



Council on Optometric Practitioner Education

Information and Instructions for Course Review

Revised August 2010

New: *Standards for Commercial Support
of Continuing Education*



*A Service of the
Association of Regulatory
Boards of Optometry*

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Dear COPE Reviewer:

The Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) Committee would like to thank you for volunteering to serve as a COPE Reviewer. Qualified volunteers such as you are essential for the fulfillment of the missions of both COPE and ARBO. Your efforts will benefit optometric licensing boards, optometric colleagues, continuing education providers, and most importantly, the public.

This manual contains the guidelines and procedures necessary to review courses. Please read it carefully. We suggest you print it and keep it handy as a reference during reviews. Most course reviews will be straightforward. However, in complex cases, you may have to refer to the manual to help you arrive at a fair and standardized decision.

In an ongoing effort to ensure that all volunteers review courses in a uniform and standardized manner, COPE has instituted an online certification process for all reviewers. This online process consists of four 15- to 20-minute self-paced education modules followed by a short self assessment. Upon successful completion, you will be issued a certificate and a lapel pin indicating your status as a COPE reviewer.

For existing reviewers, COPE may occasionally request you go online and recertify, if there have been significant changes in the guidelines or procedures. For newly appointed reviewers, COPE will require you to complete the online certification process before issuing you courses to review.

Should you need further information about COPE, or if you need assistance as you review courses, please call the ARBO office at (704) 970-2710 or send an email to arbo@arbo.org.

Sincerely,

The Council on Optometric Practitioner Education





WHAT IS COPE?

Optometric continuing education (CE) is the primary method used by optometric licensing boards to certify continuing competence of licensed optometrists. There are a variety of formats by which each optometry licensing board approves CE courses, disseminates course information, records course attendance, and retrieves practitioner data on course completion. One jurisdiction's licensing board duplicates much of the work done by another jurisdiction's licensing board, and many boards approve the same CE courses every year.

The **Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE®)**, a national clearinghouse for all CE courses of a statewide, regional or national scope, was created by the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) to remove these duplicative efforts by licensing boards, instructors, and program administrators. COPE is a member benefit of ARBO, which currently represents 50 US optometry boards, 4 US territories/jurisdictions, and 8 Canadian optometry boards.

COPE's mission is to: *Assist member boards in the accreditation and monitoring of optometric continuing education to enhance optometric competence for the protection of the public.*

To create this national clearinghouse, participating optometric licensing boards have agreed upon standards for administration of continuing education courses, and a standard course submission, qualification and accreditation process.

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COPE STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL SUPPORT OVERVIEW

As of January 1, 2010, COPE has implemented new Standards for Commercial Support (SCS) of continuing education. Instructors and Administrators/Providers of COPE-Accredited CE must agree to abide by the following standards regarding commercial support. (See the full standards on pages 22-24.)

1. COPE-Accredited CE must be identified, developed and presented free from the control of a commercial interest.
2. Every person in a position to impact the content of COPE-Accredited CE must disclose all relevant financial relationships to the COPE-Approved Administrator/Provider and to the Learners.
3. In order for a CE event to be COPE accredited, all commercial support must be in the form of an educational grant to the COPE-Approved Administrator/Provider documented by a signed agreement between the COPE Approved Administrator/Provider and Corporate Supporter.
4. There must be a clear separation of any type of product, service, and instrument or device promotion with COPE-Accredited Courses. These activities, such as commercial exhibits and advertisements must be physically separated from and not interfere with COPE-Accredited Courses.
5. COPE-Accredited Courses cannot deliver specific proprietary business interests and must give balanced coverage to treatment options.
6. To maintain transparency, financial relationships with commercial interests of any persons in a position to impact or control the educational content must be disclosed to the learners. This includes instructors and planning committee members.

REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS

Please review all of the information contained in this booklet before you are ready to begin reviewing courses.

IMPORTANT: The course application review process is anonymous. The reviewer of any specific application for course qualification is never identified to the instructor or submitter of the application.

If you need help at any time during your review, do not hesitate to contact ARBO at (704) 970-2710. If necessary, the ARBO staff will have a COPE Committee member contact you. It is better to clarify something early in the process, rather than face a problem later on. **Please remember to be aware of the timeline issued.** You are part of a system of CE accreditation that is being promoted to instructors and administrators of CE. Your involvement and your willingness to process the courses in the time allotted are critical to our success. A link to the online Course Evaluation Form to use for you review will be sent to you with the course. See pages 8-9 for a sample Course Evaluation Form.

Please apply the information in this handbook and follow the steps below for all courses to assure a standardized approach to course review. It is critical that all reviewers carry out the review of courses in the same manner. You are part of a team, and how you review a course must be the same process used by all other reviewers. This standardized system will give confidence to instructors that their courses are being reviewed in a uniform manner, without regard to how well known they are, or specific regard to experience and qualifications that do not directly relate to the course being reviewed. Also, it is important to review courses submitted by instructors you know well by reputation as thoroughly as you might review a course from an instructor whose name you do not recognize. All courses must be treated equally.

REVIEW STEPS:

1. **Set a timetable.** You will be given a deadline. On the day that you get the course(s) for review, please determine if you will be able to meet the deadline given. IF YOU WILL NOT be able to meet the deadline, please contact ARBO immediately and the course(s) will be reassigned.
2. **Review the course criteria.** Make sure that you are thoroughly familiar with the *Criteria for Course Qualification*. Before beginning to review a course, read over the requirements on page 12 of this handbook.
3. **Application.** Make sure that the application is complete, and an appropriately detailed course outline (or slides) and Curriculum Vitae (CV) are attached. If any item is missing, contact ARBO immediately. See pages 10-11 for a sample course outline.

CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

A CV is a detailed chronological history of a person's educational and teaching experience, and professional accomplishments, which qualifies the instructor to teach the course (NOT a biographical sketch). The minimum information that must be provided should include:

- Name
- Office/work address, phone and fax numbers
- Education (degree/certification, institution, year degree awarded)
- Professional accomplishments/experience (appointments, publications, area(s) of expertise)
- Professional affiliations/societies
- Optometric/medical licensure information (state(s) where the instructor holds a current license to practice)

4. **Complete the Course Evaluation.** It is important that you answer ALL items. If you answer NO to any item (or yes to item 4), the course will not be qualified. Consequently, it is critical that you complete the comments section, stating concisely your reason for your judgment. If you believe that your NO course can be changed to YES if more information were made available to you, please contact ARBO immediately. The staff will attempt to contact the principal instructor on your behalf to obtain this information.

REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS...*continued*

5. **When there is a problem with a course.** You are in the position to make changes to provisionally accept a course in the following instances:
 - If you are unable to open any of the course attachments the course should be marked provisional and the necessary documents should be requested through the ARBO staff.
 - You feel the course is not categorized properly. Please use the descriptions of course categories on pages 13-14 to re-categorize the course. The categorization of a course is CRITICAL to state licensing boards and having the correct category is the responsibility of the reviewer.
 - If the outline is insufficient for you to understand what will be presented, the course should be marked provisional pending a more complete outline. Please keep the course on hand and request, through the ARBO staff, a better outline to complete the review.
 - The time allotted for the material to be covered is significantly too long or too little. This is especially important with distance learning courses. You will need to time yourself as if you were taking the course. If there is not enough time allotted or too much time allotted, the course should be marked provisional pending revision.
 - If you receive a course that you are not qualified to review because you do not have the expertise or are not comfortable reviewing, please request the ARBO staff to forward it to a more appropriate reviewer.
6. **When to reject a course.** If you're unsure whether to reject a course or mark it provisional, a good rule of thumb is: If the course can be approved with minor adjustments (better outline, change category, adjunct vs. co-instructor, etc.), mark it "Provisional" and include remarks about what needs to be changed. On the other hand, if the content is just not appropriate for COPE-qualified continuing education, mark it "Rejected."
7. **Report your decisions.** Review the online Course Evaluation Form one more time to be sure that everything is complete and all questions have been answered. Then digitally sign the form and click on "Notify ARBO of My Decision". Please contact ARBO immediately if you have any problems with your submission.
8. **Keep all materials for a week.** Following your review, please keep all course reviews on hand for one week after which time you can properly dispose of the courses.
9. **Conflict of Interest.** If you receive a request to review a course with which you have a direct connection, i.e. have a proprietary interest, provide a for-profit support, contributed substantially to the course content, or feel that your personal knowledge of the instructor(s) may bias your review, please contact ARBO IMMEDIATELY and request a reassignment of the course to another reviewer.

REJECTED APPLICATIONS-APPEAL PROCESS

The Appeal Process for COPE is as follows:

1. A course is rejected.
2. The instructor is notified and given the reviewer comments (name not given) as to the nature of the rejection.
3. The instructor has the option to request a second review.
4. If a second review is requested, the course is sent to an additional reviewer.
5. If the course is rejected again, the course is sent to the committee for a final decision.
6. Once the committee rejects a course, the decision is final and the instructor is encouraged to submit the course directly to the state board of optometry.

COURSE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

COURSE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS INSTRUCTORS MUST FOLLOW

The following are COPE guidelines given to instructors to complete their Application for Course Qualification:

1. Course Information

- A. Enter the date application is submitted. A minimum of 30 days must be allowed for the review process.
- B. List the Principal Instructor, address, phone/fax numbers and email address so that ARBO can contact the Principal Instructor with questions concerning this application. Notification of action on this application will be sent to the Principal Instructor.
- C. **Submitter Information:** A COPE Approved Administrator/Provider may submit the course on behalf of the instructor and the submitter must upload a dated and signed statement from the instructor when submitting the course. Under no circumstances can any employee or consultant of a commercial interest submit a course for COPE accreditation. The submitter will receive email notifications as the application moves through the process.
- D. List the names and degrees of any **Co-Instructors** who participate in the presentation of the course. A **Co-Instructor** is an individual who, in conjunction with a Primary Instructor, may assist and participate in the presentation of a course, but also has the necessary qualifications to give the course independently of the Primary Instructor should the Primary Instructor be unavailable.

IMPORTANT: Instructors must file for independent COPE Qualification for a course that may, or is desired to be, presented separately by both the Primary and Co-Instructor.

- E. List the names and degrees of any **Adjunct/Assistant Instructors** who participate in the presentation of the course. An **Adjunct Instructor** is an individual whose main function is to support the Primary Instructor with the presentation or preparation of a course. An Adjunct Instructor may or may not be present to assist with the presentation of a course, however, an adjunct instructor cannot, under any circumstance, present a course in place, or in the absence of, the Primary Instructor.
- F. The title must adequately describe the course. The title must be as it will appear in all future programs.
- G. List the total credit hours of the course. To be qualified, a course must have at least 1 credit hour. One credit hour is equivalent to a minimum of 50 minutes of instructional time; two credit hours are equivalent to a minimum of 1 hour and 40 minutes of instructional time. The minimum time increment is 30 minutes, which is equivalent to 25 minutes of instructional time.

2. Course Description

This is a brief statement of what the instructor(s) intends to present. It is a thumbnail sketch summarizing the course in 35 words or less, which is suitable for publishing.

3. Disclosure of Financial/ Proprietary Interests

The instructor(s) must disclose on the application any direct financial or proprietary interests they may have in any of the companies, products, pharmaceuticals or services they may have mentioned, or intend to mention, in their presentation. As a reviewer, you are expected to assess whether such support inappropriately influences the course material.

Examples of the influence of proprietary interests include:

- the absence of unbiased evidence equally assessing similar products or services;
- the exclusion of other products or services that might reasonably be expected to produce equivalent or similar results, or
- the inference of the superiority of the proprietary product or service over others.

COURSE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS...*continued*

The Instructor must also disclose if they provide for-profit support of any kind, are a paid consultant to, an employee of, or serve as an officer on the board of companies mentioned in their presentation. Should the course be approved, this information must also be disclosed at the beginning of the presentation to the audience in a clear and unambiguous manner, both verbally, and be included in the written course handout/outline.

4. **Course Categories**

While a course may pertain to several course categories, there is usually one major topic which will cover most of the time and discussion and which will best match one of the categories. The Instructor should identify **one** category which best describes the educational experience provided by their course.

5. **Course Presentation**

The presentation indicates how the course material will be presented. Courses may be presented by more than one method. Indicate the amount of time that will be allotted for each method during the course. Use decimal format. The time allotments for all methods should total the entire number of hours in the course. Refer to definitions on page 14 for clarification.

Distance Learning/Multimedia courses require a post-course test to verify learning. As with CEE courses, a statement from the Dean of the test-sponsoring institution must accompany the course filing. See page 15 for COPE's Distance Learning/Multimedia Policy.

6. **Continuing Education with Examination (CEE)** (Previously Transcript Quality (TQ) or Institutional Certified education.)

If the course will be eligible for CEE credit, there must be a statement from the Dean of the test-sponsoring institution, certifying that the institution will assume responsibility for the related assessment, and will provide each participant with documentation of performance, with the name and address of the institution prominently identified. The post-course test and answer key must be enclosed with the application.

7. **Distance Learning/Multimedia**

A course qualifies as Distance Learning/Multimedia if it is presented in any of the following formats:

- Satellite
- Webinar
- Webcast
- Recorded/Written
- Video
- Audio
- DVD/CD
- Podcast
- Written/Correspondence
- Internet/Online

8. **Course Format**

The format indicates how the course will be taught. You are allowed only one choice of format for the course. Most courses are "live". Refer to the Course Format definitions on page 15 for clarification.

COURSE EVALUATION

A link to the online Course Evaluation Form will be emailed to you with the course. To begin your evaluation click on the link. You will also be given a review deadline date. If you cannot complete the review in the time requested, please let the ARBO staff know immediately.

Sample Course Evaluation Form

This online form must be complete when submitted to ARBO. All questions must be answered. Please note that for some questions a comment must be made justifying your decision. If you need additional information that could possibly change a NO to a YES, please call ARBO at (704) 970-2710 and the staff will contact the instructor for this material on your behalf. (Note: do not contact the instructor yourself.)

Course ID: TBA

Course Title: Benefits of contact lenses for children

Principal Instructor's Name: Jane Doe, O.D.

Reviewer's Name: John Smith, O.D.

FOR EACH QUESTION CHOOSE 'YES' OR 'NO' AS YOUR ANSWER. IF 'NO,' IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU COMMENT AND JUSTIFY YOUR DECISION.

1. Does this course contribute to the advancement and enhancement of professional competency and scientific knowledge in the practice of optometry, and reflect the educational needs of optometrists?

YES NO

Comment: (required if NO)

2. Does the course have scientific and educational integrity and contain customary and generally accepted optometric and medical practices?

YES NO

Comment: (required if NO)

3. Does the course outline demonstrate consistency with the course description and reflect the course content?

YES NO

Comment: (required if NO)

4. Will the applicant's disclosure of financial/proprietary interests inappropriately bias the learning experience?

YES NO

Comment: (required if YES)

5. Does the course description match the course category selected? If NO, provide the appropriate category for which the majority of the course content corresponds to COPE's category descriptions.

YES NO

This course is currently categorized as: _____

Comment: (required if NO)

6. Is the request for course credit hours appropriate to the material and scope of the course?

YES NO

If not, provide your estimate of the appropriate credit hours for this course.

Comment: (required if NO)

7. Is the course presentation (see definitions) appropriate to the subject matter?

YES NO

Comment: (required if NO)

COURSE EVALUATION.....continued

8. Is the course format (see definitions) listed accurately when compared with the definitions?

YES NO

Comment: (required if NO)

9. Does the Curriculum Vitae (CV) substantiate the principal instructor's qualifications to teach the course? (Give consideration to advanced experience, education and training, past experience teaching subject area, etc.)

YES NO

Comment: (required if NO)

Post-Course Testing For both Continuing Education with Examination (CEE) and Recorded Media courses, the following must apply: (CEE was previously referred to as "Transcript Quality (TQ)" or "Institutional Certified" CE)

10. Is there documentation from a school of optometry, medicine, or pharmacy, indicating its responsibility to score and grade the post-course test?

YES NO

11. Is the post-course test in multiple-choice question format?

YES NO

12. Did the test include at least ten questions per credit hour, rounded up for partial duration?

YES NO

(i.e., a 2.5 hour course must provide 30 test questions)

13. Did the instructor avoid making any reference to test questions in the course outline?

YES NO

14. Did the item distribution (test questions) match the relative emphases of the course outline?

YES NO

(i.e., did test questions address the most important areas covered in the course outline)

15. Continuing Education with Examination (CEE) only: Is the course at least 2 hours in duration?

YES NO

Comment: (required if NO)

Final Course Disposition

16. Course: ACCEPTED REJECTED PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE (comment below)

General comments (only for issues of significance that could not be included in other comment fields):

Reviewer's Digital Signature:

Your review will be time stamped to indicate the date/time it was submitted.

NOTIFY ARBO OF MY DECISION

COPE SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE

PRESCRIBING DISTANCE TELESCOPES FOR LOW VISION PATIENTS IN YOUR PRIMARY CARE PRACTICE

Jane Doe, O.D.
123 Main Street
Someplace City, CA 95959
Tel: (700) 555-1212
lowvisiondoctor@123key.com

Course Description:

This course presents a template for the primary care practitioner on how to prescribe basic telescopic devices for low vision patients. Common stock telescopes, data and information needed from the patient are discussed and case histories presented.

Course Learning Objectives:

- To recognize who may benefit from using a telescope.
- To review the principles and types of telescopes.
- To understand how to determine the beginning magnification for a telescope.
- To review the instructional sequence for use of stock telescopes.
- To review the verification of simple stock telescopes.
- To know when to refer for more extensive low vision care.

Outline

- I. Who can benefit from telescopic devices?
 - A. Distance tasks (primary use)
 1. Seeing the chalkboard
 2. Overhead menus at fast food restaurants
 3. Bus signs
 4. Identification of individuals at a distance
 5. Watching plays, movies
 6. Seeing television
 - B. Intermediate tasks (secondary use)
 1. Computer use
 2. Arm's length tasks, eg. card playing
 3. Seeing countertops
- II. Types of simple telescopes
 - A. Galilean systems
 - B. Keplerian systems
- III. Properties of telescopes
 - A. The exit pupil and field of view
 - B. The exit pupil and brightness
 - C. Determination of the telescope type
 - D. Verification of telescopic magnification (exit pupil method)
- IV. Prescribing for distance tasks
 - A. Determination of proper magnification for specified distance task
 - B. Monocular vs. binocular

COPE SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE...continued

V. Instruction in the use of telescopic systems for distance tasks

- A. Stationary user and stationary object (spotting)
- B. Stationary user and moving object (tracking)
- C. Moving user and stationary object
- D. Moving user and moving target

V. Case studies

- A. A 14 year old male with albinism has nystagmus, is light sensitive and currently wears single vision distance glasses, which he reports only “help a bit.” He cannot read the notes on the blackboard at school. Your refraction is:

R. +4.00 — 2.25 x 180 VA 10/80 L. +3.00 — 3.00 x 170 VA 10/80

1. He does not want to wear “anything that sticks out of his glasses.” He likes to watch soccer matches at the stadium also.
 2. What specific tasks does the patient want to do?
 3. What are the best corrected acuities?
 4. What magnification should you start with?
 5. How will the nystagmus affect the use of the telescope?
 6. Should he wear his glasses when using the telescope?
 7. How will wearing his glasses affect his field of view?
 8. What options are available?
 9. What about his light sensitivity?
- B. A 56 year old retired medical laboratory technician was diagnosed with beginning macular degeneration 7 years ago. She likes to play keno at the casinos but finds it very difficult to see the numbers on the overhead keno boards. She does not wear any glasses for distance and her acuities are: R. 10/40; L. 10/80.
1. What is the task needing to be accomplished?
 2. What are her acuities?
 3. How will the light in the surrounding area affect the selection of the scope?
- C. A 65 year old African American woman with glaucoma has a hard time seeing concerts from her seat in the theater. Best correction and acuities are:
- R. +1.00-0.50x095 VA 10/160 L. +0.50-0.50x080 VA 10/200
- She has found her 2x opera glasses to be inadequate.
1. Can you help her with this level of vision?
 2. How would her glaucoma medications affect her using a telescope?
 3. What is the disadvantage of giving her a high powered system?
- D. A 69 year old man with significant cataracts does not want to have cataract surgery. He loves to fly radio controlled model airplanes but is finding it extremely difficult to see the planes in the air. His acuities are not improved with any standard correction. R. 20/100; L. 20/100
1. Does the patient need his hands free?
 2. One eye or two?
 3. How will a higher powered system affect his ability to track the planes?
- E. A friend (with no visual impairment) wants to see his son play football. Many of the games are played at night, but several are during the day as well. He has seen ads for binoculars and is trying to decide whether he should buy a 4x12 binocular; a 6x15 binocular; a 7x50 binocular or a 10x20 “extra wide field” system.

Can you give him any advice?

COPE REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSE QUALIFICATION

COPE has established the following criteria to match those required by participating jurisdiction licensing boards. This assures that once qualified, your course(s) will be acceptable to all participating licensing boards for CE credit towards license renewal. If your course is accepted by COPE, it is considered “COPE Qualified” for a period of 36 months and will not need to be reviewed again regardless of how many times you may present it during that period. **Note:** Courses are not considered **COPE Accredited** until an Event is submitted by an Approved COPE Administrator/Provider and approved by COPE.

I. Courses:

- A. A course must be an organized program of learning that will contribute to the advancement and enhancement of professional competency and scientific knowledge in the practice of optometry, and be designed to reflect the educational needs of optometrists.
- B. A course must have scientific and educational integrity and must contain customary and generally accepted optometric and medical practices.
- C. A course must have an outline which demonstrates consistency with the course description and reflects the course content.
- D. A course handout/outline must be provided to all participants. The outline must be the same as the one submitted for COPE accreditation. If the original outline is updated, a copy must be provided to both ARBO and the event administrator.
- E. A course must be taught in a manner appropriate to the educational content, objectives and purpose of the program, and must allow suitable time to be effectively presented to the audience.
- F. Disclosure of financial/proprietary interests:
 - 1) Instructors and administrators/providers must disclose any financial interest or other relationship with a manufacturer, vendor, or distributor of any commercial products or services related to the practice of optometry.
 - 2) Courses presented on behalf of a commercial/proprietary entity, which specifically promotes one or more products of that company, will not be approved.
 - 3) Commercial/proprietary entities must have no influence or control over course development or presentation.
- G. Courses cannot be retroactively qualified/accredited by COPE.

II. Instructional Hours:

- A. The minimum credit for any COPE Qualified Course is one hour. Additional credits must be in half- or one-hour increments.
- C. One hour of CE credit equals a minimum of 50 minutes of instructional time.

III. Instructor(s):

- A. Instructor(s) must have the necessary qualifications, training and/or experience to present the course. With the exception of courses categorized as Practice Management, Principal Instructors must hold a minimum of a doctorate-level degree (O.D., M.D., Ph.D., D.O., J.D., D.D.S., D.C., Pharm.D., LL.D., D.Ed., D.Sc., etc.) or

its international equivalent. Salaried faculties at accredited schools or colleges of optometry at a level of at least Assistant Professor, are exempt from this requirement.

- B. All instructors, including adjunct/assistant instructors, must provide a current Curriculum Vita.
- C. The Instructor should submit the course information to COPE. A COPE-Approved Administrator/Provider may submit the course on behalf of the instructor, but the instructor must acknowledge the submission and COPE requirements (see page 17). Under no circumstances can any company with a commercial interest submit a course for COPE accreditation.
- D. All payments and reimbursements to the instructor must come directly from the COPE-Approved Administrator/Provider. Supporters cannot supplement nor provide any financial incentives to speak on COPE Accredited Courses.
- E. Under no circumstances can an Instructor serve as both the Administrator/Provider and Instructor for a COPE Accredited CE Course or Event at the same time.
- F. Instructors should not seek COPE accreditation if the presentation is for the purpose of promoting products, services, instruments or devices.
- G. Instructors will assure educational materials such as slides, abstracts and outlines will not include any advertising or product group message. Instructors will ensure balanced and transparent coverage of therapeutic and treatment options, and must disclose off-label or experimental information.
- H. Instructors may have assistance in the development of a course, including the creation of handouts, slides and objectives, though not from a commercial interest.
- I. Instructors will disclose all relevant financial relationships with any commercial interest when submitting courses for COPE accreditation. Should no relevant financial relationships exist, this must be disclosed.
- J. Instructors will include a disclosure slide at the beginning of each presentation disclosing: (see page 17)
 - 1) That the instructor developed the course material and information independently or if the instructor had assistance. The disclosure must include who provided the assistance.
 - 2) The instructor developed the course material independent from any influence of commercial interest.
 - 3) Any personal conflicts of interest have been resolved.
 - 4) Any financial relationship with a commercial interest. Should no relevant financial relationships exist, this must be disclosed.

COURSE CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

A. CLINICAL OPTOMETRY

Contact Lenses (CL): All aspects of contact lens applications.

Functional Vision/Pediatrics (FV): Those portions of optometric practice that deal with visual processing and neuro-optometric rehabilitation, including sports vision, binocular vision, and visual training or vision development courses.

General Optometry (GO): Any study in the area of the eye and vision care, which constitutes eye and vision research, or examination, diagnosis and treatment of anomalies of the human eye and visual system. For the purposes of these categories “General Optometry” excludes any other category enumerated here.

Low Vision/Vision Impairment & Rehabilitation (LV): All aspects of low vision devices, care and therapy.

B. OCULAR DISEASE

Glaucoma (GL): The study of the etiology, clinical pathophysiology, diagnosis, treatment, management, and the outcomes of therapeutic regimens.

Examples: Any course with major emphasis on diagnosis, treatment, and/or surgical and medical management of glaucoma (i.e., trabeculectomy, laser surgery for glaucoma).

Peri-Operative Management of Ophthalmic Surgery (PO): The study and clinical training of any ophthalmic surgical procedure of the anterior segment and adnexa (not to include any procedures covered in other categories).

Examples: Includes all aspects of pre- and post-operative management of ocular surgery care (excluding Refractive Surgery), i.e., cataract, lid surgery/procedures, strabismus surgery, keratoplasty, etc.

Refractive Surgery Management (RS): Instruction and/or clinical training in refractive or photorefractive technologies, which may include Peri-operative Patient Management: Counseling and evaluation for indications or contra-indications in patient selection, including recognition of associated complications and course of action in analysis and treatment.

Examples: Courses related specifically to management of PRK, RK and LASIK patients; corneal refractive surgery, etc.

Treatment & Management of Ocular Disease: Anterior Segment (AS): The study of the etiology, clinical pathophysiology, diagnosis, treatment, management, and outcomes of therapeutic regimens for anomalies of the anterior segment of the human eye.

Examples: Keratitis, anterior uveitis, conjunctivitis, blepharitis, lid anomalies, foreign body removal, etc.

Treatment & Management of Ocular Disease: Posterior Segment (PS): The study of the etiology, clinical pathophysiology, diagnosis, treatment, management, and outcomes of therapeutic regimens for anomalies of the posterior segment of the human eye.

Examples: Degenerative, infective, and vascular diseases of the retina/choroid/sclera and optic nerve, inclusive of all aspects of surgical care involving the posterior segment of the eye, i.e., retinopathies, neuropathies, retinal laser surgery, retinal detachment surgery, etc.

C. RELATED SYSTEMIC DISEASE

Neuro-Optometry (NO): The study of the etiology, clinical evaluation, diagnosis, treatment and management of disease and disorders of the nervous system, both systemically and as it relates directly to the eye and visual system.

Examples: Includes all aspects of nervous system conditions involving the brain, cranial nerves, spinal cord, peripheral nerves, and corresponding muscles, i.e., multiple sclerosis, pituitary tumor, brain trauma, Myasthenia Gravis, papilledema, Horner’s Syndrome, etc.

Oral Pharmaceuticals (OP): The study of the etiology, clinical evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of ocular disease using the appropriate indications, prescription utilization, and follow-up assessment of the oral medications used for ocular therapy.

Pharmacology (PH): The study of the interaction of chemical agents with biological systems.

Examples: Toxicology; adverse effects of systemic drugs; adverse effects of ocular drugs; control of ocular pain. Any courses related to medications and how they affect the various tissues or their mechanism of actions.

Principles of Diagnosis (PD): The study of the art and science of the process of determining the nature and circumstances of a diseased condition with emphasis on the biological and clinical procedures utilized in medical examination and disease differentiation, and underlying clinical pathophysiology, e.g., corneal topography, visual fields (unless specific to glaucoma); laboratory testing and imaging; fluorescein angiography; gonioscopy.

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COURSE CATEGORY DEFINITIONS-*continued*

Systemic/Ocular Disease (SD): The study of the relationship of any anomaly of normal function of the human body and the possible manifestation of such as signs and/or symptoms in the eye or visual system.

Examples: General study of diabetes, HIV/AIDS, thyroid disease, etc., along with their ocular manifestations. Vascular diseases both systemic and ocular.

D. OPTOMETRIC BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Ethics/Jurisprudence (JP): The study of the body of law in the practice of optometry and its relationship to the medicolegal system.

Examples: Any courses related to the rules and practice acts for optometry, or addressing medicolegal issues related to patient treatment, and liability concerns and issues.

Practice Management (PM): The study of management of the **business** affairs of optometric practice. *This includes the concepts of managed care and operations management, courses designed to help market practices, to educate office staff, to improve billing efficiency and coding skills, to improve clinical recordkeeping and to enhance fiscal efficiency. This does not include courses that are intended for personal enhancement or investment prowess.*

COURSE PRESENTATION DEFINITIONS

The continuing education course presentation and the format by which the presentation is made are aspects of CE that must be identified for many optometric licensing boards as part of the approval of courses for license renewal. While these descriptions may not cover all possible presentations or formats (as defined by COPE), they can be used to provide this information required by the licensing boards.

CORRESPONDENCE: The presentation of clinical cases of information related to professional eye care solely in a written (printed/typeset), or electronically recorded format.

GRAND ROUNDS: A presentation of clinical cases involving actual patient encounters, and the discussion of the diagnosis and treatment of that particular patient condition.

INTERACTIVE/WORKSHOP: A laboratory that emphasizes the demonstration and application of hands-on techniques and skills in optometric procedures and instrumentation.

INTERNET/ONLINE: The presentation of clinical cases or information related to professional eye-care delivered solely via the Internet.

LECTURE: A discourse given before an audience for the purposes of instruction in an area of study with one or more instructors.

PANEL: A discourse in a given area of study, presented by usually three or more simultaneous instructors.

POSTERS: The presentation of a poster at a scientific meeting. Authors must be present with the leading author meeting the COPE criteria (i.e. O.D., Ph.D., R.Ph., M.D.). 50 minutes of attendance is one hour of credit.

SYMPOSIA/SCIENTIFIC LECTURES: A presentation usually by multiple persons on numerous topics, each presented in a short time frame.

COURSE FORMAT DEFINITIONS

FORMAT DEFINITIONS

- A. **LIVE:** A live format is when the instructor is in the same room with the participants, even if other formats are used as audiovisual aids for teaching the course. The instructor is face-to-face with the audience and can touch the participants.
1. **CE:** There is no post-course test.
 2. **CEE (Continuing Education with Examination):** There is a post-course test sponsored by a school of optometry.
Important: See CEE Policy, page 16.
- B. **DISTANCE LEARNING/MULTIMEDIA:** The course instructor is not physically present. *Important:* See Distance Learning/Multimedia Policy below.
1. **Interactive:**
 - a. **Webinar:** Web-based seminar that (unlike a webcast) allows for interaction between audience and instructor.
 - b. **Satellite:** The course is delivered by satellite TV to downlink receiver sites. The one-way video broadcast can be made interactive through the use of telephones and fax machines and time is provided for participants to ask questions via phone or fax.
 - c. **Teleconference/Videoconference:** Interactive course between participants at two or more sites using computer networks to share audio and video data; may involve an electronic whiteboard to share software applications.
 2. **Non-Interactive:**
 - a. **Video:** The course is taught via video from a non-interactive videotape or DVD.
 - b. **Audio:** The course is taught via audio from an audiotape or audio CD.
 - c. **DVD/CD-ROM:** The course is taught from a computer disc at the learner's personal computer.
 - d. **Satellite:** The course is delivered by satellite TV to downlink receiver sites. The one-way video broadcast can be made interactive through the use of telephones and fax machines and time is provided for participants to ask questions via phone or fax.
 - e. **Internet/Online:** The course is available on the Internet/World Wide Web with print and graphics.
 - f. **Webcast:** Live or delayed audiovisual course that is broadcast one way on the Internet to an audience.
 - g. **Podcast:** Syndicated Web content downloadable by subscribers to an iPod, PDA, cell phone, or computer.
 - h. **Written/Correspondence:** The course is taught via printed media such as manuscripts, journals, or magazines. The instructor who is responsible for the course educates the participants by written means only.

DISTANCE LEARNING/MULTIMEDIA POLICY

A course qualifies as Distance Learning/Multimedia if it is presented in any of the following formats:

- Satellite
- Webinar
- Webcast
- Recorded/Written
- Video
- Audio
- DVD/CD
- Podcast
- Written/Correspondence
- Internet/Online

Courses presented for COPE review under any of the Distance Learning/Multimedia formats must comply with the following requirements:

- A. Courses must be at least one hour in duration and must include a post-course test to verify learning.
- B. Post-course tests must be sponsored by an accredited school of optometry, medicine, pharmacy or osteopathy.
- C. Tests must be in **multiple-choice question (MCQ)** format and should conform to the National Board of Examiners in Optometry's (NBEO) *Item Writer's Manual*.
- D. Post-course tests must require a score of at least 70% in order for a certificate of completion to be issued.
- E. Post-course tests must include at least ten questions for each hour of credit.
- F. The post-course test and answer key must be uploaded with the application materials to COPE.
- G. Tests may accompany a course as part of the delivery mechanism (i.e., an internet-based course may allow test candidates to take the test online; or a correspondence course may include the test in the same publication as the article, etc.)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Distance Learning/Multimedia courses *do not* qualify as CEE Courses. **Only live lectures qualify as CEE courses.**

CONTINUING EDUCATION WITH EXAMINATION (CEE) POLICY

Formerly known as Transcript Quality (TQ) or Institutional Certified CE.)

Courses presented to COPE for qualification as Continuing Education with Examination (CEE) courses must include a post-course test to verify learning and comply with the following criteria:

- A. Courses must be at least 2 hours in duration; only ‘live’ courses are eligible for CEE credit.
- B. Courses must be sponsored by an accredited school of optometry, medicine, pharmacy or osteopathy; a statement must be provided certifying that the institution will assume responsibility for the related assessment. The name and address of the sponsoring institution must be prominently displayed on the documentation of post-course test results sent to each participant. See sample statement below.
- C. Post-course tests must be in **multiple-choice question (MCQ)** format and should conform to the National Board of Examiners in Optometry’s (NBEO) *Item Writer’s Manual*. Visit www.optometry.org for a copy of the manual, or visit the COPE downloads page to find a link to the manual. In general, multiple-choice questions should incorporate a simple stem that poses a question, or forms an incomplete statement (which is completed by the selected answer), and provides four or five options from which the test candidate will select one answer.
- D. Test candidates must receive a score of at least 70% or better in order for a certificate of completion to be issued.
- E. Tests must include at least (10 questions for each hour of credit. The number of test questions should be rounded up for courses of partial duration (i.e., a 2.5 hour course must provide 30 test questions, etc.).
- F. Instructors who submit CEE courses acknowledge that course attendees are not prepped on test questions or guided on test content areas during course instruction. Furthermore, instructors must make no reference to test questions in the course outline, or in any other course handout.
- G. If the post-course test is given on-site, it must be administered in an atmosphere of educational integrity. If not tested on-site, the test must be mailed directly to the attendee after the completion of the course who must then complete it and return it to the sponsoring school for evaluation. Tests may not be removed from the course site by candidates.
- H. A printed copy of the post-course test and answer key must be included with the course application (confidentiality of any test submitted to COPE will be maintained).

When developing post-course tests, instructors should note the following (this is a brief overview of test preparation and does not replace a thorough review of the NBEO’s *Item Writer’s Manual*):

- The scope of the test should address the material in the course outline and correspond with content areas.
- Item options (answer choices) should be based on prior knowledge or knowledge taught in course.
- Instructors should undertake a simple post-test analysis of the results to determine if there are any flawed items (i.e., items that, due to low or erratic scores, are revealed as ambiguous, confusing or inaccurate) and remove them from future tests. The scoring for a test where items are flawed and removed should be recalibrated accordingly.
- Scores should be expressed as a percentage in all cases.
- Instructors should identify relative importance in course outline, and item distribution should match emphases.

SAMPLE STATEMENT FOR ACCREDITED INSTITUTIONS SPONSORING CONTINUING EDUCATION WITH EXAMINATION (CEE) COURSES

(Printed on Official Letterhead)

December 1, 200X

Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE)
200 South College Street., Suite 1630
Charlotte, NC 28202

This letter confirms that ABC College of Optometry is responsible for the testing and grading of the post-course test for the courses listed below, scheduled for the XYZ Annual Meeting, January 5-6, 200X, in Atlanta, GA. ABC College of Optometry will provide each participant with documentation of performance on the test with the score reported as a percentage (only candidates with a passing score of at least 70%)

Course Title	Instructor(s)
Effective Use of TPAs in Contact Lens Practice	John Smith, OD
Contact Lens Management of Irregular Astigmatism: Video Grand Rounds	Tim Roth, OD Terry Maine, OD
Advanced Contact Lens Applications: Reversed Geometry Lenses	Phil Bartleby, OD

Sincerely,
Emily Provost, O.D.

INSTRUCTOR COURSE SUBMISSION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

If a COPE-Approved Administrator/Provider is submitting a course on behalf of the instructor, the instructor must acknowledge the submission and the Administrator/Provider must attach the signed acknowledgement when submitting the course.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, [INSERT NAME] acknowledge that this course, [INSERT COURSE TITLE], meets all the COPE requirements. I give my approval for [INSERT SUBMITTER NAME of ORGANIZATION NAME] to submit this course for COPE qualification on my behalf.

Instructor Signature and Date

SAMPLE COMMERCIAL DISCLOSURE SLIDE

COPE offers this document as a template for use in disclosing relevant financial relationships. With modification it can be used for lecturers, authors and members of planning committees. The commercial disclosure slide must be at the beginning of each presentation.

NOTE: COPE CE Instructors are not required or expected to use this document; it only serves as an example of elements that should be included in the disclosure to participants.

COMMERCIAL DISCLOSURE SLIDE:

- The content of this COPE Accredited CE activity was prepared independently by [INSERT NAME] without input from members of the ophthalmic community.
- The content of this COPE Accredited CE activity was prepared with assistance from [INSERT NAME].
- Disclosure information for instructor:
 - * [INSERT NAME] is affiliated with [INSERT COMMERCIAL INTEREST NAME] as a [INSERT RELATIONSHIP, i.e., consultant, speaker, etc.]
 - * [INSERT NAME] has no direct financial or proprietary interest in any companies, products or services mentioned in this presentation. [OR DISCLOSE DETAILS]
 - * [INSERT NAME] has/has not received commercial support from [INSERT COMMERCIAL INTEREST NAME] in the form of [INSERT].
- Disclosure information for persons(s) assisting instructor with content:
 - * [INSERT NAME OF PERSON WHO ASSISTED] is affiliated with [INSERT COMMERCIAL INTEREST NAME] as a [INSERT RELATIONSHIP, i.e., consultant, speaker, etc.]
 - * [INSERT NAME] has no direct financial or proprietary interest in any companies, products or services mentioned in this presentation. [OR DISCLOSE DETAILS]
 - * [INSERT NAME] has/has not received commercial support from [INSERT COMMERCIAL INTEREST NAME] in the form of [INSERT].
- The content and format of this course is presented without commercial bias and does not claim superiority of any commercial product or service.
OR
- The content and format of this COPE Accredited CE activity may reflect commercial bias and may claim or imply superiority of a particular commercial product or service.

SAMPLE FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

COPE offers this document as a sample for COPE CE Instructors to use for disclosing financial relationship information. All elements of this form must be included with the course submission. It can also be used by CE Administrators/ Providers who submit a course on behalf of an instructor. **NOTE: COPE CE Instructors are not required or expected to use this document; it only serves as an example.**

Disclosure of Relevant Financial Relationships

Name: [INSERT NAME]

Activity Title: [INSERT COPE ACCREDITED CE ACTIVITY NAME]

Content of Activity: [INSERT SUMMARY OF CONTENT]

Date of Activity: [INSERT DATE OF ACTIVITY]

First, list the names of proprietary entities producing health care goods or services, consumed by, or used on patients, with the exemption of non-profit or government organizations and non-health care related companies with which you or your spouse/partner have, or have had, a relevant financial relationship within the past 12 months. For this purpose we consider the relevant financial relationships of your spouse or partner that you are aware of to be yours.

Second, describe what you or your spouse/partner received (ex. Salary, honorarium, etc.). [COPE CE ADMINISTRATOR/PROVIDER NAME] does not want to know how much you received.

Third, describe your role:

Commercial Interest	Nature of Relevant Financial Relationship (include all that apply)	
	What was Received?	For What Role?
Example: Company X	Honorarium	Speaker

I do not have any relevant financial relationships with any commercial interests.

My signature on this document confirms all of the following:

- I have read and will comply with the COPE requirements for course qualification. I further agree to notify COPE in writing should any information provided, including financial/proprietary information, change at any time during the three year qualification period of this course.
- I agree that I will keep my presentation free from commercial interest or bias. I will maintain independent control over the content of my presentation, so that it is balanced, objective, presented with scientific rigor and not be for the purpose of promoting products, equipment, etc. (Therefore, my presentation should not be perceived by attendees as a commercial.) I further agree that I will not change the basic content of my presentation following approval.
- I agree to disclose to the audience the existence of any significant financial/professional relationships with the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product(s) and/or the provider(s) of any commercial service(s) discussed in the educational presentation. (Said relationships can include such things as grant/research support, employment, consulting and/or speakers bureau arrangements, major stock ownership, etc.) I will disclose any of these relationships, whether or not there is direct commercial support for the CE activity. This disclosure is made to provide the audience the information on which they can make judgments as to a presenter's objectivity.
- I agree to disclose the attendees; a) when products or procedures being discussed are off label, unlabeled, experimental, and/or investigational (not FDA approved); b) any limitations on the information that is presented, such as data that are preliminary or that represent ongoing research, interim analyses, and/or unsupported opinion.
- I agree I have an ethical responsibility to make appropriate decisions related to my presentation, and all issues involving financial remuneration. (Considerations in this regard could include kickback schemes or multiple remunerations for a single event.)

Signature : _____

Date: _____

GLOSSARY OF COPE TERMS

ARBO

The Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit association of regulatory boards of optometry. ARBO's mission is to represent and assist member licensing agencies in regulating the practice of optometry for the public welfare. ARBO created COPE in 1995 as a service to its member boards; COPE is entirely administered from ARBO's administrative offices.

Commercial Interest

A commercial interest is any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing health care goods or services consumed by, or used on, patients. Providers of clinical service directly to patients are not considered commercial interest. A commercial interest is not eligible to become an approved COPE Administrator/Provider and cannot control the educational content for COPE Approved CE. Under this definition, the following types of organizations are eligible for become approved COPE Administrators/Providers and free to control the content of COPE Approved CE:

- 501C Non-profit organizations (Note: 501C organizations are screened for eligibility. Those that advocate for commercial interests as a 501C organization are not eligible to become COPE Approved Administrators/Providers. They cannot serve in the role of joint sponsor, but can be a commercial supporter.)
- Government organizations
- Non-health care related companies
- Liability insurance providers
- Health insurance providers
- Group optometric practices
- For-profit hospitals
- For-profit rehabilitation centers
- For-profit nursing homes
- Blood banks
- Diagnostic laboratories

Conflict of Interest

Circumstances create a conflict of interest when an individual has an opportunity to affect CE content about products or services of a commercial interest with which he/she has a financial relationship.

COPE considers 'CE content about products or services of a commercial interest' to include content about specific agents/devices, but not necessarily about the class of agents/devices, and not necessarily content about the whole disease class in which those agents/devices are used.

COPE

The Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE), a member benefit and program of the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO). The mission of COPE is to:

- accredit continuing optometric education courses on behalf of state boards on a national basis;
- reduce duplication of effort by state boards;
- create a uniform method of recording continuing education courses on a national basis;
- be the clearinghouse for information about continuing education programs and courses utilized by licensed optometrists to fulfill their continuing education requirements for license renewal; and
- encourage program sponsors to offer high quality CE in appropriate settings with adequate administrative structure

COPE Accredited CE

Continuing education activities that consist of COPE Qualified Courses produced and delivered by COPE Approved Administrators/Providers within COPE Qualified Events.

COPE Approved Administrator/Provider

The organization, group, or entity assuming overall responsibility for program planning, promotion, on-site administration, and financial management of CE events. CE Administrators/Providers must submit an application, agree to abide by COPE rules and regulations and meet specific requirements to become COPE Approved Administrators/Providers.

Course Outline

A Course Outline is a basic guide to the key learning elements contained in a course. Usually laid out in bullet format, a Course Outline should be in sufficient detail so as to permit either the participant or an observer the ability to clearly follow along throughout the presentation. An outline can be considered sufficiently detailed if an observer is able to enter the presentation and after 5 or 10 minutes be able to locate where in the outline the presenter is. As a rough guide, a 1-½ to 2 page outline is typical for a one-hour course.

Course Presentation

The method used to present the information in a course, (i.e., Lecture, Interactive/Workshop, Panel, Symposia/Scientific Lectures, Grand Rounds, Correspondence, Poster, or Internet/Online). More than one presentation method can be used in a course.

Credit Hour

One (1) hour of CE credit is based on 50 minutes of instructional time. COPE only accepts for review courses of at least one (1) in duration. Additional increments of credit are in 0.5 hours, where 0.5 hour of credit is based on 25 minutes of instructional time. For example, 1.5 hours of credit = a minimum of 75 minutes of instruction; 2.0 hours of credit = a minimum of 100 minutes of instruction, etc.

Curriculum Vitae

A CV is a detailed chronological history of a person's educational and teaching experience, and professional accomplishments which qualifies the instructor to teach the course (not a biographical sketch).

Event Number

Each event is given a unique identification number when it becomes COPE Qualified. If the event is discontinued after qualification for any reason, the number is not used for another course. All documentation provided to a doctor for submission to a licensing board, such as a certificate of attendance slip, must include both the COPE Course and Event Numbers.

Instructors

1. **Instructor.** The person (or persons) who actually teach the course, and who assumes responsibility for the educational content and method of presentation of the course.
2. **Principal Instructor.** The principal instructor is considered by COPE as the key individual identified with the course, and is the individual who submits the course material to COPE for review and receives all correspondence regarding its disposition.
3. **Co-Instructor.** A co-instructor is an individual who, in conjunction with a principal instructor, may assist and participate in the presentation of a course, but also has the necessary qualifications to give the course independently of the principal instructor should the principal instructor be unavailable due to extenuating circumstances.
4. **Adjunct Instructor.** An Adjunct Instructor is an individual whose main function is to support the Principal Instructor with the presentation or preparation of a course. An Adjunct Instructor may assist with the presentation of a course, however, the Principal Instructor must be responsible for presenting the majority of the course and an Adjunct Instructor cannot, under any circumstance, present a course in the absence of, the Principal Instructor.

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GLOSSARY OF COPE TERMS...continued

Open Access

COPE Accredited CE must be open to all optometrists. COPE Approved Administrators must ensure this by the following:

- No efforts shall be made to exclude any learners.
- Commercial interests cannot invite or select learners, or generate invitation lists.
- Public notice of COPE Approved Events is required.
- If attendance is limited by space requirements, this must be included in all invitations and public notices, with a first come, first served policy.
- Non-members or affiliated parties of a COPE Approved Administrator/Provider must be able to attend the COPE Accredited CE event. Administrators/Providers may adjust the registration fees in a reasonable manner to accommodate them.

Relevant Financial Relationships

Financial relationships are those relationships in which the individual benefits by receiving a salary, royalty, intellectual property rights, consulting fee, honoraria, ownership interest (e.g. stocks, stock options or other ownership interest excluding diversified mutual funds), or other financial benefit. Financial benefits are usually associated with roles such as employment, management position, independent contractor (including contracted research), consulting, speaking and teaching, membership of advisory committees or review panels, board membership, and other activities from which remuneration is received or expected. COPE considers relationships of the person involved in the CE activity to include financial relationships of a spouse or partner.

With respect to personal financial relationships, 'contracted research' includes research funding where the institution gets the grant and manages the funds and the person is the principal or named investigator on the grant.

With respect to financial relationships with commercial interests, when a person divests themselves of a relationship it is immediately not relevant to conflicts of interest but it must be disclosed to the learners for 12 months.

Reviewer

A COPE recognized and state board-endorsed optometrist or faculty at optometric colleges who has volunteered to review courses for qualification and has completed the COPE Reviewer Training Modules successfully. Reviewers serve indefinitely and are not compensated for their service. Reviewers are required to examine in detail the course materials submitted to COPE, determine if it is in compliance with the *Criteria for Course Qualification*, and, where necessary, provide appropriate guidance for modification or adjustment.

Urgent Course Approval

The standard processing time for course processing is 30 days upon receipt at the COPE office. An additional fee is required for courses submitted under the 30-day requirement, with a request for urgent processing. In any event no course will be accepted with request for review in less than 10 days.

COPE STANDARDS FOR COMMERCIAL SUPPORT

Standard 1: Independence

COPE Accredited CE must be identified, developed and presented free from the control of a commercial interest.

1. A “commercial interest” is defined as any proprietary entity producing health care goods or services, with the exemption of non-profit or government organizations and non-health care related companies .
2. COPE Approved Administrators/Providers must ensure that any decisions regarding content, format, speaker selection and evaluation are made without any influence from or control of a commercial interest. COPE Approved Administrators/Providers should develop curriculum based on identification of CME needs with determination of educational objectives.
3. Instructors of COPE Accredited CE must develop course material and information independent from any influence from commercial interest.
4. Under no circumstances can a commercial interest produce or deliver COPE Accredited CE or take the role of non-accredited partner in a joint sponsorship relationship.

Standard 2: Resolution of Personal Conflicts of Interest

Every person in a position to impact the content of COPE Accredited CE must disclose all relevant financial relationships to the COPE Approved Administrator/Provider and to the Learners.

1. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider must be able to show that everyone who is in a position to control the content of an educational activity has disclosed all relevant financial relationships with any commercial interest.
2. Relevant financial relationships are financial relationships in any amount occurring within the past 12 months that create a conflict of interest.
3. An individual who refuses to disclose relevant financial relationships will be disqualified from being a planning committee member, a COPE Accredited CE instructor or an author of CE, and cannot have control of, or responsibility for, the development, management, presentation or evaluation of the COPE Accredited CE.
4. COPE Approved Administrators/Providers must have implemented a mechanism to identify and resolve all conflicts of interest prior to the education activity being delivered to the learners.

Standard 3: Appropriate Use of Commercial Support

In order for a CE event to be COPE accredited, all commercial support must be in the form of an educational grant to the COPE Approved Administrator/Provider documented by a signed agreement between the COPE Approved Administrator/Provider and Corporate Supporter.

1. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider must make all decisions regarding the disposition and disbursement of commercial support.
2. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider cannot be required by a commercial interest to accept advice or services concerning instructors, authors, or participants , evaluation methods or other education matters, including content, from a commercial interest as conditions of contributing funds or services.
3. All commercial support associated with COPE Accredited CE must be given with the full knowledge and approval of the COPE Approved Administrator/Provider.
4. The terms, conditions, and purposes of the commercial support must be documented in a written agreement between the commercial supporter that includes the COPE Accredited Administrator/Provider and its educational partner(s). The agreement must include the COPE Accredited Administrator/Provider, even if the support is given directly to the COPE Accredited Administrator’s/Provider’s educational partner or a joint sponsor .
5. The written agreement must specify the commercial interest that is the source of commercial support.
6. Both the commercial supporter and the COPE Accredited Administrator/Provider must sign the written agreement between the commercial supporter and the COPE Accredited Administrator/Provider.
7. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider must have written policies and procedures governing honoraria and reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for planners and instructors.
8. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider, the joint sponsor, or designated educational partner must pay directly any instructor honoraria or reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses in compliance with the COPE Approved Administrator’s/Provider’s written policies and procedures.
9. No other payment shall be given to the director of the activity, planning committee members, instructors or authors, joint sponsor, or any others involved with the supported activity.

10. If instructors are listed on the agenda as facilitating or conducting a presentation or session, but participate in the remainder of the COPE Accredited CE as a learner, their expenses can be reimbursed and honoraria can be paid for their instructor role only.
11. Social events or meals at COPE Accredited CE events cannot compete with or take precedence over the educational courses.
12. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider may not use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for non-instructor participants of a COPE accredited event. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider may use commercial support to pay for travel, lodging, honoraria, or personal expenses for bona fide employees and volunteers of the COPE Approved Administrator/Provider, joint sponsor or educational partner.
13. The COPE Approved Administrator/Provider must be able to produce accurate documentation, if requested, detailing the receipt and expenditures of the commercial support, make all decisions regarding the use distribution of commercial support, and must be able to account for all expenditures.
14. All financial support must be directed through the COPE Approved Administrator/Provider; under no circumstances can the supporter provide any person with influence over the content of the COPE accredited course or event with any financial incentives or reimbursement directly .

Standard 4: Appropriate Management of Associated Commercial Promotion

There must be a clear separation of any type of product, service, and instrument or device promotion with COPE Accredited Courses. These activities, such as commercial exhibits and advertisements must be physically separated from and not interfere with COPE Accredited Courses.

1. Arrangements for commercial exhibits or advertisements cannot influence planning or interfere with the presentation, nor can they be a condition of the provision of commercial support for COPE Accredited CE.
2. Product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement of any type is prohibited in or during COPE Accredited Courses. The juxtaposition of editorial and advertising material on the same products or subjects must be avoided. Live (staffed exhibits, presentations) or enduring (printed or electronic advertisements) promotional activities must be kept separate from COPE Accredited Courses.
 - a. For print, advertisements and promotional materials will not be interleaved within the pages of the CE content. Advertisements and promotional materials may face the first or last pages of printed CE content as long as these materials are not related to the CE content they face and are not paid for by the commercial supporters of the COPE Accredited CE.
 - b. For computer based, advertisements and promotional materials will not be visible on the screen at the same time as the CE content and not interleaved between computer 'windows' or screens of the CE content.
 - c. For audio and video recording, advertisements and promotional materials cannot be displayed or distributed in the educational space immediately before, during or after a CE event. COPE Approved Administrators/Providers cannot allow representatives of commercial interests to engage in sales or promotional activities while in the space or place of the CE course.
3. Educational materials that are a part of COPE Accredited CE, such as slides, abstracts and handouts, cannot contain any advertising or product-group message.
4. Print or electronic information distributed about the non-CE elements of a COPE Approved Event that are not directly related to the transfer of education to the learner, such as schedules and content descriptions, may include product-promotion material or product-specific advertisement .
5. COPE Approved Administrators/Providers cannot use a commercial interest as the agent providing COPE Accredited CE to learners, e.g., distribution of self-study CE activities or arranging for electronic access to COPE Accredited Courses .

Continued on page 24.

Standard 5: Content and Format without Commercial Bias

All COPE Accredited Courses cannot deliver specific proprietary business interests and must give balanced coverage to treatment options.

1. The content or format of a COPE Accredited Course or its related materials must promote improvements or quality in healthcare and not a specific proprietary business interest of a commercial interest.
2. Presentations must give a balanced view of therapeutic options. Use of generic names will contribute to this impartiality. If the COPE Accredited Course includes trade names, where available trade names, where available trade names from several companies should be used, not just trade names from a single company.
3. Instructors may have assistance in the development of a course, including the creation of handouts, slides and objectives, though not from a commercial interest. Any ghostwriting activity must be included in the disclosure to the CE Administrator/Provider and learners .

Standard 6: Disclosures Relevant to Potential Commercial Bias

To maintain transparency, financial relationships with commercial interests of any persons in a position to impact or control the educational content must be disclosed to the learners. This includes instructors and planning committee members.

1. An individual must disclose to learners any relevant financial relationship(s), to include the following information:
 - a. The name of the individual;
 - b. The name of the commercial interest(s); and,
 - c. The nature of the relationship the person has with each commercial interest.
2. For an individual with no relevant financial relationship(s) the learners must be informed that no relevant financial relationship(s) exist.
3. Instructors must disclose ghostwriting activities .
4. The source of all support from commercial interests must be disclosed to learners. When commercial support is ‘in kind’ the nature of the support must be disclosed to learners.
5. ‘Disclosure’ must never include the use of a trade name or product-group message.
6. COPE Approved Administrators/Providers must disclose the above information to learners prior to the beginning of the educational activity.