

STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Interpretation of 49 Pa. Code § 23.86(g) (relating to Sources of Continuing Education) – statement of policy.

(a) Purpose. This statement of policy is intended to clarify to the regulated community the Board's current interpretation of "individual study" contained in § 23.86(g).

(b) Background. As a requirement for optometry license renewal, licensees must complete at least 30 hours of Board approved continuing education in each biennial renewal period. See 49 Pa. Code § 23.82. At a minimum, 50% of Continuing Education credits must be obtained from attendance at live, in person courses. This continuing education must be taken from a Board-approved optometry continuing education provider listed in Section 23.86(a) of the Board's regulations. Section 23.86(g) allows for up to 15 of the required 30 hours to be online. Taped study programs, online or webinar programs, journal courses are listed under "individual study" type programs. The Board has received inquiries regarding whether § 23.86(g) applies to "Live virtual" courses and programs that are conducted through synchronous (real-time) audio and video communications where the instructor and participant can interact in real-time.

(c) Interpretation. For purposes of § 23.86(g) the Board interprets § 23.86(g) to exclude live virtual courses and programs that are conducted through synchronous (real-time) audio and video communications where the instructor and participant can interact in real-time. Stated differently, the Board considers "in person" to be met if the setting includes real-time (synchronous) video and audio communication.