COPE Announces New Synchronous and Asynchronous Course Formats
October 2022

Over the past few years, the COPE Governing Committee has completed a thorough review of COPE's course format options and the effectiveness of these formats within optometry and the healthcare continuing education system. The committee also completed an extensive literature review and research into CE/CME formats in numerous healthcare professions.

COPE has determined that the overall quality of continuing education is more important than the location of the course. Continuing education delivery methods changed during the pandemic and technology now allows for immediate interaction with a course instructor regardless of learners being present in the same room. In February 2022, COPE proposed updating its course formats to Synchronous and Asynchronous to align with modern educational terminology. Feedback from stakeholders was overwhelmingly positive. Stakeholders requested clarification on monitoring attendance and measuring outcomes for the new formats and in response, COPE developed clear, streamlined guidance to ensure that COPE's requirements and standards will remain intact with the format changes.

COPE will be implementing the new Synchronous and Asynchronous course formats with all new course and activity submissions on January 1, 2023. To prepare for this change, the following information/guidelines have been created to ensure a smooth transition among stakeholders:

- NEW COPE Synchronous/Asynchronous Format Chart (including definitions and examples)
- Attendance Monitoring and Outcomes Measurement Guide (includes definitions and examples)
- New COPE Format FAQ

It is also important to note that individual State and Provincial Licensing Boards may limit the number of Synchronous Virtual and Asynchronous hours optometrists can take for license renewal. COPE advises optometrists to contact the State or Provincial Board where they are licensed for verification of what is acceptable.

Please review the attached information and feel free to contact Sierra Powell, Manager of Accreditation Services, at spowell@arbo.org, with any questions.

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2023 COPE Course Formats

NEW COURSE FORMAT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
SYNCHRONOUS • **SYNCHRONOUS IN-PERSON** *FORMERLY "LIVE"* *OR* • **SYNCHRONOUS VIRTUAL** *FORMERLY "INTERACTIVE DISTANCE LEARNING"*	**INTERACTIVE CONTINUING EDUCATION** *For Synchronous In-Person and Virtual:* • Lecturer and learner are together at the same time • Real time communication between the instructor and the learner • Learners can receive immediate feedback • Fixed schedule; learning takes place only once at a specific date and time **NOTE: Post-course tests will **NOT** be required for courses presented in a synchronous format <u>unless the course is for CEE credit</u>. See CEE definition below.*	• **SYNCHRONOUS IN-PERSON:** -Face-to-face -Hands on workshop -Interactive posters with authors presenting in real time • **SYNCHRONOUS VIRTUAL:** -Interactive webinars in real time -Videoconferences -Interactive posters with authors presenting in real time
ASYNCHRONOUS *FORMERLY "ENDURING DISTANCE LEARNING"*	**NON-INTERACTIVE CONTINUING EDUCATION** • Lecturer and learner are not together at the same time • No real time communication between the instructor and the learner • Learners do not receive immediate feedback • Content is created and made available for attendance at a later date • No fixed schedule, learner-paced **NOTE: Post-course tests will be required for ALL courses presented in an asynchronous format.*	• Recorded webinar without instructor interaction • Journal article • Webcast/podcast

<u>**Continuing Education with Examination (CEE)**</u> is also known as Transcript Quality (TQ) or Certified CE. This type of continuing education is required to be in-person, be a minimum of 2 hours in length and include a post-course test to verify learning. Learners must score a minimum of 70% on the post-course test to receive CEE credit.

IMPORTANT: Individual State and Provincial Licensing Boards may limit the number of Synchronous Virtual and Asynchronous hours optometrists can take for license renewal**. COPE advises optometrists to contact the State or Provincial Board where they are licensed for verification of what is acceptable.**

COPE Attendance Policy Requirements

Attendance monitoring is required for COPE-Accredited CE and must be an active process that is conducted with integrity and impartiality. **COPE Administrators/Providers MUST monitor attendance at all activities and ensure that CE credit is provided only to those individuals present during the instructional time.** No partial credit is permitted in any circumstances. Attendees should only receive credit if they have been present for the entire scheduled time.

COPE credit hours/units are defined in the following increments:
- 0.25 credit hours/units = 15 minutes of instructional time
- 0.50 hours/units = 25 minutes of instructional time
- 1.00 hours/units = 50 minutes of instructional time

To assist COPE Administrators/Providers in ensuring accurate attendance, COPE has provided a list of examples of acceptable attendance monitoring options. **Please note that this list may not include all attendance monitoring options available. COPE Administrators/Providers are welcome to contact ARBO to discuss other potential options.

Attendance Monitoring Options for COPE Accredited CE

Virtual Roll Call

Message Boards/Chats or Discussion Forum- Ask learners to post comments/something they learned at various times

Interactive Polls- Ask questions throughout the course to ensure learner participation

Quizzes- Pre-and post-course quiz or post-course quiz only

(Reminder: Post-course tests are required for Asynchronous and CEE courses.)

Post-Course Surveys or Evaluations

Lecture Questions asked throughout Course for learners to respond in chat

Meeting Platform/Software Attendance Tracking of attendees' sign-in and sign-out time

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COPE Outcomes Measurement Requirements

COPE Administrators/Providers are required to conduct a post-activity educational evaluation which includes gathering data or information on the changes in the learners based on the stated goals of competence, performance or patient outcomes as identified in planning the activity. This is extremely important for Synchronous Courses that no longer require post-course testing. (Note: Courses submitted for CEE credit require a post-course test.) COPE has provided a list of outcomes measurement options for COPE Administrators/Providers to use. **Please note that this list may not include all outcomes measurement options available. COPE Administrators/Providers are welcome to contact ARBO to discuss other potential options.

Outcomes Measurement Options for COPE Accredited CE

Short Pre-Test and Post-Test- Ask the same question or different questions to measure change

Simple Question at End of Course asking what learners plan to change in practice

Interactive Poll at the end of the course asking outcomes measurement questions

Open-Book Test Questions based on speaker's handout at end of the course

Self-Assessment Question(s) given at the beginning and end of the course to measure change

Pre-Course Checklist of Skills- Ask "Are you doing this activity in your practice now?" Areas not checked off can be addressed in the speaker's presentation and reported at the conclusion.

Required/Strongly Recommended Pre-Reading - Ask questions related to pre-reading and course content at the end of the course

Post-Course Surveys or Evaluations

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COPE Synchronous/Asynchronous Format FAQ's

What is the difference between "Synchronous In-Person" and the previous "live" format?
There is no difference. The Synchronous In-Person format (previously "live") is when the instructor is in the same room with the participants, even if other formats are used as audiovisual aids for teaching the course. The instructor is face-to-face with the audience and can touch the participants.

What is the difference between "Synchronous Virtual" and the previous "Interactive Distance Learning" format?
Synchronous Virtual is the same as the previous Interactive Distance Learning format as far as the course presentation. There must be immediate interaction between the instructor and the learner. The only difference is that post-course tests will no longer be required for courses presented in the Synchronous Virtual Format. Required attendance monitoring and other methods of outcomes measurement are now available for COPE Administrators/Providers to ensure accurate attendance and evaluate their stated goals of competence, performance or patient outcomes.

What is the different between "Asynchronous Distance" format and the previous "Enduring Distance Learning" format?
There is no difference. Because there is no real time communication between the instructor and the learner during these courses, a post-course test for learners will continue to be required for this format.

Have the post-course test requirements changed for Asynchronous Distance courses?
No. Courses presented for COPE review under the Asynchronous Distance format must comply with the following requirements:
   A. Courses must include a post-course test to verify learning.
   B. Post-course tests and answer keys must be reviewed by an accredited school of optometry, medicine, pharmacy or osteopathy.
   C. Tests must be in multiple-choice question (MCQ) and should conform to the National Board of Examiners in Optometry's (NBEO) Item Writer's Manual.
   D. Post Course tests must receive a score of at least 70% or better for a certificate of completion to be issued.
   E. Post-course tests must include a minimum number of questions based on the length of the course.
      • 0.25 hours/units require a minimum of 3 questions
      • 0.50 hours/units require a minimum of 5 questions
      • 1.00 hours/units require a minimum of 10 questions
   F. The post-course test and answer key must be uploaded with the application materials to COPE.
   G. Tests may accompany a course as part of the delivery mechanism (i.e., an internet-based course may allow test candidates to take the test online; or a correspondence course may include the test in the same publication as the article, etc.)
   H. Post-course test grading may be done by the sponsoring school or other impartial method. The sponsoring school is responsible for ensuring that the test and answer key are valid and that the grading process is objective. The school must ensure the administration and grading of the test is unbiased if they are not grading the test themselves.

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Will my licensing board award "Live" credit for a Synchronous Virtual course?
Individual State and Provincial Licensing Boards may allow Synchronous Virtual courses to count as "live" credit for license renewal, while others may not. COPE advises optometrists to contact the State or Provincial Board where they are licensed for verification of what is acceptable for license renewal.

Why did COPE remove the post-course test requirement for Synchronous Virtual Courses?
COPE has determined that there are other effective tools to both monitor attendance and measure the success of a CE activity outside of a multiple-choice test. A full list of acceptable attendance and outcomes measurement options is now available for all COPE Administrators/Providers to utilize based on the nature of each individual CE activity.

If I have a course that was approved under one of COPE's previous formats will I have to resubmit it as synchronous or asynchronous in order to present it in 2023?
You will not have to resubmit a course as long as it hasn't expired and the delivery method of the course hasn't changed. As of January 1, 2023, all new course submissions will be in the synchronous and asynchronous formats.

Are there any changes in the Course Qualification Periods?
The course qualification period for each course qualified by COPE depends on the format of the course. These time periods will not change with the new formats. They will remain as follows:
- o Synchronous In-Person Courses: 1 Year Qualification Period
- o Synchronous Virtual Courses: 1 Year Qualification Period
- o Asynchronous Distance Courses: 3 Year Qualification Period

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