



CET for CLOs unravelling – Information from the GOC

This article is adapted and updated for the current period from an article by Linda Ford on behalf of the GOC, published in Dispensing Optics in 2014, and clarifies the CET requirements for contact lens opticians

In January 2016, the second cycle enhanced CET came into effect for 1 January 2016 until 31 December 2018. The second cycle in general continues as did the first, with requirements to cover all competencies, engage in interactive CET including peer review (for CLOs) and to spread CET activity throughout the cycle with at least six points being gained each year.

In addition, the scheme requires the CLO registrant to ensure that 18 of the total 36 points requirement are gained as contact lens points and the remaining 18 as general points.

All GOC registrants must gain 36 CET points over a three-year cycle. For CLOs, these must include:

1. 18 general CET points
2. 18 contact lens speciality CET points
3. Participation in at least one peer review group or peer discussion event using contact lens cases.
4. All dispensing and contact lens competencies:
 - Communication (CLO)
 - Standards of Practice (CLO)
 - Ocular Examination (CLO)
 - Verification & Identification (CLO)
 - Contact Lenses (CLO)
 - Optical Appliances (DO)
 - Low Vision (DO)
 - Refractive Management (DO)
 - Ocular Abnormalities (DO)
 - Paediatric Dispensing (DO)

In order to avoid duplication of competencies for CLOs, communication and standards of practice only need to be covered once by doing contact lens speciality CET provision in these areas.

Accepting points

After completing each piece of CET, registrants must log into their online CET portfolio at www.optical.org/MyGOC to accept the points. When accepting points for CET, which is approved for both

general points for dispensing opticians and speciality points for CLOs, registrants will be asked which points requirement they wish the CET points to credit towards. This choice relates to the allocation of points not competencies. Competencies will automatically credit, where relevant, to both the dispensing and contact lens requirements.

Distance learning

We recognise the value registrants place on being able to undertake CET by distance learning. However, our independent research identified risks associated with the large proportion of registrants completing all or most of their CET via text based distance learning (eg. journal articles). In previous cycles, registrants who relied largely on CET provided by distance learning were achieving their CET points with little or no interaction with peers, potentially leading to professional isolation.

In order to mitigate against this risk, the enhanced CET scheme includes a requirement to gain at least 50 per cent of points (18 out of 36) via interactive methods. For CLOs, any interactive CET, whether contact lens speciality or general, will contribute towards this requirement. We have worked with CET providers to approve new types of interactive CET, which can be delivered as distance learning but still includes activities, which involve discussion with peers or personalised feedback from experts.

Peer review

As part of the requirement to interact with peers, contact lens opticians must participate in a minimum of one peer review per three-year cycle. Peer review groups should not be about individual practitioners making or offering judgement on the decisions or practices of others. It should offer an environment in which registrants can engage in case-based discussion with a group of four to 10 peers, which will help them to consider their own decision-making and record-keeping.

Registrants in clinical practice may choose to use their own case records. Alternatively, example case records can be used, ensuring registrants not currently in clinical practice can also benefit from these sessions. For CLOs, cases selected for discussion should focus on contact

lens patients and groups must include other CLOs or optometrists who fit contact lenses.

In order to gain the peer review points, individual registrants must record their learning in a reflection statement in their CET portfolio, which captures how the discussion and learning relates to their own scope of practice.

We have approved the following three methods of peer review.

1. Registrant-led peer review group

This is where a small group of registrants organise their own event and bring their own case records relating to an agreed topic for discussion. One registrant acts as the group leader and is responsible for applying to the GOC for the event to be approved, and for submitting details of the attendees and competencies covered.

For this type of peer review, the lead registrant can organise the event and apply for GOC approval via their own CET portfolio. The process is straightforward, requiring basic details including the date, time and location of the event, the topic(s) for discussion and learning objectives. Approval takes 10 working days, so organisers must allow sufficient time when applying.

2. Peer review or peer discussion

This is an event organised by an approved CET provider with multiple groups of up to 10 peers, with each group led by a facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to ensure each individual participates, that registrants link the discussion to their own practice and that the learning objectives are met.

The approved provider takes responsibility for ensuring the cases used and discussion questions allow participants to achieve the learning objectives.

3. Virtual peer review

This is an event organised by a GOC-approved CET provider offering participation via web-based or video-conferencing facilities with real-time audio and visual communication. This option is only available on application to the GOC for registrants who can demonstrate exceptional circumstances that prohibit them from attending an event in person.

We are delighted with the number of registrants who have already participated in peer review and have found the experience to be a positive one. Registrant feedback and reflection statements show peer review has helped practitioners to become more aware of best practice, identify areas for improvement and is generally seen to be a useful way of raising standards across the profession.

GOC audit

The enhanced CET scheme expects registrants to spread their CET throughout the cycle, with a minimum of six points being gained each year. We audit registrant CET portfolios after 31 December each year, and registrants who have not achieved the minimum

points for that year are required to explain the reasons for their non-compliance.

At the end of each three-year cycle, the GOC will check each registrant's CET portfolio to ensure they have complied with all requirements of the scheme, including number of points (general and specialist), 50 per cent interactive requirement, all competencies have been covered, a peer review has been attended and a reflection statement has been completed. Registrants without exceptional circumstances who fail any of these requirements will be removed from the GOC register.

Restoration to the register

The general requirement to restore to the general register is 12 CET points gained within the 12 months preceding the date of restoration. Those CLOs wishing to retain as both a dispensing optician and as a contact lens specialist, the 12 restoration points must include six CLO points and six general points, cover all of the competencies, have done a peer review and half must be interactive.

In addition to the general CET requirement to restore the register, anyone removed from the register for CET failure, or who has an outstanding CET shortfall, is also required to make up the shortfall from the last period.

Linda Ford was head of education and standards at the General Optical Council until September 2015.

ABDO members are advised to contact the GOC directly to ascertain their individual restoration requirements before starting the restoration process.

The MyCET PDP (Personal Development Plan)

When you first log in to MyCET in this CET period, the first screen you will see is a message from the GOC about completing and maintaining a personal development plan. This plan was available for completion in the previous cycle, but was not generally completed by registrants. To encourage career development and planning, the GOC now require at least one learning goal to be recorded on MyCET. They have made the process easy by providing a guide and a video, as well as setting the first learning goal, based on the new Standards of Practice document. The best way of learning what a PDP is all about is to read the guide and watch the video. Click 'Find out more' on the opening screen.

The guide can be downloaded directly from:
https://cet.optical.org/docs/Guide_to_my_CET_Professional_Development_Plan.pdf