

General Optical Council



**Enhanced CET
from 2013**

a guide for registrants

Contents

Why is CET changing?	3
What are the new requirements?	4
Competencies	6
Peer review	8
Interactive CET	10
Changes to your online CET portfolio	12
Frequently asked questions	16

About this booklet

We are the regulator for the optical professions in the UK. Our purpose is to protect the public by promoting high standards of education, performance and conduct amongst opticians. We currently register around 26,000 optometrists, dispensing opticians, student opticians and optical businesses.

It is essential that eye care practitioners maintain the up to date skills and knowledge needed to practise safely and effectively throughout their career. To ensure this, we oversee a mandatory Continuing Education and Training (CET) scheme.

In January 2013 our CET scheme changed. The new scheme is designed to ensure all those on the register keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date and remain fit to practise. This means registrants not only have to get 36 points in each three-year cycle, but also have to meet other requirements in respect of how they gain those points to remain on the GOC registers.

This information pack explains the new requirements for each registrant group and aims to help registrants to ensure they meet the requirements of the new scheme.

Why is CET changing?

In developing our proposals to enhance our CET requirements, we commissioned research into risk, the use of appraisals and sought feedback from patients, registrants and other stakeholders. We also analysed data from the previous two CET cycles and reviewed research into the effectiveness of different learning methods. The enhancements to our CET scheme are based on the findings of this research.

Although the risks associated with GOC registrants are generally low, the research identified a key risk associated with practitioners who are professionally isolated having little or no contact with peers. Evaluation of the previous CET cycles revealed that the majority of registrants had been undertaking their CET in areas of personal interest, or based on availability in a preferred location or learning method such as distance learning. Such practices reduce the effectiveness of CET in maintaining knowledge and skills across the full scope of practice that is permitted by GOC registration.

The findings of this research can be found at www.optical.org/en/Education/enhanced-cet-post--2012/why-is-cet-changing.cfm

The changes we have made to the CET requirements are specifically designed to respond to the risks identified and provide the assurance sought by patients and the public. The new requirements ensure that registrants must engage in case based discussion with peers and have increased opportunities to interact with experts and other professionals to reflect on their learning. Registrants must also keep up to date in all of the knowledge and skills relevant to their scope of practice by doing CET across the full range of competencies relevant to their registrant group. With these changes we are satisfied that the Enhanced CET Scheme will provide an effective mechanism for us to ensure our registrants continued fitness to practise.

What are the new requirements?

The following general principles apply to all registrants from 1 January 2013:

1. The new three year cycle runs from 1 January 2013 – 31 December 2015.
2. There is still a 36 general points requirement per cycle for all dispensing opticians and optometrists.
3. There is an expectation that registrants spread their CET activity throughout the three year cycle obtaining a minimum of six points per year. (see page 5)
4. The number of points awarded for a CET activity no longer relate to the length of the CET. Instead points reflect the level of engagement with peers or experts required and the extent to which the activity supports reflection. For example, peer discussion and clinical skills CET carry more points than attendance at lectures or article-based CET.
5. There will be no automatic shortfall period – this will be replaced by a discretionary shortfall period only for those who have satisfied the Registrar of exceptional circumstances that prevented them from undertaking the required level of CET.
6. At least 18 of the 36 general points required must be achieved through interactive CET. New interactive types of learning, including those that will be offered as distance learning, have been developed by CET providers to ensure all registrants can meet this requirement, even those with difficulties physically attending events.

Specific requirements for optometrists

36 general points which must include:

1. At least one point obtained for participation in a peer review group or peer discussion event
2. All optometry competency units (see page 6)

Specific requirements for dispensing opticians

36 general points which must include:

1. All dispensing optics competency units (see page 6)

Specific requirements for contact lens opticians

36 points which must include:

1. 18 points to be obtained in contact lens specialty CET (obtained at a rate of at least six per year)
2. 18 points to be obtained in general CET (obtained at a rate of at least six per year)
3. Participation in at least one peer review group or peer discussion event using contact lens cases.
4. All general dispensing optics competency units (see page 6)
5. All contact lens specialty competencies (see page 6)

Specific requirements for therapeutic specialist optometrists

36 general points which must include:

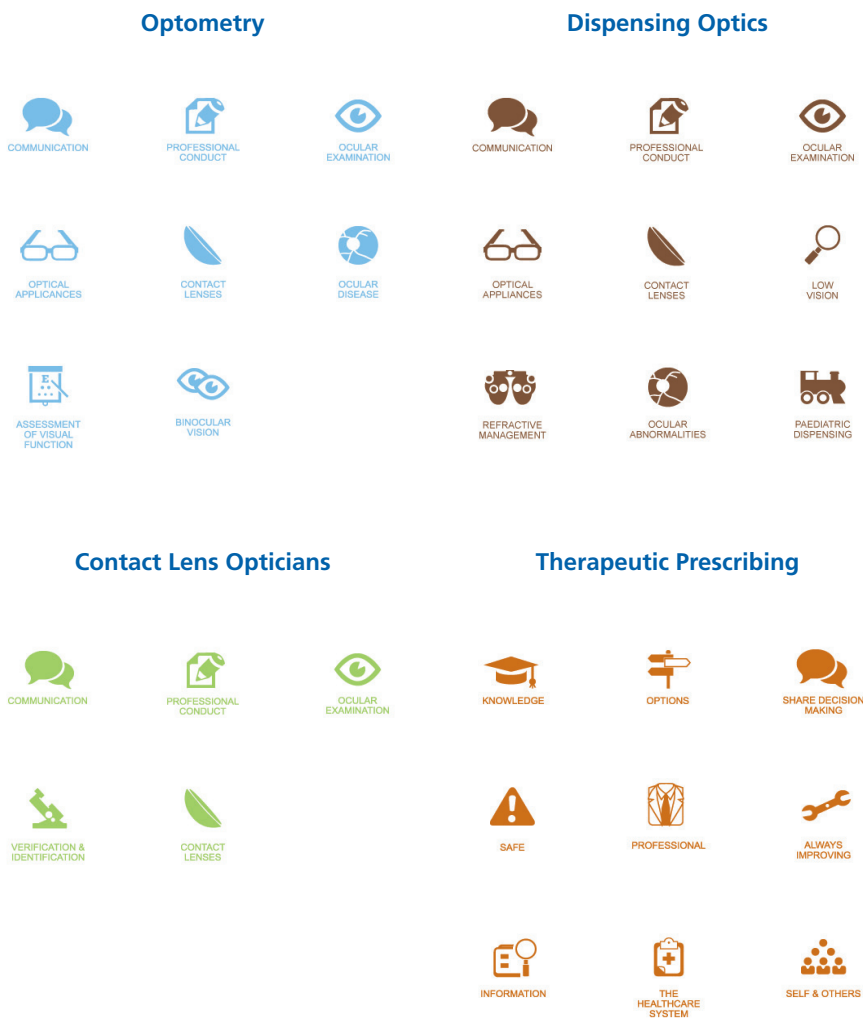
1. Participation in at least one peer review group or peer discussion event using therapeutics cases
2. All general optometry competency units (see page 6)
3. All therapeutics specialty competency units (see page 6)
4. 18 additional therapeutics specialty CET points (obtained at a rate of at least six per year)

Annual points requirement

Registrants are expected to undertake CET regularly throughout the three year cycle. We will review registrants' CET activity at the end of each year during the cycle. Registrants who have not gained a minimum of six points in a year will be required to explain why this is the case. The Registrar will use this information when considering whether to approve a registrant's application for retention. Any registrant who believes they have exceptional circumstances which may prevent them from undertaking CET for a specific period during the cycle should declare this to us at the earliest opportunity. This will allow it to be taken into account when reviewing achievement of the annual six point minimum requirement.

Competencies

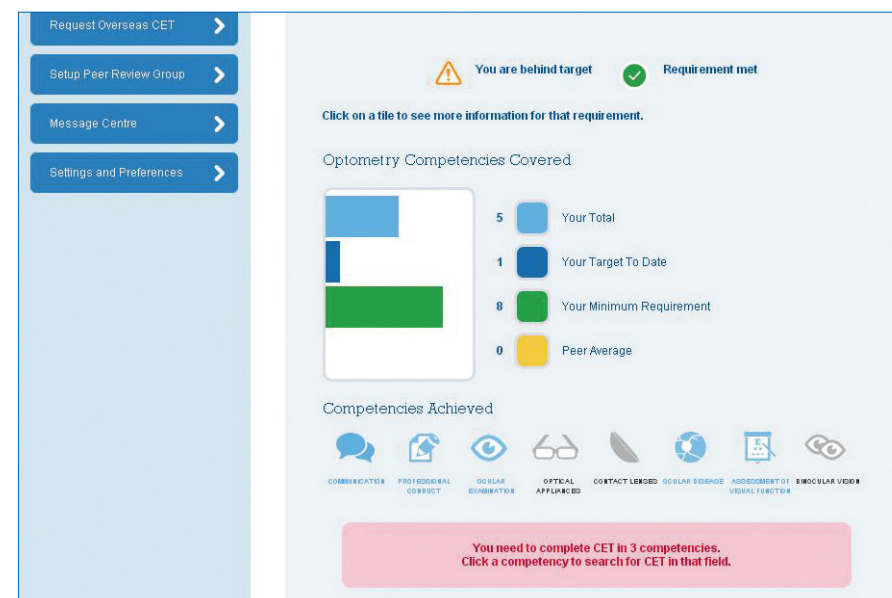
When checking a registrant's CET points at the end of the cycle we will also check that in achieving those points, all competency units relevant to the registrant's group are covered. If a registrant holds a specialty qualification where competencies overlap in both general and specialist practice, they are only required to complete that competency by doing specialty CET (for example professional conduct).



Registrants logging into their CET portfolio will be able to see their progress in covering the competencies via a new tracking facility. This shows which competencies to date have been covered by the CET undertaken, which still need covering, and how many points have been achieved against the target number.

The relevant competency icon changes from grey to coloured once that competency has been achieved. By clicking on an outstanding competency icon registrants can search for available CET relevant to that competency. This should help registrants to plan their CET activity in advance, ensuring all of the requirements are met before the end of the cycle.

In the below example, the five competencies coloured blue have been covered. The three in grey have not.



Peer review

In response to our risk research that highlighted the potential for registrants to become professionally isolated, not interacting with peers, we have introduced a requirement for optometrists and contact lens opticians to participate in at least one peer review or peer discussion per cycle.

Peer review will help registrants to share their own experience and expertise with one another and learn from colleagues. Registrants are able to discuss interesting, difficult or unusual cases and exchange ideas about different ways of handling them. We know that our registrants have a lot of good practice to share and peer review is designed to help them learn from each other.

Three types of CET activities are approved for peer review points:

1. Registrant-led peer review groups

These are groups of between four and ten registrants who meet for a case based discussion session using their own cases. One registrant should undertake the role of group leader with the responsibility for applying to the GOC for approval for the group before the event. They should inform other attendees of the topic or theme which their case must relate to and upload the list of attendees to the CET system after the event.

The lead registrant can apply for GOC approval for a peer review session by clicking on the "apply for peer review approval" button within their own

CET portfolio. The approval application requires specification of the following details:

- » Date, time and venue for group meeting
- » Type of registrants in group e.g. all optometrists, mixed optometrists and CLOs, etc
- » Topic or theme that cases relate to
- » Identification of competency unit(s) relevant to topic or theme
- » High level learning objectives such as "to discuss effective communication techniques when dealing with paediatric cases", "to improve referral decisions for patients with suspected Glaucoma" or "to identify good practice in record keeping"

When discussing real cases, registrants should avoid sharing confidential patient information such as names, addresses and dates of birth.

After the event the group leader will upload the list of attendees names and GOC numbers (including their own) into the event record held within their own CET portfolio. This will allocate pending points to each of the attendees' CET accounts.

Each registrant must log in to their CET account and record their learning in a reflection statement prior to being able to accept the pending peer review points.

2. Peer discussion event

This is a CET Provider led event where cases or topics are provided and learning objectives are set in advance by the provider. These events can involve a large number of attendees, however delegates must be split into discussion groups of between four and ten registrants plus a facilitator.

Facilitators do not participate in the discussion as a delegate but have a specific role to manage the discussion to ensure it enables achievement of the specified learning objectives. Facilitators do not receive peer review points but can claim general points for delivering CET.

3. Online peer review

In exceptional cases, where a registrant makes a written application demonstrating a legitimate reason why they cannot physically attend a peer review event, we will consider permitting participation via online real-time audio and video services. If approval is granted registrants will be put in contact with GOC approved providers authorised to deliver remote peer review sessions.

Reflection Statements

All registrants, regardless of which of the above types of peer review they have completed, must complete a reflection statement to capture their learning.

Registrants are asked to do this by completing a template within their CET portfolio which will appear when logging in to accept the pending

CET points. The purpose of the reflection statement is to capture a summary of the discussion and the learning, development and good practice identified. Registrants are asked to reflect on the following questions:

- » Summarise the clinical skills and competencies that were discussed during this session;
- » List the main things you learned from this session;
- » Describe how you will apply this learning in your practice; and
- » Has this session identified any areas where further personal learning is needed? If so briefly describe these.

We will audit 10% of registrant reflection statements each year, considering the content alongside the learning objectives specified when CET approval was granted.

Registrants should log in as soon as possible after receiving the notification that their pending points are available, to ensure they record their reflection whilst the learning is still fresh in their mind. Registrants may also complete reflection statements after other types of CET to help them consider how they will apply the learning to their practice.

Interactive CET

Interactive CET can be identified by the following icon:



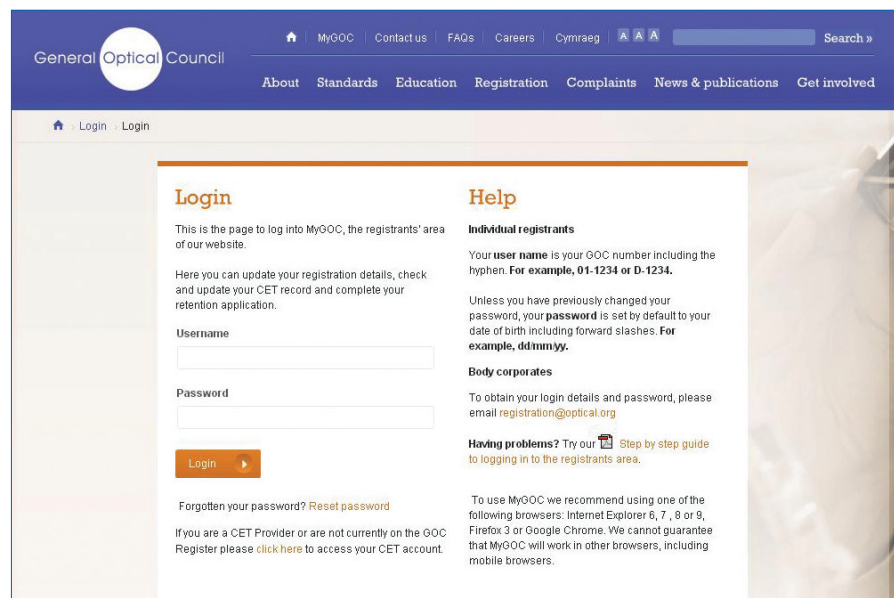
Interactive CET can be defined as any CET which involves either:

- » Physical attendance such as lectures, workshops or peer review events; or
- » Distance learning which includes an interactive element such as participation in a web based discussion forum, internet thread or message board or provision of personalized feedback from a tutor or expert to support learning and verify correct understanding.



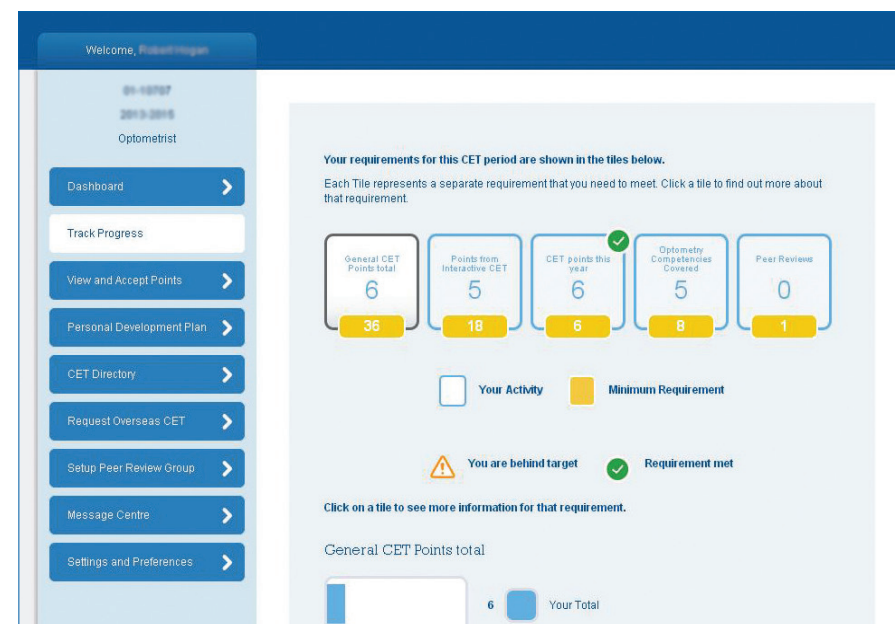
Changes to your online CET portfolio

Since 1 January 2013, registrants access their CET portfolio by logging in to MyGOC on the GOC website (www.optical.org). This is the same place where online retention is completed. Registrants can log their points and check CET requirements and progress. Registrants now only have to use one website with one username and password for CET, retention and keeping their contact details up to date.



The new look CET portfolio will be easier to use and have enhanced functionality to include:

- a) A progress page to enable registrants to track how many interactive points they need, which competencies have been covered, if the six points per year target has been met and whether any peer review has been completed.



- b) A facility to provide feedback on CET attended when accepting pending points.
- c) A template to help registrants record reflection statements following peer review, capture interactions with peers and link CET activity to their scope of practice.
- d) Register their own local peer review group.
- e) Apply for scheduled overseas events to be awarded CET points.
- f) Use the message centre to notify us of any exceptional circumstances affecting registrants' ability to meet the requirements or to support a request to undertake peer review using online or video conferencing facilities.
- g) Search for CET events by location, provider name, mode of learning, competencies covered and topic.
- h) Set notification preferences to be informed when new CET matching your criteria is available.

How to find points

Your online CET portfolio also includes a search facility to find CET events. You can search to find CET available in your local area, or online, offered by a particular provider or in a particular mode of learning, topic or competency. It is quick and easy to use and the search results will give you all the information you need to plan your CET – who the CET is targeted at, whether it's interactive, which competencies it covers and how to book yourself a place:

Search for the CET you need:

The screenshot shows the General Optical Council website with a search interface for Continuing Education (CET). The page header includes the logo and navigation links like 'My GOC', 'GOC Dashboard', 'Contact Us', and 'Logout'. A sidebar on the left contains various user options such as 'Dashboard', 'Track Progress', 'View and Accept Points', 'Personal Development Plan', 'CET Directory', 'Request Overseas CET', 'Setup Peer Review Group', 'Message Centre', and 'Settings and Preferences'. The main content area is titled 'Search for CET' and features a search bar with the placeholder 'Enter search term'. Below the search bar are several filter sections: 'Filter by Location, Competency' with dropdowns for 'Scotland' and '4. Optical Appia...'; 'Filter by CET Type' with a dropdown for 'Skills Workshop' and a checked box for 'Include Distance Learning'; and 'Filter by date' with two date input fields set to '01/05/2013' and '31/05/2013'. A 'Search' button is located at the bottom right of the search area. A link at the bottom of the search area reads 'Save this search and notify me when CET matching this search is added to the CET Directory'.

View the details of the CET matching your criteria:

The screenshot displays the details for a specific CET event. The event title is 'Paediatric spectacle fitting skills workshop'. The date and location are '27/05/2013 - Clydebank, Scotland'. The description states: 'This is a skills workshop to improve facial measurement and adjustment capabilities in paediatric dispensing.' The provider is 'ABDO CET', the type is 'Skills Workshop', and it is marked as 'Interactive? Yes'. It offers '3 (General)' points. The target groups are listed as 'Optometrist', 'Optical Dispensing', and 'Fabricator Referring'. The 'Optical Dispensing' group is highlighted with a blue icon and the text 'OPTICAL DISPENSING Dispensing Optician'. The 'Fabricator Referring' group is highlighted with a red icon and the text 'FABRICATOR REFERRING'.

Also, when checking your progress in meeting the competencies relevant to your registrant group, you can click on each of the competency icons on your track progress screen to search directly for CET covering that competency:

The screenshot shows a competency progress screen. At the top, there are two status indicators: a warning icon for 'You are behind target' and a checkmark for 'Requirement met'. Below this is a message: 'Click on a tile to see more information for that requirement.' The main section is titled 'Optometry Competencies Covered' and features a bar chart. The chart shows a blue bar for 'Your Total' at 5, a dark blue bar for 'Your Target To Date' at 1, a green bar for 'Your Minimum Requirement' at 8, and a yellow bar for 'Peer Average' at 0. Below the chart are icons for various competencies: 'COMMUNICATOR', 'PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT', 'OCULAR EXAMINATION', 'OPTICAL DISPENSING', 'CONTACT LENSES', 'OCULAR REFRACTION', 'ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL FUNCTION', and 'BIOOCULAR VISION'. A red banner at the bottom states: 'You need to complete CET in 3 competencies. Click a competency to search for CET in that field.'

Frequently asked questions

What if I can't meet the requirements?

All GOC registrants are expected to undertake CET regularly in order to keep their knowledge and skills up to date. CET is available in a wide range of learning methods, including distance learning. This means that even registrants based overseas, on a career break or struggling to attend events can access CET regularly.

To be on the GOC register you must be fit to practise and be able to undertake CET. Anyone who experiences exceptional circumstances affecting their ability to undertake CET for an extended period of time should inform the GOC of this as soon as possible and should not be practising. The Registrar will take these circumstances into account when determining a registrant's fitness to retain on the Register and will determine whether use of a shortfall period may be permitted. The GOC does not have discretion to waiver or vary the CET requirement which is a statutory requirement of GOC registration.

Will peer discussion groups need to apply for CET approval in advance of meeting?

We have listened to feedback from registrants and CET providers on the barriers to peer review under the previous system, in particular difficulties in providing the advance information required for CET approval. Under the new scheme it is still necessary to register

a peer review group in advance, as the requirement for prior approval is specified in the Opticians Act. However, the information requested has been limited to the date and location of the event, type of registrants attending and the competency unit(s) relevant to topic, theme or scenario of the cases to be discussed.

After the event the organiser will provide the GOC with the names and GOC numbers of those who attended and confirm the learning objectives achieved. This process will result in pending points being credited to each attendee's CET portfolio.

Each registrant will then be required to log into their CET account and complete a reflection statement to capture their learning from the discussion and relate it to their own scope of practice. Points will not be able to be accepted until the reflection statement has been submitted.

Although the CET requirement is to participate in only one peer review or peer discussion group per cycle, registrants will hopefully recognise the benefits and want to attend more regularly. We believe peer review, in providing an opportunity for registrants to share their experiences, will create an increased awareness of best practice, help practitioners identify areas for further learning and improvement and help raise standards across the professions.

What happens if I don't meet my points target by the deadline?

The CET requirements and deadlines are set in law. The GOC does not have the power to waive the requirements in any circumstances, but can in extreme cases grant registrants additional time to meet them. This is known as a shortfall period. Registrants who believe they have exceptional circumstances should inform the GOC in writing as soon as possible once they are aware of the circumstances. Only circumstances which have resulted in a registrant being unable to practise, such as serious health issues, will be considered and each application will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

This means at the end of the 2013–15 cycle on 31 December 2015 there will no longer be an automatic shortfall period available to all registrants who fail to meet the requirement. Instead, only those registrants who have informed the GOC of exceptional circumstances and have been granted additional time will be permitted use of the shortfall period. All other registrants failing to meet their CET requirements by the 31 December 2015 will be removed from the register.

I want to restore to the GOC register – what are the CET requirements?

When applying to restore to the register, applicants must demonstrate they have achieved at least 12 CET points in the 12 month period up to the date of restoration and have no outstanding shortfall from the previous CET cycle.

In addition, anyone who is removed from the register after 1 April 2013 and applies to restore on or after 1 January 2014 will also be required to demonstrate they have covered all of the competencies relevant to their registrant group and have interacted with peers.

For more information see www.optical.org/en/Registration/Restoring_to_the_registers/index.cfm

How will I log into my CET portfolio?

Since 1 January 2013, registrants access their CET portfolio via the MyGOC section of our website, as for online retention. Registrants now only have to use one website, with one login, for both CET and retention. The new CET portfolio is easier to use and has enhanced functionality to help you find and log CET.

Does the peer review requirement mean I will be judged by my peers?

Peer review groups should not be about individual practitioners making or offering judgment on the decisions or practices of others. They should offer an environment in which registrants can engage in case-based discussion with a group of four to ten peers, which will help them to consider their own decision-making and record-keeping.

How can I do peer review if I am not currently working in practice?

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. A bank of example cases is being developed by CET providers and is available online.

Why is the GOC introducing a cap on how much CET can be done via text-based distance learning?

Our research identified risks associated with registrants completing all or most of their CET via text-based distance learning (e.g. journal articles) under the previous scheme. This means that many registrants have been achieving their CET points with little or no interaction with peers, potentially leading to professional isolation. This is the reason for the cap on how many points can be achieved through non-interactive text-based distance learning alone.

Do I have to do a separate CET activity for each competency unit?

No. You must cover all competency units in your CET, but many CET activities will cover more than one competency area.

I live abroad, how will I do peer review and meet the 50% interactive requirement?

Interactive CET will be available in a range of learning methods including distance learning. Registrants living abroad or who have other geographical

difficulties organising or joining a local peer review event will be able to apply to do peer review online or using video conferencing facilities.

I can't meet my points requirement due to exceptional circumstances – when should I tell the GOC?

If you wish to apply to have exceptional circumstances taken into account you must let us know as soon as they occur. You must not wait until the end of the cycle. Failure to declare exceptional circumstances before the end of the cycle may result in you being removed from the register at the end of the cycle.

Will the GOC make sure there is enough CET available in my area to enable me to meet the requirements?

We are working with CET providers to ensure that all registrants, regardless of geographical location or other barriers to learning, will have access to sufficient CET to meet our requirements.

We are working with CET providers to ensure that all registrants have access to a peer review group or can attend a peer discussion event. We have produced guidance on the role of the discussion leader and approved example case records and associated learning objectives to support groups in meeting the requirements. These can be accessed via the GOC website: www.optical.org/en/Education/enhanced-cet-post--2012/peer-review-and-distance-learning.cfm

Where can I get more information about enhanced CET?

Visit the enhanced CET section of our website, www.optical.org or ring our CET helpline on 020 7307 9488.



