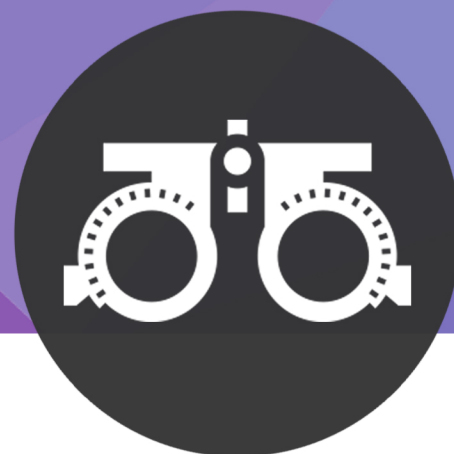


CANADIAN CERTIFIED OPTOMETRIC ASSISTANT

# MAINTENANCE & RENEWAL GUIDE



## Welcome to the CCOA Family

Congratulations on earning your CCOA designation and becoming a Canadian Certified Optometric Assistant!

Your certificate is a testament to your value and the dedication you and your office have toward upholding the high standards of optometric care in Canada.

Obtaining your certification is just the first step in your professional journey. To truly leverage its benefits and maintain its value, it is essential to engage in ongoing learning and demonstrate your commitment to continuous improvement. This guide will assist you in navigating through your three-year Certification cycle. It provides important information on the requirements needed to maintain your certification, guidance on obtaining those requirements, and details on understanding and tracking your progress in your Learning Center.

The CCOA Program will continue to be a valuable resource for you, your optometrist, and your patients going forward.

For further information and support, please visit our website at <https://opto.ca/ccoa> or contact the CCOA team at [ccoa@opto.ca](mailto:ccoa@opto.ca).

We are here to assist you every step of the way.

## CCOA Renewal and Maintenance Requirements

The Canadian Certified Optometric Assistant (CCOA) Certification is **valid for three years**. CCOAs must fulfill the renewal requirements to maintain an active CCOA status. Failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of the legal right to use the CCOA designation, and the certificate will no longer be recognized.

Your CCOA renewal date can be found in your CAO Learning Portal. Renewal reminders will be sent periodically via email throughout the year. Please keep your contact information up to date to receive these notifications.

Note that late renewals will incur a late fee. Meeting all requirements before the specified deadline is important to avoid unnecessary charges and maintain an active CCOA status without interruption.

By adhering to the renewal and maintenance requirements, CCOAs demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional development and the highest standards of optometric care.

## Continuing Education (CE) Requirements

Continuing education (CE) is crucial for developing and enhancing professional skills and staying up to date with the evolving field of optometry. CE can be obtained through workshops, seminars, online courses, and specialized training programs.

To maintain your CCOA designation, you must accumulate **18 hours of continuing education** credits within each three-year certification cycle. Duplicate credits will not be given for any course taken twice within the same certification period. A **maximum of 4 credits** can be earned for CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) training.

In addition to meeting the CE requirements, an annual membership fee is also required.

You will receive a new three-year CCOA certificate with your updated certification status upon successfully fulfilling the renewal requirements.

## **CPR Requirement**

To maintain your CCOA designation, it is mandatory to hold a valid CPR certification. The CPR certification must be at the **CPR C level** and can be obtained through in-person or online courses. It is important to note that the CPR certification must remain valid until your CCOA certification cycle expires.

A **maximum of 4 hours of CPR** education can be claimed towards the 18 hours of continuing education (CE) required for renewal.

## **Annual Membership Fees**

The CCOA membership fee must be paid on an annual basis. The fee will be automatically added to your Learning Center's cart every January to facilitate payment.

The annual CCOA membership fee is \$49.00 (plus tax). Prompt payment ensures the uninterrupted continuation of your membership benefits and the validity of your CCOA designation.

## **Recognized Continuing Education for CCOAs**

The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) holds the authority to determine acceptable topics for continuing education (CE). These topics should be directly linked to competencies within the optometric scope. The subject matter covered in the CE must be broad and educational rather than a sales pitch or focused solely on commercial interests. Please note that staff and other business meetings cannot be used for CE credits. Attendance at trade shows and exhibit halls is also not eligible for CE credits.

**CAO CE Modules:** Credits will automatically be applied to your profile upon completing any continuing education module through the CAO. View the list of available courses [here](#). You can also check out our page for additional CE opportunities [here](#).

**External Training:** To ensure the recognition of your CE, a participation document must be provided to the CAO. This document should include the title of the activity, the date and duration of the activity (credit hours), your name as the participant, and a signature from the sponsor or developer of the activity.

## Uploading External CE or CPR Requirements

To ensure compliance with the continuing education (CE) and CPR requirements, proof of completion must be uploaded to your Learning Portal. You can upload credits at any time before the three-year renewal deadline. It is recommended that CCOAs keep a copy of all submitted CE documents in case of an audit.

### Uploading External CE or CPR Requirements to Your Learning Portal

#### Step 1:

Log in to your account on the CAO Learning platform.

#### Step 2:

Navigate to your Learning Center, select the Certification tab, and click Continue.

#### Step 3:

Click on "Apply External CE Credits" or "Apply External CPR," depending on the type of requirement you need to upload.

#### Step 4:

Complete the required information in the online form:

- Enter the activity title, date uploaded, expiry date, and vendor.
- Provide a brief description of the activity.
- Enter the number of hours (this field is required for credit application).
- Attach and upload the document of attendance or participation.
- Select "Create and Save."

#### Step 5:

Verify that the activity has been successfully uploaded and registered under the Completed and Certification tab.

### Notes about uploading CE:

- Each CE activity must be individually uploaded.
- The number of CE hours claimed must match the hours/credit stated on your attendance document.
- The document of attendance/participation can be a certificate or a result letter.
- Your profile will be automatically updated upon completing courses taken through the CAO.

## Progress Bar: How Does It Work?

There are four different credit options available under your Certification tab. Each of the four progress bars represents a specific credit requirement option. As you complete or upload CE or CPR credits, each progress bar will automatically update to reflect your progress. The requirement is complete once **one of the progress bars reaches 100% for CE and CPR.**

The progress bars vary based on the number of CPR credits that have been uploaded and claimed. Here is an overview of the options:

- Option 1 requires 17 hours of CE and 1 hour of CPR.
- Option 2 requires 16 hours of CE and 2 hours of CPR.
- Option 3 requires 15 hours of CE and 3 hours of CPR.
- Option 4 requires 14 hours of CE and 4 hours of CPR.

This tracking feature allows you to gauge your progress and ensures transparency in monitoring your certification requirements.

## CE Opportunities for CCOAs

As a CCOA member, you can access various continuing education (CE) activities through the CAO Learning Platform. These opportunities are designed to enhance your professional development and expand your knowledge in the optometric field. Please note that fees may apply for certain activities.

## Other Continuing Education (CE) Opportunities for CCOAs

The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) has partnered with the Opticians Association of Canada (OAC) to offer additional CE activities. [Create an account today](#) to access these valuable resources!

Online CE is also available from the following:

- [Continuing Education \(2020mag.com\)](http://2020mag.com)
- [Contact Lens Society of America](http://Contact Lens Society of America)
- [Eyetec.net](http://Eyetec.net)
- [Optical Training Institute](http://Optical Training Institute)
- [SECO University](http://SECO University)

### **Late Renewals & Grace Period**

If CCOAs cannot meet the renewal requirements by their deadline, a 5-month grace period is automatically granted, extending until June 1st of the following year. This grace period allows additional time for CCOAs to complete the requirements for renewal.

Please note that a late renewal fee will apply for renewals submitted during the grace period. It is important to adhere to the renewal deadline to avoid incurring this additional fee.

### **Missed Renewal Deadline – Recertification Exam**

Failure to renew within your specified grace period will result in the loss of the CCOA designation. Any CCOA wishing to renew their certification after their grace period has lapsed, must write a Reinstatement/Recertification exam within 24 months of the original renewal deadline.

The Reinstatement/Recertification exam allows CCOAs to demonstrate their knowledge and proficiency in optometric care, ensuring they meet the required standards for maintaining the CCOA designation.