

# Optometry Examining Board of Canada

## Information for OEBC volunteers and exam staff

### Re: Volunteers & Continuing Education – Continuing education value of volunteering with OEBC

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OEBC completed a strategic project to update its recognition of the contributions of its many volunteer optometrists from across Canada.

While our volunteers tell us that their involvement provides them with a valuable professional educational experience, this had never been formally analyzed or described. Furthermore, a review of how optometry regulators recognize OEBC volunteer activities showed variation in the “credit” given to optometrists for OEBC volunteer activities.

The purpose of our project was to better qualify and quantify the educational value of various OEBC volunteer activities. We now have a new model for volunteer hours that makes it possible to objectively measure the learning value of each role regardless of the hours spent. It is our hope that optometry regulators will consider and also recognize our approach to recognizing volunteer hours with OEBC.

#### Project Background

Quality Assurance Programs of Canadian optometry regulators permit participation in continuing educational (CE) activities to demonstrate ongoing competence. Educational activities are typically reported by optometrists to their regulators using “credit hours”. Each regulator specifies the type of activity that qualifies for credit and the number of credit hours required in a period. Volunteers for OEBC historically have been granted credit hours by regulators for helping to develop and deliver the exam.

#### How the new model was developed

An optometrist who volunteers with (and was a past director of) OEBC carried out this research project for OEBC. The project researched, analyzed and described the educational and learning value of our volunteer activities supporting the exam and proposed a model for “valuing” these activities. We conducted primary research including surveys, telephone interviews and panel group discussions in 2015. We also researched approaches on how to assess the value of educational activities for the purpose of CE recognition. The proposed model was validated with optometrists who are involved in different volunteer roles, and approved by the board of directors on October 1, 2015.

#### CE Letter for Volunteers

Volunteers will continue to receive a “CE letter” from OEBC when participating in exam development and administration events. The letter will include:

- participant (volunteer) name and date of the event
- the “actual hours” based on documented volunteer time at the event

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- the “credit hours” that is based on documented hours multiplied by the equivalence factor for that activity

For example, a writer who participates in a 16-hour writing review workshop will receive a letter documenting 16 total hours and 12.8 (rounded to 13) credit hours. An exam assessor who participates in a 23-hour exam weekend (training and exam) will receive a letter documenting 23 total hours and 9 credit hours.

## To all of our Volunteers!

Your generosity of time and your dedication to the profession help make it possible to deliver a high quality entry-to-practice examination. *Thank you.*