



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

**NOTICE OF ADOPTION
POLICY STATEMENT**

Title of Policy Statement: Optometry Continuing Education – Reporting of In-Person Hours for Year 2024 | OD 24-01

Issuing Entity: Board of Optometry

Subject Matter: Allowances for in-person continuing education for licensed optometrists who have a continuing education reporting date in year 2024.

Effective Date: March 1, 2024

Contact Person: Kristina Bell, Program Manager
360-236-4841
Kristina.bell@doh.wa.gov

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER
STATE OF WASHINGTON
FILED

DATE: March 13, 2024

TIME: 10:44 AM

WSR 24-07-038

**Department of Health
Board of Optometry**

Policy Statement

<i>Title:</i>	Optometry Continuing Education - Reporting of In-Person Hours for Year 2024	<i>Number:</i> OD 24-01
<i>References:</i>	WAC 246-851-090 WAC 246-12-170 through 246-12-240	
<i>Contact:</i>	Kristina Bell, program manager	
<i>Phone:</i>	360-236-4841	
<i>Email:</i>	Kristina.bell@doh.wa.gov	
<i>Effective Date:</i>	March 1, 2024	
<i>Supersedes:</i>	n/a	
<i>Approved By:</i>	Melissa Dacumos, OD Chair, Board of Optometry	

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the amount of synchronous in-person continuing education (CE) hours that the Board of Optometry (board) requires of licensed optometrists who have a CE reporting date that falls in 2024.

The board recognizes the value of CE and encourages ongoing professional development and enhancement of clinical and practical skills needed to protect the health and safety of all patients. CE is in addition to the educational requirements for entry into a profession,

Due to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the board adopted policy number OD 20-01 to allow optometrists unlimited online CE credits for the duration of the declared state of emergency. The policy became effective May 18, 2020, as WSR 20-11-068 and amendments to the policy became effective October 8, 2022, as WSR 23-06-036.

On December 01, 2021, the board opened rules related to continuing education to consider increasing the number of allowable online CE credits and decreasing the amount of in-person CE required. The board had found quality online CE widely available, providing attendees flexibility and cost savings.

Governor Inslee ended Washington State's state of emergency proclamation on October 31, 2022. The federal state declaration of emergency ended on May 11, 2023, thereby ending the CE during COVID-19 policy implemented by the board. At this time optometrists were required to revert to standard CE requirements.

Effective November 25, 2023, the board adopted changes to optometrist CE requirements to include increasing the amount of CE that are allowed to be taken online, updating definitions, further defining the types of CE category hours, establishing health equity training requirements, updating CE documentation requirements, clarifying self-study requirements, and determining certain allowance of CE during declared of states of emergency.

[WAC 246-851-090](#) requires licensed optometrists to complete and document 50 hours of CE every two years. The new CE rules adopted November 25, 2023, require a minimum of 10 credit hours to be completed through synchronous in-person learning.

To address the confusion related to the minimum number of synchronous in-person learning CE hours, the board makes the following allowances:

- A licensed optometrist whose CE reporting due date is in 2024 will not be found non-compliant with their CE if they are unable to complete the 10 credit hours of synchronous in-person learning so long as they complete and document 50 total hours of continuing education in compliance with WAC [246-12-170 through 246-12-240](#).
- The 10 hours of synchronous in-person learning may be met by completing any combination of synchronous virtual learning and asynchronous learning as defined in WAC 246-851-090.

This allowance does not apply to licensed optometrists who have a CE reporting due date after December 31, 2024.