



COLLEGE OF OPTICIANS OF ALBERTA

Continuing Competence Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ'S)

General Questions

Q: Is the new program on a three-year cycle?

A: Yes. You will be working on the program throughout the cycle and will be expected to complete it by the end of the three years. The current cycle ends on June 30, 2023.

Q: Will the same accredited activities still be available for me, even though there is now a different program?

A: Yes. Although the program has changed, many of the available opportunities for education will remain the same. For example, you can complete online modules or attend seminars that are related to the goals you have set for yourself. Additionally, you will have the freedom to find your own activities and incorporate them into your plan as you wish.

Assessments

Q: Do I have to study or prepare for the assessment?

A: No. The assessments are meant to evaluate your current level of competence in the different areas you practice, to determine where you might need to focus your development. There is no need to prepare for it.

Q: How long is the assessment? How long does it take?

A: There are four different parts to the assessment, measuring different sets of competencies, and each registrant is only assessed in their own specific areas of practice. As a result, the time it takes will be different for everyone. For each section mentioned below, you are allowed a specific amount of time. However, it may take you less time to complete.



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Assessment Section	Time Allotted
Core (80 Questions)	90 Minutes
Eyeglasses (60 Questions)	70 Minutes
Contact Lens (50 Questions)	60 Minutes
Refracting (50 Questions)	60 Minutes

Q: Can I fail the assessment? If so, will I lose my license?

A: No, you cannot fail the assessment. Although it is timed and uses multiple-choice questions, it is not an exam, so you cannot pass or fail.

Q: My assessment results are telling me to improve a competency that I don't understand. What should I do?

A: The assessment is a tool to help you understand your strengths and weaknesses, and to help you focus your learning plans. Even if you are advised to address every competency, your program requirement will stay the same. You should review the national competency document, which provides specific performance indicators and examples of practice for each competency. The complete breakdown of competencies can be found [here](#).

Learning Plans and Setting Goals

Q: Do I need to create my learning plans before I complete activities?

A: No. You can create a learning plan, set your goals and complete activities to meet your goals. Or you complete activities, align activities with competencies and create a learning plan with goals that address those competencies.

Q: How many goals do I need to achieve?

A: In your three-year cycle, you are required to complete a total of six goals by the end of the cycle. If you registered with the COA during the second year of the cycle, you are required to complete a total of four learning goals by the end of the cycle. If you registered with the COA during the third year of the cycle, you are required to complete a total of two learning goals by the end of the cycle.



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Q: Do I need to contact the COA to get my chosen activities approved if I choose to do something different/not on the list?

A: No. The new program allows you more freedom to seek out different ways to learn what you set out to learn. If your chosen activities directly relate to learning more about the chosen competency for that goal, and you are able to reflect on what you learned and how to put it into practice, it will be an acceptable activity.

For Example: If your goal relates to customer service, and part of your plan includes shadowing a respected colleague when they interact with the public, you will be able to identify appropriately upon reflection what you learned and how you can put it into practice. However, if your plan includes watching an instructional video on using a new piece of technology, your goal to improve your customer service skills will not be achieved, and therefore is not an acceptable activity toward developing in that area.

Q: How many activities do I need to complete, to achieve or submit a finished goal?

A: It depends on your goal, and what you think will be necessary to achieve it. While one goal might only require one activity, such as a lengthy course with enough learning involved to achieve your desired outcome, other goals might require four or five different activities to contribute to your overall growth in that chosen area.

Q: Do I need to provide proof that I completed an activity?

A: Your Online Learning Plan will allow you to upload any documents related to the activity that you completed. We would encourage you to provide these details should your program be audited for review. In some cases, documented proof of completion will not be available for you to submit or applicable; in these cases, the college will be relying on your detailed reflection summary to see that you have participated in your chosen activities.

Q: What am I required to do after I complete all of my activities?

A: When you have finished your activities set out in your learning plan, you will log back into your program and complete the final step, your reflections. You will be asked some guided questions to help you reflect on your learning - what you accomplished, whether you learned what you had hoped to, how you can put your new skills into practice, etc.



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Q: Do I submit completed activities/goals as I go along in the program, or do I submit everything all at once at the end of my cycle?

A: Each goal will be considered complete as long as you make sure to mark the activities in your plan as “completed” for each goal. You should also make sure you have properly filled out the *Reflection* section. If all of this is done, the goal will be considered completed/submitted and you simply need to move onto your next goal. Once you have completed at least six goals, the COA will know that you are finished your requirements for the cycle.

Have questions? Contact the COA office:

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