



Criteria for Continuing Education Handbook

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The American Board of Opticianry
& National Contact Lens Examiners

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Mission Statement: The purpose of ABO-NCLE, Inc. is to recognize qualified opticians and contact lens technicians at various levels of proficiency for the consumer and the ophthalmic community by: (1) certifying those who pass the professionally-developed examinations, and (2) requiring and promoting approved continuing education for recertification.

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I. Welcome

To all providers of ABO and NCLE continuing education

Welcome to the new online *Criteria for Continuing Education Handbook*, your guide for offering and/or renewing ABO and NCLE recertification courses. This updated handbook is intended to make it easier for Speakers and Meeting Sponsors to navigate the approval process, and to ensure high standards of continuing education for our certificants. This on-line handbook replaces the previously-used burgundy ring binder, which contains outdated information and forms that may no longer be accepted. Please discard the old hardcopy handbooks, and use only the version on the ABO-NCLE website.

Speakers and authors who wish to provide continuing education approved by the ABO-NCLE must first be approved ([New Speaker Application](#)). Speakers qualified to provide technical information on optical topics at the basic to intermediate level may apply for Ophthalmic Level I and II; those with extensive technical training, knowledge and experience should seek approval for Ophthalmic Level III. Speakers who wish to give courses on non-optical topics pertinent to our certificants should apply for Non-Ophthalmic approval. Non-Ophthalmic courses have only one level. Any speaker approved for Ophthalmic courses is automatically approved to provide Non-Ophthalmic courses as well.

When speakers agree to provide a lecture or article, they must supply the meeting sponsor, organizer, or publisher with: the course title, description, and outline; speaker approval classification and level; the suggested course classification and level; intended audience and teaching methods; and the last four digits of the speaker's social security number. This can all be done on the [New Course Application](#).

Meeting sponsors will then provide the information and other requirements necessary to complete the application process.

We hope you will find this handbook to be a useful guide to help you with the CEC course approval process. As always, we welcome your input, questions or suggestions. By working together, it is our sincere hope that those who are ABO and NCLE certified will continue to receive the quality of continuing education that enables them to uphold the high standards of professionalism that they represent within the ophthalmic community.

II. Introduction

The American Board of Opticianry – National Contact Lens Examiners (ABO-NCLE) defines continuing education as planned learning experiences that maintain and enhance the technical skills and knowledge of ophthalmic professionals to deliver quality services to the public and to the profession in a competent, professional manner.

These Criteria for Continuing Education (Criteria) are provided to better ensure quality and consistency in educational offerings for ophthalmic professionals. There are many educational experiences which provide learning and advance the ophthalmic profession; however, only courses which are planned and administered in accordance with the Criteria are assured of being accepted for recertification credit. Failure to follow these criteria may result in denial of CEC approval for courses, instructors or sponsors.

ABO-NCLE exists for certification and educational purposes. We review, promote and approve continuing education for recertification. It is our belief that instructors and sponsors who follow these criteria will be successful in enhancing the professional abilities of ABO- NCLE Certificants.

III. General Information

A. Applying for Course Approvals

When should I apply for course approval? ABO-NCLE recommends new course submissions be made about four months before the meeting, and *must* be received eight weeks prior to the meeting date.

When should I request paper CECs for an approved course? CEC requests must be received at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Does the ABO - NCLE approve courses that have already taken place? No. Retroactive approval is not given; all courses must be pre-approved.

How many copies must I submit? Submit one copy of the application and any attached documents.

Do course approvals expire? Yes. All courses are approved for a three (3) year time period.

Where can I get help on completing the application form? If you cannot find what you need in this handbook, call ABO-NCLE at (800) 296-1379.

What are approved statements for course announcements? If your promotional materials are printed prior to notification of approval and you wish to include a statement about the status of the course the following statement may be used:

This course has been submitted to the American Board of Opticianry - National Contact Lens Examiners for continuing education credit.

Promotional materials *cannot* indicate the course level until the course level is approved by ABO-NCLE. **Once the course is approved, all promotional materials *must* indicate the course level.**

Ophthalmic Level III courses can only be taught by speakers approved at Ophthalmic Level III.

Under no circumstances shall course approval be indicated in marketing material until final approval has been granted.

B. Applying for Print and Online Article Approvals

1. Courses presented as written articles, in print and/or online, must be submitted with complete content, along with a New Course Application with the author's signed affidavit (see application). Author must be approved prior to submission of courses.
2. The body of the article must contain 3,500 words per credit hour at the time of submission.
3. Twenty multiple-choice test questions must be included per credit hour:
 - a. Questions should be scrambled rather than follow the exact order of topics in the text
 - b. Include four possible answers for each question, with only one correct answer
 - c. No negative questions with the words "not" or "except" in the stem
 - d. No "All of the above" and no "None of the above" answers
4. An answer key with the correct answers marked must be submitted.
5. Passing grade is 80% or higher.
6. Placement of CEC article in relationship to advertising: no break in text; no advertising should be contained within the body of the article.
7. ABO-NCLE requests that no advertising related to the content of the article be placed directly before or after the article.
8. Signed statements from two currently certified dispensers/technicians affirming completion of the course in no less than the number of credit hours requested for approval.
9. Sponsor will be responsible for appropriate CEC distribution in accordance with ABO-NCLE regulations.

C. Applying for Live and Recorded Webinar Approvals

1. A new course application must be submitted with the presenter's signed affidavit (see application), the course description, timed outline, and meet all other criteria applicable to lecture courses.
2. Speakers must be approved prior to the submission of the course.
3. Paper CECs must be requested at least two weeks prior to date of webinar.
4. Attendees must pre-register before the course and be given an ID for access to the webinar.
5. For recorded webinars that are available on-demand, four polling questions are to be asked during the presentation, to which the attendee must respond within one minute or the program will revert back to the previous segment, so the attendee is required to sit through that segment again. At the end of the course, sixteen more questions are asked, for a total of twenty questions. If more than four out of the twenty are wrong, the attendee fails and will not receive a CEC.
6. Live webinars do not require polling questions, but do require twenty questions at the end of the course.
7. Twenty multiple-choice test questions must be included per credit hour:
 - a. Questions should be scrambled rather than follow the exact order of topics in the webinar
 - b. Include four possible answers for each question, with only one correct answer
 - c. No negative questions with the words "not" or "except" in the stem
 - d. No "All of the above" and no "None of the above" answers
8. An answer key with the correct answers marked must be submitted.
9. Passing grade is 80% or higher.
10. Include the following statement after the test questions: Course attendees may send any comments about courses and/or speakers to mail@abo-ncle.org.
11. Sponsors will validate paper CECs with their stamp, put attendee name on all three parts of CEC, and send to the attendees who pass. A roster of passing attendees must be kept by the sponsor for three years after the webinar is no longer available.

D. Policies and Requirements

1. Those who review course submissions for CEC approval rely most heavily on a detailed course outline with time references. It is not enough to merely state the main topics of the course. Including sub-topics, and how much time will be spent on each segment of the course, will greatly enhance the prospects for course approval.
2. We ask speakers to provide sponsors with a course description of 25-50 words. In addition, a list of learning objectives shows how the course is of importance in opticianry and/or contact lens fitting. Often, courses are disapproved because it is not clear how they pertain to the skills or knowledge used in the optical field. Please use the course description, as well as the detailed course outline, to show what attendees will learn, and how your course relates to the practice of opticianry or contact lens fitting.
3. Please note that an application fee must be submitted with every Course Approval application. If the course's intended speaker has not yet been approved, an application for Speaker Approval must also be sent along with the appropriate fee. If the course is Technical, the course approval fee is \$75; the General Knowledge course approval fee is \$100. Failure to submit the appropriate fee(s) will result in the return of the submission. If a course is disapproved, the application may be revised and resubmitted one time without incurring an additional processing fee.
4. Courses will only be approved for a period of three (3) years. Review courses to prepare for the basic ABO or NCLE certification exams are not eligible for continuing education credit. All approved courses must be updated and submitted for re-approval upon expiration. All re-submissions will require the appropriate application fee - \$75 for Ophthalmic courses; \$100 for Non-Ophthalmic courses.
5. Ordering of paper CECs for approved courses is the responsibility of the meeting sponsor, not the speaker. Paper CECs must be requested a minimum of two weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in the denial of the request. Please refer to the [Timetable Checklist](#) in this handbook for meeting guidelines.
6. With new developments in the optical field, and in the certification process, it is our expectation that there will be ongoing additions and/or revisions to the criteria. We ask that you refer to this online handbook on a regular basis to avoid delays in the approval process.

D. Criterion Four: Course Content

Course content must be generic in nature and presented in an objective manner.

Educational courses designed to promote one company's products or services are not acceptable for ABO-NCLE continuing education credit.

Specific product brands may be mentioned and described within a course, but such presentations should always be as balanced as possible with respect to competing companies or products.

Speakers and sponsors involved in the manufacturing, distribution, marketing, sales and servicing of products and services are expected to exercise caution and good judgment in separating promotional concerns from educational courses.*

Totally new and innovative technology is often non-generic in nature, but may still be an appropriate topic for continuing education. Courses relating to such innovations will be judged on an individual basis.

All courses must be monitored, and those that fail to adhere to these guidelines may be denied CEC approval. Industry vendors, sponsors or speakers who fail to honor this criterion may be removed from the ABO-NCLE approved listings.

***A sponsor's logo may only appear on the first and last slide of a presentation.**

***Speakers sponsored or employed by an industry vendor must include a signed statement with their application, (except for new technology or a new product), pledging that the course content will be presented in a generic and objective manner.**

E. Criterion Five: Length of Course

The course length and method of presentation must be indicated on the course application.

A minimum of 50 minutes of instruction must be allotted for each hour of credit requested. Questions and answers may be entertained afterward. It is best to plan an hour for each credit, which will allow courses that finish a few minutes early to still fulfill the 50-minute requirement. Hours are based on actual instruction time excluding coffee breaks.

Courses can only be submitted for a maximum of 2 hours. Courses submitted for more than 2 hours must be split up and submitted as separate courses.

The method of presentation — lecture, hands-on, article*, live webinar*, recorded webinar*, other — shall be indicated. This will help course evaluators to judge the appropriateness of the course and will also help attendees to know what to expect when they take the course.

*Please refer to the special requirements for [articles](#) and [webinars](#).

As part of the course evaluation process and to ensure compliance with these criteria, ABO-NCLE reserves the right to monitor, record and evaluate--without prior notice and without charge-- any approved educational meeting.

F. Criterion Six: Speaker Qualifications

Speakers must be qualified by education or experience to provide quality instruction in the relevant subject area, and must be approved by ABO-NCLE for each course they are presenting.

Speakers are approved as either **Level I** (basic) or **Level II** (intermediate) or **Level III** (advanced) course content is determined as one of three levels: **Level I** (basic) and **Level II** (intermediate); or **Level III** (advanced). **Level III** courses are not distinguished by levels. **Level III** speakers may only provide Level I (basic) and Level II (intermediate) courses, but not Level III courses. **Level III** approved speakers may provide Level I, II or III courses.

A speaker's qualifications can be judged, in part, on education and training, work experience, recognition by peers, previous speaking performances, publications, and professional credentials. All speakers presenting **Level III** courses must be certified by ABO-NCLE or another appropriate certifying agency (JCAHPO, RN, etc.). Doctors (MDs and ODs) automatically meet the certification requirement, but must still be approved at a certain level. Persons with credentials other than those required by ABO-NCLE, or those giving **Level III** courses, may be granted approval by the ABO-NCLE Education Committee.

Level III courses are those that relate directly to skills or knowledge that are optical in nature, and appear in the ABO Job Analysis or NCLE Job Analysis. **Level II** courses are those that will enhance the abilities of ophthalmic professionals, but are usually not optical in nature.

ABO-NCLE cannot verify a speaker's communication skills. It is the responsibility of course sponsors to obtain speakers who will best present the material in a manner that keeps the audience engaged in the learning process. Always check references of your speakers. Consistently poor reviews for either a course or a speaker could result in the rescinding of ABO-NCLE approval for continuing education credits.

All Speaker Approvals are valid for a three (3) year period. All Speakers must re-apply for Speaker Approval every three (3) years.

G. Criterion Seven: Evaluations

Each attendee will be invited to evaluate the course and speaker.

ABO-NCLE wants course attendees to have the opportunity to evaluate speakers and courses. This opportunity will now be offered electronically, by inviting attendees to send comments to mail@abo-ncle.org.

We ask that sponsors and speakers assist in this effort by doing the following:

Sponsors – Please include the following statement in all promotional materials for your program: Course attendees may send any comments about courses and/or speakers to mail@abo-ncle.org.

Speakers – Please present the following statement in your slides and/or handouts: Course attendees may send any comments about courses and/or speakers to mail@abo-ncle.org.

Also, announce this invitation to your audience at the time of the presentation.

No CEC may be validated until at least 50 minutes of course time has transpired for each hour of credit received. Paper CECs must be validated by stamping with sponsor's stamp. If a participant arrives late or leaves early so as not to have completed the required amount of instructional time, the sponsor may not validate the CEC.

To ensure the integrity of the continuing education process, be sure non-participants do not have access to paper CECs. All unused CECs must be destroyed after the meeting. If you run out of paper CECs you must contact the ABO-NCLE for instructions. CECs may not be copied.

Failure to comply with the proper procedures for distribution and validation of CECs may result in loss of privilege to serve as a provider of ABO-NCLE-approved education.

V. Sample Course Topics

A. ABO Topics

This list is included to illustrate the TYPES of topics that might be covered in either Ophthalmic or Non-Ophthalmic continuing education courses. It is NOT to be regarded as a COMPLETE list, but is here only to help give Speakers and Sponsors a better understanding of Ophthalmic versus Non-Ophthalmic topics.

i. Ophthalmic Courses

- Ophthalmic Terminology
- Optics
 - Ophthalmic Optics
 - Geometric Optics
 - Theoretical Optics
 - Practical Optics
 - Lens characteristics
 - Centration
 - Optical centers
 - Major Reference Points
 - Measurements
 - Segment heights
 - Prism
 - Desired prismatic effects
 - Unwanted prismatic effects
- Ocular Anatomy and Physiology
 - Anatomy of the Eye
 - Physiology of the Eye
 - Refractive Errors and Refractive Status
 - Anatomical Considerations for Fitting Criteria
 - Anomalies
 - Visual Pathway
 - Ocular Pharmacology
 - Triage
 - Ocular Conditions & Pathology
 - i.e. Glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration, etc.
 - Age-Related Accommodation Issues
 - Coordination of Eye and Head Movements
 - Others
- Principles of Refraction
- Transposition
- Optical Dispensing
 - Customer/Patient History
 - Relationship between the prescription and finished product
 - Format and Content of Prescription

- Analysis and Interpretation of Prescriptions
 - Visualizing the prescription
 - Use of the Lens Cross
- Considerations for dispensing based on refractive errors (equal or unequal)
- Lenses
 - Characteristics of lenses
 - Single Vision
 - Multifocal
 - PAL's
 - Occupational
 - Safety and Sports
 - Specialty Lenses
 - Other Characteristics
 - Base Curves and Relationship of Changes and Thickness
 - Lens Materials
 - Characteristics and properties
 - Lens Design
 - After-Market Treatments, Coatings, Tints, Selective Filtrations, etc.
 - Lens Selection – Material, Blank Size, Thickness
- Common Prescription Irregularities
- Frames
 - Frame Materials
 - Metals
 - Plastics
 - Specialty Materials
 - Safety/Industrial/Sport
 - Care and Handling
 - Frame Design
- Care of Lenses, Treatments, Frames, etc.
- Patient Advisement
- Fitting and Adjusting
 - Measurements
 - Vertex Distance
 - Tilts
 - Use of Hand Tools
 - Fitting Triangle
- Dispensing Procedures and Methods
- Verification and Inspection
- Observation Techniques
- Identification of changes in customer's/patient's old eyewear and new eyewear
- Infection Control
- Instrumentation and Equipment
 - Ophthalmic Instrumentation and Equipment
 - Optical Instrumentation and Equipment
 - Use of focimeter (lensometer, vertometer, lens meter), lens clock, calipers, distometer, etc.
 - Calibration and Maintenance
 - Infection Controls and Hygiene
 - Handling and Disposing of Hazardous Materials and Waste
 - SDS

- Optical Fabrication Procedures & Processes
- Sight Testing
- Technology
 - Technology of New Products Available
 - Technology of Old Products

ii. Non-Ophthalmic Courses

Any other topics that contribute to the effective professional practice of Opticianry and the health and welfare of the consumer, in so far as they relate specifically to Opticianry including:

- Governmental Standards and Regulations
 - Rules and Regulations
 - Ophthalmic Dispensing Law
 - Prescription Release
 - Standards of Practice
 - Scope of Practice
 - Ethics Related to Ophthalmic Dispensing and Practice
 - Health Care Law
 - Agencies
 - Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
 - Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
 - Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
 - American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM)
 - HIPAA – Can also be placed under HR
 - Medicare & Medicaid
- Regulatory Boards
- Professional Development
 - Front Office Procedures
 - Telephone Procedures
 - Patient Flow
 - Office Image
 - Dress Code
 - Professionalism
- Dispensing
 - Communication
 - Lifestyle Dispensing
 - Benefits and Limitations of Prescriptions for Visual Efficiency
 - Vocational and Avocational Needs of Customer/Patient
 - Cosmetic/Pathological/Therapeutic Needs of Customer/Patient
 - History
 - Questioning
 - Listening
 - Cosmesis of Eyewear (facial shapes, customer/patient coloring, other facial characteristics, proper frame selection)

- Recommendation of proper frames and lens combination based on lifestyle analysis
- Professional and courteous customer/patient relationship
- Resolving Conflict
- Patient Advisement
- Product Performance and Limitations
- Duty to Warn

- Demographics and Dispensing
 - Age Related Dispensing
 - Pediatrics
 - Geriatrics
 - Between

- Human Resources
 - Employee and Policy Manuals
 - Management
 - Leadership
 - Hiring and Termination
 - Training
 - Scheduling
 - Conflict Regulation
 - Laws and Regulations
 - Agencies
 - The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
 - Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
 - U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)
 - Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)
 - Department of Health Human Services (HHS)

- Practice Management
 - Financial Issues
 - Business Planning
 - Financial Planning and Budgets
 - Financial Statements
 - Marketing Strategies
 - Basic Accounting
 - Advertising
 - Material Costs
 - Overhead
 - Payroll Cost
 - Reimbursement Systems (SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, health insurance, federal/state/local waivers and grants)
 - Monitoring Third Party Relationships
 - Basic Office Procedures and Record Keeping
 - Purchasing Decisions
 - Inventory Management
 - Practice Management Technology Software
 - Organizational Skills
 - Computer Skills
 - Practice Promotion, Marketing and Advertising
 - Purchasing Decisions

- Inventory Management
 - Records
 - Consumer Laws
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- Technical writing, developing educational materials, & instructional techniques
 - Areas outside the scope of practice such as: surgical techniques, medical diagnosis, medical triage, drug prescriptions, and any other topics that may arise and the decisions regarding relevancy will be at the sole discretion of the ABO-NCLE.

B. NCLE Course Topics

This list is included to illustrate the TYPES of topics that might be covered in either Ophthalmic or Non-Ophthalmic continuing education courses. It is NOT to be regarded as a COMPLETE list, but is here only to help give Speakers and Sponsors a better understanding of Ophthalmic versus Non-Ophthalmic topics.

i. Ophthalmic Courses

- Anatomy and Physiology
- Ocular pathology and physiology
- Drugs, systemic diseases, and ocular pathogens affecting contact lens wear
- Refractive errors, conversion of spectacle Rx to contact lens Rx
- Corneal defects, congenital deformities, injuries
- Principles of optics and visual pathways as related to contact lens wear
- Instrumentation usage and calibration: keratometry, corneal topography, lensometry, slit-lamp biomicroscopy, radiuscopy, other instruments used in inspection and verification of contact lenses
- Interpretation of instrument findings
- Fluorescein evaluation to evaluate lens fit and discern pathology
- Tear Film Evaluation
- Contact Lens Materials and Designs
- Determination of Lens Properties and Parameters
- History-Taking and Patient Selection
- Fitting Criteria, Techniques and Lens Evaluation
- Lens Manufacturing, Modification, and Polishing
- Contact lens care systems and solutions: components, ingredients, incompatibilities
- Lens disinfection, storage, care and maintenance
- Cleaning and disinfection of instruments, sinks, surfaces in the contact lens area
- Lens insertion and removal techniques
- Patient Instruction and Compliance
- Hygiene and Personal Care
- Normal and Abnormal Responses and Reactions to Contact Lens Wear
- ANSI Z80 Standards
- Contact Lens Emergencies and Triage

ii. Non-Ophthalmic Courses

- Lifestyle factors and their effect on contact lens wear
- Sources of Patient Records
- Storing Patient Data
- Ethics and Confidentiality
- Records Release Information
- Knowledge of fitter aids, product sources, consultation services
- Product Purchasing and Return Policies
- Telephone Skills

- Scheduling Fitting and Follow-up Appointments
- Human resources: job descriptions, work rules, employee grievances, safety training, interviewing, recruitment, wages, salary, benefits, standards for job performance, employee evaluation, work schedules, conflict resolution
- Interactions with other professionals, vendors, ancillary personnel
- Professional Societies and Continuing Education
- Product demonstrations and educational seminars to public
- Promotion of goods and services
- Participating in community vision programs
- Technical writing, developing educational materials, and instructional techniques
- Marketing strategies
- Basic accounting
- Business and financial statements
- Business Planning
- Financial Planning and Budgets
- Federal, state, & local guidelines (e.g. ANSI, FTC, OSHA, HHS, FDA, HIPAA): knowledge and compliance
- Reimbursement Systems (SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, health insurance, federal/state/local waivers and grants)
- Consumer Laws
- Monitoring Third Party Relationships
- Inventory Control and Reordering Systems
- Storage Systems
- Product Recalls
- Patient Fees and Refunds