

OPTOMETRIST

Optometrists specialize in the study of the human eye. They examine patients' eyes with a diverse set of instruments. Additionally, they treat vision problems, usually by prescribing eyeglasses or contact lenses, vision therapy, or rehabilitations programs. They also prescribe medicines to treat eye diseases and allergies.

CAREER DESCRIPTION*

- » National average salary: \$118,050
- » National projected career growth: 9%
- » Many optometrists own and operate their own practices
- » Expected to be a high growth field

TYPICAL EDUCATION**

- » Years of school (including undergraduate): 7-8
- » Approximate cost (excluding undergraduate): \$165,312
- » Minimum GPA Required: 3.22
- » Optometry Admissions Test (OAT) required
- » Most programs require 90 credits of undergraduate coursework, but a Bachelor's is **highly** encouraged

NEARBY SCHOOLS & CLASS SIZE

- » Nebraska does not have an optometry school
- » Illinois College of Optometry: 165-170
- » University of Missouri at St. Louis College of Optometry: 46
- » Chicago - Midwestern University College of Optometry: 60
- » Glendale - Midwestern University College of Optometry: 56

COMPETITIVE APPLICANTS ALWAYS...

- » Maintain a strong GPA
- » Score well on the Optometry Admissions Test (OAT)
- » Develop solid communication skills
- » Participate in volunteer and leadership opportunities
- » Shadow professionals in the field
- » Gain clinical experience as an optometry technician

WHAT PRACTICING PROFESSIONALS SAY

Optometry has a lot to offer patients. The days of contact lenses are gone. I am motivated to continue to spread the truth and the word about the intellectual capacity of the profession."

-Larry Alexander, OTD

There are always challenges but optometry has always adapted. I am very optimistic about our profession's future."

-Marjorie Knotts, OTD

WORDS FROM SUCCESSFUL OTD STUDENTS

I started preparing for the OAT the spring of my junior year [of college]. I took the exam twice - the first in May, the other in August. The first time I only used the Kaplan OAT study book, but I found myself easily distracted and needing a schedule. So, I bought the Kaplan online course that came with additional online and study guide materials for the retake."

-Northeastern State University:
Oklahoma College of Optometry Student

Working as a clinic tech and gaining additional hours in the field definitely benefited not only my application process, but also my experience in optometry. I felt I had a smoother transition into school as I was more familiar with different optometric terms."

-Northeastern State University:
Oklahoma College of Optometry Student

*Data and information from Bureau and Labor Statistics

** Data and information from Chicago Midwestern University

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Optometry program prerequisites vary significantly depending on the school. Students are responsible for ensuring all entrance requirements are met.

Typical Prerequisites

S = Spring, F = Fall, M = Summer

Biological Sciences (minimum credits: 16)			
Course	Credits	Semester	Prerequisites
BIOL 1450 – Biology I	5	S, F, M	High school Biology and Chemistry
BIOL 1750 – Biology II	5	S, F, M	BIOL 1450
BIOL 2440 – The Biology of Microorganisms	4	S, F, M	High school Biology and Chemistry
BIOL 2740 – Human Physiology & Anatomy I*	4	F, M	High school Biology and Chemistry
BIOL 2840 – Human Physiology & Anatomy II*	4	S, M	BIOL 2740

Recommended Chemistry (minimum credits: 16)			
CHEM 1180 & 1184 – General Chemistry I & Lab	4	S, F, M	MATH 1320 or CHEM 1140 & 1144
CHEM 1190 & 1194 – General Chemistry II & Lab	4	S, F, M	CHEM 1180 & 1184 & MATH 1320
CHEM 2210 & 2214 – Fund of Organic Chemistry & Lab	5	S, F	CHEM 1140 & 1144 or 1190 & 1194
CHEM 3650 & 3654 – Fundamentals of Biochemistry & Lab	4	S, F	CHEM 2210 & 2214 or 2260 & 2274
OR			
CHEM 1180 & 1184 – General Chemistry I & Lab	4	S, F, M	MATH 1320 or CHEM 1140 & 1144
CHEM 1190 & 1194 – General Chemistry II & Lab	4	S, F, M	CHEM 1180 & 1184
-CHEM 2250 – Organic Chemistry I*	3	S, F, M	CHEM 1190 & 1194
-CHEM 2260 & 2274 – Organic Chemistry II*	3	S, F	CHEM 2250
CHEM 3650 & 3654 – Fundamentals of Biochemistry & Lab	4	S, F	CHEM 2210 & 2214 or 2260 & 2274

Physics (minimum credits: 10)			
PHYS 1110 & 1154 – General Physics I & Lab	5	F, S, M	MATH 1310 or 1220
PHYS 1120 & 1164 – General Physics II & Lab	5	F, S, M	PHYS 1110 & 1154

Advanced physics may be substituted.

Recommended Mathematics (minimum credits: 8)			
MATH 1950 – Calculus I	5	F, S, M	MATH 1320 & 1330 (or 1340)
MATH 1940 – Calculus for Biomedicine	5	F	MATH 1320
AND			
BIOL 4110—Statistics for Biology	4	F	BIOL 1450 & BIOL 1750 and MATH 1310 or MATH 1530
PSYC 3130 – Statistics for Behavioral Sciences	3	S, F, M	MATH 1120, 1220, 1310 or 1530
SOC 2130 – Social Statistics	3	S, F, M	MATH 1120, 1130, 1220, 1310 or 1530
STAT 3000 – Statistical Methods I	3	S, F, M	MATH 1310 OR 1220

Additional statistics courses are also permissible.

English Composition (minimum credits: 3)			
ENGL 1150 or 1154 – English Composition I	3	F, S, M	AP score of 3 or by EPPE exam
ENGL 1160 or 1164 – English Composition II	3	F, S, M	ENGL 1150/1154 or AP score 4 or by EPPE

Psychology (minimum credits: 3)			
PSYC 1010 – Introduction to Psychology	3	S, F, M	

Recommended Electives			
Social Science, Humanities, Computer Science, Business, Economics, Sociology, and Public Speaking.			

It is recommended that students take courses in chemistry, biology, mathematics, and psychology beyond the required minimum.