

# Practices and Requirements for Review of

## CPC Continuing Education Credit

*Committed to Lifelong Learning!*



**AOA-CPC**  
**243 N Lindbergh Blvd**  
**St Louis MO 63141**

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## Background

The Practices and Requirements for Review of CPC Continuing Education Credit are intended to help guide organizations planning paraoptometric education. The matter of professional competence must be ensured so the public and other stakeholders can rely on the systems of certification programs to identify individuals who have the qualifications and competence to provide services.

In the certification world, there has been much discussion and documented research concerning continued competence. The CPO, CPOA, and CPOT credentials of the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA accreditation serves as a benchmark on how organizations should conduct certification and clearly distinguishes the excellence and value of CPC certification. In order to receive and maintain this national accreditation, a program must meet and adhere to twenty-one standards. Two of these standards pertain to the review of continuing education and the recertification mechanism as follows:

Standard 19 The certification program must require periodic recertification and establish, publish, apply, and periodically review policies and procedures for recertification.

*Essential Elements:*

- A. The published policy must contain a statement of the basis and purpose for recertification and all recertification requirements.
- B. The rationale for the recertification time interval must be included in the policy.
- C. Recertification policies and procedures in handbooks, guides, and/or electronic media must be published and made available to certificants and the public.

Standard 20 The certification program must demonstrate that its recertification requirements measure or enhance the continued competence of certificants.

*Essential Elements:*

- A. If the purpose of recertification is to *measure* continued competence of certificants, then the certification program must substantiate the validity and reliability of the assessment instruments used to measure continued competence.
- B. If the purpose is to *enhance* continued competence of certificants, then the certification program must demonstrate how the policy contributes to professional development of the individual certificant.

Based in part on a benchmarking survey conducted by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), the CPC and its Education Review Committee took a long, hard look at both the recertification and education review processes. After two years of research, conference calls, and meetings, the CPC is confident that these updated guidelines will ensure that only quality programs will be approved for maintenance of credentials.

## Guidelines for CPC Approved Education Credit

### Purpose

The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) believes that individuals certified as CPO, CPOA, CPOT, and CPOC should continue to expand their skills in order to enhance the quality of services and patient care they provide. The CPC requirements for certification renewal are designed to encourage and motivate certified paraoptometricians to continue their professional education through continuing education.

To achieve a high level of quality continuing education, the CPC has a pre-approval process for continuing education programs. Organizations that provide continuing education and training are encouraged to seek pre-approval of their programs which will indicate that their programs are appropriate to use toward meeting recertification requirements.

CPC approval of education courses is designed to insure that:

- The courses are pertinent to the profession of optometric assisting/technology
- The courses are presented by qualified and knowledgeable speakers
- The courses meet standards that are expected by the optometric profession
- Quality continuing education opportunities are available to certified paraoptometricians
- Education programs of varying media and presentations may apply for CPC continuing education approval. These may include, but are not limited to:
  - Classroom presentation (lecture, panel, workshop, Q&A)
  - Distance learning (electronic or print media)
  - Employer in-service training (employers provide in-service training only to their employees, and at no charge)
  - Industry provided training
  - Self-study programs

Course content should enhance the knowledge and skill level of the paraoptometric and provide a benefit to the care of the patient and practice. The program provider must submit an outline of the presentation, learning objectives, specific skills to be learned, and presenter's current curriculum vitae or resume'. Clarity of the connection between the objectives and skills to be learned and the optometric profession increase the chance of approval. For web-based or self-study programs, providers must submit a copy of the materials that will be viewed by the attendee as well as access to the web content. The most common reasons for course disapproval are applications that do not provide detailed outlines, speaker qualifications, or courses that do not appear to be relevant.

*Note: The CPC does not review course content detail and is not responsible for the course presentation.*

### Processing Fees

As a courtesy, the CPC does not require a review fee for AOA state optometric or paraoptometric affiliates applying for continuing education, however, a flat-rate application fee of \$50 will apply. For all other organizations, the review fee is \$25.00 per credit hour (maximum \$1,500). If applying for internet based credit, the review fee and information as to how to access the Web site (including course password if applicable) is required. Applications received less than 8 weeks prior to the presentation will be assessed a \$50 late fee or will be rejected without review. The late fee applies to all organizations, including those AOA state optometric or paraoptometric affiliates and/or entities. If a course is denied credit, the application may be revised and submitted one time without incurring an additional processing fee.

### Review and Approval Process

Applications and forms are available on the AOA Web site or by contacting the CPC office. The applications are processed by the Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) office and forwarded for review and determination to the CPC Continuing Education Review Committee, which is comprised of certified personnel and optometrists. The Committee reviews each submission and awards credit based on the established criteria. CPC reserves the right to monitor the programs for which it has granted approval.

It is the provider's responsibility to advise the program sponsor of any prerequisite information that should be included with promotional and registration materials. In cases where promotional or registration information is printed prior to receiving course approval, you may want to include the following statement in those materials for each course that is pending CPC approval: **This course is pending review from the AOA Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) for continuing education credit.**

After a course has been approved, any change in title or speaker will require resubmission. Do not indicate or market courses as "CPC-approved" until approval has been granted. Once course approval has been granted, be sure to include the learning level of the course in any marketing or printed materials along with any prerequisite requirements.

### Format

A program may be comprised of many courses (various topics) or just one course (one topic). Programs may be presented in many different types of formats; i.e., classroom presentation (lectures, workshops, seminars, etc.), distance learning (electronic or print media), or employer in-service training (employers that provide in-service training only to their employees and at no charge).

**Classification of Levels** The provider must define the program applied for as basic, intermediate, or advanced level. At the **basic level**, the attendee is expected to have had very little or no background in the subject matter area. An **intermediate level** program is for individuals who have had some experience in the subject area. An **advanced level** program is for those attendees who have had two or more years experience in the subject matter and have satisfied any prerequisites as determined by the education provider. Providers offering advanced level courses must include with the application any prerequisite experience or knowledge requirement.

**Speaker Qualifications**

A current resume' or curriculum vitae should be included with the application. A speaker should have appropriate qualifications judged by a combination of education and training, work experience, peer recognition, related speaking experience, publications, and professional credentials such as OD, MD, PhD, RN, CPOA, CPOT, CPOC, ABO, NCLE, COA, COT, or COMT. Speakers must be well qualified to present the course for which they have been approved. At no time should a speaker be allowed to present a course out of their realm of knowledge or expertise. A \$25 application fee is required for those speakers seeking CPC approval on their own behalf and is intending to lecture as a for-profit entity.

**Credit Hours and CE Forms**

The Committee awards credit hours in one-hour increments (50 minutes=1 hour=1 CEC). Credit hours are issued for actual instruction time and include question/answer session, but exclude time spent on registration, introductions, pre and post tests, breaks, and completion of course evaluations. Credits are awarded based on course descriptions, learning objectives, and speaker qualifications. **Credit may not be awarded retroactively.**

Continuing education credit forms must be issued to attendees. Upon course approval, the CPC will e-mail a template for each course to the individual who is listed as the contact on the Cover Sheet. The form must be validated by the sponsor stamp or signature. If a participant arrives late or leaves early, the sponsor must not provide or validate the form. Ensure that only participants who complete the entire program receive a validated form. Any unused forms must be destroyed. Credit will not be awarded to those presenting forms without validation. Sponsor to retain attendance records for a minimum of three years from presentation date and must be made available upon request from the CPC.

**Expiration of Credit**

Credit for a program is valid for three years from the approval application date.

**Attendance and Course Evaluation**

Providers must maintain a listing of attendees for a minimum of 3 years and the list must be made available to attendees or the CPC office.

Education sponsors shall involve attendees in evaluating each course. The template CEC contains the course evaluation that must be completed prior to validating the CEC form. The evaluations are to be collected and used to prepare the Course Report Form for each course presented. The Course Report form shall be forwarded to the CPC office within 30 days of the program.

**Disclaimer for Review Programs**

Providers of programs intended to prepare attendees for CPC certification examinations are required to publish the following disclaimer on all program advertisements, brochures, or notices.

**The Commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) does not constitute an endorsement concerning review courses and study materials or any lecturer and does not imply a guarantee that candidates will be successful in passing the CPC Certification Examinations.**

### Submission Guidelines

All forms are designed to be completed electronically and no handwritten forms will be accepted. Those submitting should review the checklist to be sure the information is complete.

Applications must be submitted to CPC with required documentation at least 8 weeks in advance of the program along with the appropriate fee, based on the number of hours requested for review. **Incomplete applications will be returned without review.** Applications not received 8 weeks in advance of the program presentation date will be subject to a \$50 late fee. Program providers will be notified of the committee's determination within four weeks of receipt of the completed application. Each approved course will be assigned a unique identification number.

Once the program provider learns of course/program approval, a template CEC form for each course will be provided to the individual requesting the review. These templates will allow the requester to print the quantity needed without incurring additional expense. The majority of the circumstances will mandate that these forms will be the only proof of continuing education credit for CPC Certification Renewal unless special permission has been obtained from the CPC.

When the complete application and all attachments are ready for review, e-mail the entire package to [cpc@aoa.org](mailto:cpc@aoa.org). The e-mail subject line should read, *Request for Continuing Education Review*. If time allows, applications may also be mailed to the CPC office at: AOA-CPC | 243 N Lindbergh Blvd | St Louis MO 63141.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***1. How far in advance should a course be submitted for CE approval?***

Applications should be forwarded to CPC at least eight (8) weeks in advance of the presentation date.

### ***2. Is there a fee for course approval?***

Except for AOA State Optometric Associations and/or AOA Paraoptometric Affiliates, there is a \$25 per credit hour review fee. A late fee of \$50 will be charged for any review not received at least eight weeks prior to the presentation date. AOA State Optometric Associations and/or AOA Paraoptometric Affiliates shall pay a flat-rate application fee of \$50 due at the time of applying.

### ***3. How long is course approval in effect?***

Courses are approved for 3 years. Applicants will be notified at the time of approval of the course approval expiration date. Once the course expires, education providers may resubmit the course for approval.

### ***4. Does CPC automatically send CE forms for approved courses?***

Yes, upon course approval, CPC will e-mail templates for each approved course to the individual listed as contact on the cover sheet. Printing each template will be the responsibility of the requestor.

### ***5. I forgot to have my course approved before the presentation. Can it still be submitted for review?***

Approval must be granted before the course is presented; no retroactive credit will be awarded.

However, you may submit the course for approval for future presentations.

### ***6. Should someone entering the presentation late or leaving the presentation early receive a stamped or validated CE form?***

Anyone arriving more than fifteen minutes late or leaving early should not receive a stamped or validated CE form.

### ***7. If I have questions or need assistance completing the form, whom should I contact?***

Contact the CPC office at [cpc@aoa.org](mailto:cpc@aoa.org) or by phone at 800-365-2219 ext. 4210.

*When applying for a program containing more than one course, complete one cover sheet for the entire program. Complete applications must be submitted no less than 8 weeks prior to the event. Forms are designed to be completed electronically. See complete submission guidelines.*

**Application Submitted By:**

**Organization/Provider Name:**

**Address:**

**City/State/Zip:**

**Phone:**

**Fax:**

**Web site:**

Non-Profit -Any educational facility, society, or organization as defined by IRS Guidelines with a 501(C) tax exemption status. This includes all providers who do not charge a fee for the course/class. [For example, doctors who are providing staff training to their staff only at no cost.]

For-Profit -Organizations, corporations, offices, or any individual or company as defined by IRS government guidelines.

**Application Contact Person:**

**Address:**

**City/State/Zip:**

**Phone:**

**Fax:**

**E-Mail:**

**Web site:**

**Program and Course Information**

**Event Name:**

**Date of Presentation(s):**

**Total Number of CE Hours:**

**Location of Program (city/state):**

**Program Format:**

Please submit a complete outline or course handout for each course, CV/Resume for each presenter, promotional material, and payment to: [CPC@aoa.org](mailto:CPC@aoa.org) attn: CPC CE Review Committee

**Payment Information**

**Check**

**Credit Card**

**Total Amount: \$**

**Credit Card #:**

**Exp:**

**Security Code:**

**Name as it appears on credit card:**

**Signature:**

Should you have any questions, please contact the CPC office at 800-365-2219 ext. 4210 or [CPC@aoa.org](mailto:CPC@aoa.org).

*Complete applications must be submitted no less than 8 weeks prior to the event. Forms are designed to be completed electronically. See complete submission guidelines. Complete one form for each course and attach comprehensive outline and/or course handout. Incomplete applications will be returned.*

**Course Title:**

**Course Length:**

**Presenter:**

**Course Date:**

**Time:**

**Domain:**

**Course Level:**

**Prerequisites (if any)**

**Presentation Format:**

**Course Description (100 words or less):**

**Learning Objectives (100 words or less):**

*Complete applications must be submitted no less than 8 weeks prior to the event. Forms are designed to be completed electronically. See complete submission guidelines. Complete one form for each presenter and attach curriculum vitae or resume. Incomplete applications will be returned. A \$25 application fee is required for those speakers seeking CPC approval on their own behalf and is intending to lectures as a for-profit entity.*

**Name:**

**Credentials:**

**Address:**

**City/State/Zip:**

**Telephone:**

**E-Mail:**

**Web site (if applicable):**

*Please attach a current curriculum vitae or resume that includes:*

*Education*

*Work Experience*

*Teaching and/or speaking experience*

*Specialized training and/or certifications*

**Other Information:**

**Which of the following domains is the speaker currently qualified to lecture?**

- ◆ *Complete applications must be submitted no less than 8 weeks prior to the event.*
- ◆ *Forms are designed to be completed electronically.*
- ◆ *Incomplete applications will be returned.*

### **Instructions**

**I have read the instructions and submission guidelines**

### **Cover Sheet Form**

**Cover sheet is completed in full**

**Promotional material included**

**Check or Credit Card information provided (if applicable)**

### **Biographical Forms**

**Biographical Form completed for each presenter**

**Curriculum Vitae or Resume included for each presenter**

### **Course Information Form**

**Course Information Form completed in full for each course being submitted**

**Detailed course outline and/or course handout included**

### **Submission**

**Application is being submitted 8 weeks in advance of event**

**If not, the late application fee is included with payment (applies to all entities)**

**All forms are typed or prepared electronically**

**Complete the checklist and e-mail all information to: [cpc@aoa.org](mailto:cpc@aoa.org)**

**E-Mail subject line to read, *Request for Continuing Education Review***

**A confirmation e-mail will be sent to the contact person once a review of material has occurred. Please contact the AOA commission on Paraoptometric Certification (CPC) office at 800-365-2219 ext. 4210 or [cpc@aoa.org](mailto:cpc@aoa.org) with any questions.**

Please complete the summary of all attendees' evaluation forms and forward to the CPC office no more than 30 days post event.

Organization/Provider Name:

Event Name:

Date of Presentation(s):

Rating Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Impartial 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree

1. Course Title:

2. Presenter:

3. CPC Course I.D. #:

This course satisfied the promised objective.	1	2	3	4	5
The instructor was prepared and knowledgeable.	1	2	3	4	5
Will this course be beneficial in performing your job?	1	2	3	4	5
Was this course a refresher or new knowledge for you?	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I was satisfied with this course.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Additional Comments:

1. Course Title:

2. Presenter:

3. CPC Course I.D. #:

This course satisfied the promised objective.	1	2	3	4	5
The instructor was prepared and knowledgeable.	1	2	3	4	5
Will this course be beneficial in performing your job?	1	2	3	4	5
Was this course a refresher or new knowledge for you?	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I was satisfied with this course.	1	2	3	4	5

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4. Additional Comments: