

GOC/COVID/06

Date of statement: 3 April 2020 (updated 1 May 2020)

General Optical Council (GOC) statement on Continuing Education and Training (CET) during COVID-19 emergency

1. In these extraordinary times, we are fortunate that in all four countries of the United Kingdom we have a group of exceptionally well qualified eye care professionals on whom the general public and fellow healthcare professionals can rely. Uncertain times mean that our registrants may be called upon to work at the limits of their scope of practice and vary their practice for protracted periods of time and in challenging circumstances. While registrants are encouraged to work up to the limits of their competence, refresher training and/or supervision may be needed.
2. In this statement we hope to reassure our registrants that when they act in good conscience, for the public benefit, exercising professional judgement in all of the circumstances that apply, we will support them.
3. Along with all other healthcare regulators, we have signed a [joint regulatory statement](#) which acknowledges that registrants will need to act differently and deliver care in different ways during the COVID-19 emergency in line with Government and public health guidance. We will take account of this in fulfilling our regulatory functions along with the following statement.

CET requirements

4. All registrants have requirements which must be completed by the end of the three-year CET cycle on 31 December 2021. The requirements can be found here: <https://www.optical.org/en/Education/CET/cet-requirements-for-registrants.cfm>
5. All registrants are expected to complete a minimum of six points of CET on an annual basis (this may be reduced if a registrant has joined the register part way through the year).

Changes to CET expectations as a result of COVID-19

6. It is important for our registrants to maintain and develop their knowledge, skills and performance, even during this emergency. This is particularly the case if they are required to undertake activities that they do not normally undertake. While registrants are encouraged to work up to the limits of their competence, refresher training may be needed.
7. Given that we are not yet at the mid-point of the three-year CET cycle, the overall cycle requirements for CET will remain in place to be completed by 31 December 2021.

8. However, we acknowledge the difficulty that registrants will experience in achieving the annual expectation of six CET points and will waive this requirement for 2020.

Peer review

9. To ensure that registrants do not put themselves at risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, we will automatically allow all registrant-led peer reviews to be conducted using video-conferencing technologies. This includes video-conferencing via Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Skype, but other technologies may also be used.
10. All other requirements for registrant-led peer review remain in place, including the minimum period of one hour and the need to have this approved by us in advance. Details can be found in the CET registrant guide 2019-21 here: <https://www.optical.org/en/Education/CET/index.cfm>

The GOC will keep this statement under review

11. Next routine review due: not later than 31 January 2021¹.

¹ This statement was reviewed on 1 June 2020 and no changes were made other than to the review date in paragraph 11.