Doctors of Optometry (O.D.) are primarily health care professionals who diagnose, manage, and treat conditions and diseases of the human eye and visual system as regulated by state law. OD’s prescribe medications, low vision rehabilitation, vision therapy, spectacle lenses, contact lenses, and perform certain surgical procedures. OD’s counsel their patients regarding surgical and non-surgical options that meet their visual needs related to their occupations, avocations, and lifestyle. They may practice as independent practitioners, in a group practice, or in a health clinic or hospital.

Most students earn a Bachelor’s degree before enrolling in optometry school, but a degree is not required for admissions at all optometry schools. Specific admission requirements differ widely among schools.

Doctors of Optometry receive four year of specialized professional education and clinical training of which two years are dedicated to the basic health and visual sciences and two years to studying diagnostic and treatment techniques in clinical settings. Upon graduation and successfully passing rigorous national board and state board examinations, OD’s become licensed to practice optometry. Additionally, ODs are required to complete 50 hours of continuing education every two years in order to keep current in their profession.

<table>
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<th>COMMON PRE-OPTOMETRY COURSES</th>
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| Biology | One year of coursework with lab | BISC 120Lg  
           | OR BISC 220Lg |
| Chemistry | One year of coursework with lab | CHEM 105aLg  
             | OR CHEM 105bLg |
| Organic Chemistry | One semester with lab is required. Some schools may require one year. Contact individual schools for specific requirements. | CHEM 322aL  
                  | OR CHEM 322bL |
| Physics | One year of coursework with lab | PHYS 135aLg  
           | OR PHYS 135bL |
| Mathematics | At least one semester of Math is generally required. Some schools require calculus, while others require calculus & statistics. | MATH 125g and/or MATH 126  
                         | MATH 208x, BISC 305, HP 340, PSYC 274g or equivalent stats course |
| Molecular Bio | One semester is strongly recommended yet required by other schools. | BISC 320Lg |
| Biochemistry | One semester is strongly recommended yet required by other schools. | BISC 330L |
| Microbiology | One semester is strongly recommended yet required by other schools. | BISC 300L |
| Anatomy/Physiology | One semester is strongly recommended yet required by other schools. | HBIO 301L and/or BISC 307L |
| Immunology | Very few optometry schools require this course. (e.g., UC Berkeley) | BISC 450L |
| English | One year is required for most Optometry Schools in the country. | WRIT 150 and WRIT 340 |
| Soc. Science | Many Optometry Schools require at least one course in Psychology. | PSYC 100g |
The four most important factors in determining whether or not you will be accepted to optometry school will usually be: 1) your academic record (includes the cumulative GPA and science GPA), 2) your scores on the Optometry Admissions Test (OAT), 3) letters of recommendation, and 4) your personal interview.

In addition, admissions committees expect that you have knowledge of the optometry profession and that you know some of the issues optometrists currently face based on work experience, research, and/or discussions with doctors of optometry, and other extracurricular activities.

Admissions committees select students for their entering class who show evidence of strong intellectual ability, a good record of accomplishments, and personal traits that indicate the ability to communicate with and relate to patients.

Research Opportunities*

Student Opportunities for Academic Research (SOAR) [www.dornsife.usc.edu/soar]
Provides students up to $1,000 of support for any non-course related research activity conducted during the fall or spring semesters. Students must have a faculty sponsor.

Summer Undergraduate Research Fun (SURF) [http://dornsife.usc.edu/surf]
Through SURF, USC College students may receive up to $3,000 to support a summer research project under the supervision of a USC faculty member.

Problems Without Passports [http://dornsife.usc.edu/problems-without-passports]
USC students have the opportunity in the summers to participate in various Problems Without Passports courses that combine problem-based or inquiry learning research exercises with study in a foreign country, Washington D.C., or Los Angeles.

McNair Scholars Program [www.mcnair.usc.edu/]
Summer research grants of $2,800 and special programs to help prepare for graduate school, for disadvantaged and underrepresented minority students.

Volunteer Opportunities*

Doheny Eye Institute [www.doheny.org/]

Trojan Health Volunteers – JEP [www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/jep/jep/thv.htm]

LAC/LISC Department of Emergency Medicine (DEM) Volunteer Program [http://www.lacusc.org/Services/Volunteer/PAH.aspx]

LAC/LISC Medical Center (County) [www.lacusc.org/Services/Volunteer/]

The Los Angeles Free Clinic [www.thesabanfreeclinic.org/]

Cope Clinical Care Extender (CCE) Internship Program (Saint Francis Medical Center) [www.copehealthsolutions.org/clinical-internships/clinical-care-extender]

WEBSITES

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry [www.opted.org]
Centralized Application Service for Schools of Optometry [www.optomcas.org]
American Optometric Association [www.aoa.org/]
California Optometric Association [www.coavision.org/]
American Academy of Optometry [www.aaopt.org/]
National Optometric Association [www.natoptassoc.org/]
Optometry Programs Directory [http://www.opted.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3600]

This information is not comprehensive and should not be used as your only advising tool. Research each school for a complete listing of requirements.