Doctors of Optometry examine people’s eyes to diagnose vision problems and eye diseases. They test visual acuity, depth and color perception, and ability to focus and coordinate the eyes. They also diagnose conditions due to systemic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. It usually takes at least 8 years to become an optometrist: 4 years of undergraduate college and 4 years of optometry school. For some specialties, further training is required.

Degree

Optometry schools award the Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) degree.

Admission

Admission is competitive. In order to compete for admission, students are advised to complete a baccalaureate degree. Although students come from a variety of undergraduate degree programs, majoring in the natural sciences is typical (for example, biology, chemistry, etc.) Optometry schools seek students with excellent academic preparation, interpersonal skills, leadership ability, a disposition to help others, and a strong work ethic. First-hand experience within the field is important (ex. become acquainted with an optometrist, conduct informational interviews, etc.) All schools require a personal interview and Optometry Admission Test (OAT) scores.

Typical Minimum Prerequisite Courses

Two semesters of biology with labs; two semesters of physics with labs; four semesters of chemistry with labs including organic; two semesters of English; two semesters of humanities; two semesters of social sciences; one semester of algebra and trigonometry; one semester of calculus.

Optometry Colleges may prefer prerequisites be completed at 4-year colleges and/or for students to take upper-division science courses at 4-year institutions.

Examples of MCC Courses Include

- BIO 155 - General Biology I
- BIO 156 - General Biology II
- BIO 202 or 209 – Microbiology
- MTH 160 - Statistics I
- MTH 210 - Calculus I
- ENG 101 and/or ENG Literature Course
- PSY 101 – Intro Psychological Science

- CHE 151 - General College Chemistry I
- CHE 152 - General College Chemistry II
- CHE 251 - Organic Chemistry I
- CHE 252 - Organic Chemistry II
- PHY 154 - General Physics I & PHY 155 - General Physics II OR PHY 161 - University Physics I & PHY 261 - University Physics II

Also Recommended: Biochemistry, Cell Biology, Genetics, Human Anatomy and Physiology, Business, Economics, Sociology, History, Public Speaking, and Computer Science. Check with schools for specific requirements.
Partial List of Colleges Offering a Degree in Optometry
(Students will complete a bachelor’s degree at a different college and then apply)

SUNY College of Optometry
Pennsylvania College of Optometry
Salus University
Nova Southeastern University
The Ohio State University
New England College of Optometry
Illinois College of Optometry

Additional Information

- USDL, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Optometrists
- American Optometric Association
- Accreditation Council on Optometric Education

*Note: While every effort is made to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate, students are advised to contact transfer institutions for specific course requirements and the most up-to-date information.*

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