 2. Failure to submit the required documentation shall be grounds for disciplinary action.

Subp. 4. **Courses; board approval required.** Continuing education activities must be approved by the board or the board's designee. Activities must be approved for all attendees when submitted by the sponsor pursuant to subpart 6, or a licensee may request individual approval pursuant to subpart 7. Courses that meet approval criteria standards and receive approval from the board's designee shall be accepted for credit by the board.

The board or the board's designee shall consider the following factors when determining whether an activity should be approved:

- A. whether the activity is structured on sound educational principles and has a topic relevant to the practice of optometry;

B. whether the speakers, lecturers, or other presenters are recognized by the board as being highly qualified in their fields;

C. whether the proposed course, if conducted within Minnesota, is open to all optometrists licensed in Minnesota;

D. whether the tuition fee charged for courses conducted within Minnesota is the same for nonmembers of the course's sponsoring organization as it is for members. Any difference in tuition shall be reasonable and related to the sponsoring organization's expense in operating the continuing education course; and

E. whether the course is interactive between audience and instructor, either live or remote via Webinar, teleconferencing, or videoconferencing.

Courses or programs deemed by the board to be a sales promotion for a product or service shall be denied approval of continuing education credit, and may be presented without continuing education credit when so noted by the sponsor.

Subp. 5. **Retroactive revocation of CE approval.** The board may, after due consideration, add or delete continuing education credit hours of previously approved continuing education programs due to a change in content or actual hours of presentation. The board shall notify the program sponsor via mail of the change in approval. The program sponsor must then notify the program participants of the change in continuing education hours awarded.

Subp. 6. **Sponsor's application for course approval.** A program sponsor requesting approval by the board or the board's designee must submit a program, schedule, and course description to the board. The board shall respond to the applications within 30 days. Nothing in this part shall permit the board to approve an educational program that has not satisfied the criteria in subpart 4. Courses not eligible for credit shall be identified by the program sponsor.

Subp. 7. **Licensee's application for course approval.** A licensee may apply individually to the board for approval of continuing education activities that have not been approved by the board or its designee. A licensee shall complete and submit to the board the following information, as well as any other information the board or its designee deems necessary to evaluate the course for approval:

A. the name and address of the organization sponsoring the activity, if applicable;

B. a detailed description of the content of the activity;

C. the name and credentials of each instructor or presenter, if applicable; and

D. the location, including the name and address of the facility, at which the activity will be conducted.

If the activity does not meet the standards in subpart 4, the board or its designee shall deny approval. The board shall notify the licensee in writing of the reason for denying approval or an activity under this subpart.

Subp. 8. **Sources of credit.** Continuing education credit may be applied for the types of programs described in this subpart.

A. Programs approved by the board or its designee under subpart 4. A maximum of six credit hours per compliance period may be granted for programs related to practice management.

B. Participation in grand rounds, which consist of presenting medical conditions or treatment of a particular patient or type of condition to an audience consisting of licensed health care providers, residents, or medical students. One hour of continuing education credit may be awarded for each hour of participation in grand rounds.

C. Preparation of articles accepted for publication in optometric journals or other health-related journals. A maximum of three hours of continuing education per compliance period may be granted for acceptance and publication of articles in optometric or health-related journals.

D. Preparation of books or subparts of books on optometry-related subjects that have been accepted for publication. A maximum of nine hours of continuing education credits per compliance period may be granted for acceptance and publication of books.

E. Development and presentation of one or more lectures on optometry-related topics before an audience of optometric or other health care professionals. One hour of continuing education credit may be awarded for each hour of presentation. For one time only per lecture, two hours of continuing education credit may be awarded for development of each hour of presentation.

F. Participation in noninteractive, independent study activities, including self-instruction in vision care periodicals, Webcasts, audiotaped or videotaped programs, podcasts, written correspondence courses, and Internet courses. All programs must include a self-test to qualify for continuing education credit. A maximum of 15 hours of continuing education credits per compliance period may be awarded for noninteractive, independent study activities.

Subp. 9. **Exemption for continuing education requirements.** A licensee whose license has not expired and who meets any of the following conditions is exempt from continuing education requirements as described in this subpart.

A. A licensee who has been granted emeritus status under part 6500.2700 is exempt from continuing education requirements.

B. A licensee serving in active military service, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 190.05, subdivision 5, during any part of the 12 months immediately preceding the annual license renewal date is exempt from continuing education requirements.

C. A licensee first licensed by examination or reciprocity in the first year of the compliance period is exempt from continuing education requirements for that year but is responsible for 20 hours of continuing education for the second year of the compliance period.

D. A licensee first licensed by examination or reciprocity in the second year of the compliance period is exempt from continuing education requirements for the entire compliance period.

Subp. 10. **Requirements in specified subjects.** The board may, when compelled by advancement in scope of practice or emerging public health issues, and by mailing written notice to each licensed optometrist on or before January 1, require all optometrists to attend continuing education programs in specified subjects.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 145.714; 148.53; 214.06*

History: *43 SR 5*

Published Electronically: *July 11, 2018*