

OPTOMETRY (OD)



Optometrists, or Doctors of Optometry (O.D.'s) examine the eyes and other parts of the visual system. They diagnose and treat visual problems, manage diseases, injuries, and disorders related to the eyes, and prescribe lenses as needed. O.D.'s can practice either independently, in a group practice, or in health clinics, hospitals, or the military. Some get involved with research—exploring new treatments and cures for eye diseases and other ailments.

Optometrists must complete a Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) degree program and obtain a license to practice in a particular state. O.D. programs take 4 years to complete, and student must have a bachelors degree upon entering. O.D. Programs combine classroom learning and supervised clinical experience. After finishing an O.D. degree, some optometrists complete a 1-year residency program to receive advanced clinical training in the area in which they wish to specialize.

As an undergraduate Pre-Optometry student, it is important to review the admissions requirements of each optometry school as all have varying criteria. It is recommended to shadow several optometrists in different settings though not every optometry school mandates a certain number of shadowing hours. Each applicant should become acquainted with at least one optometrist and, if possible, gain some firsthand experience. The most common optometry school exam is the **Optometry Admission Test (OAT)**. While all schools and colleges will accept the OAT, there are other options for standardized tests. Please consult the **Optometry Programs Admissions Directory** for specific application requirements.

We encourage you to meet with a Pre-Health Advisor at least once a semester to ensure satisfactory progress towards your goals!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Many students who select a science major find a great deal of overlap between their major requirements and those required for optometry school; A science major is not required. Students should choose a major based on their interests and an area that they find exciting, which at the same time, will keep them academically competitive.
- O.D.'s do much more than prescribing and fitting lenses. They are increasingly viewed as primary care providers for patients seeking ocular or visual care.
- The flexibility to work either full-time or part-time allows optometrists to achieve a work-life balance that is rarely matched in other professional careers.
- **OptomCAS** is the central application service for schools and colleges of optometry, and opens late June.
- Optometry schools typically require between 2-3 recommendation letters.
- There are 24 schools and colleges of optometry in the U.S. and two in Canada.

COMMON CORE COURSES

Students are responsible for verifying the prerequisite coursework and policies of the schools to which they plan to apply.

Course	# of courses	USC Course(s)
General Biology	2 courses with lab	BISC 120L and BISC 220L or BISC 121L and BISC 221L
General Chemistry	2 courses with lab	CHEM 105aL and CHEM 105bL or CHEM 115aL and CHEM 115bL
Organic Chemistry	1 course with lab is generally required. Check with individual schools.	CHEM 322aL or CHEM 325aL
Physics	2 courses with lab	PHYS 135aL and PHYS 135bL or PHYS 151L and PHYS 152L
Mathematics	1 Calculus course 1 Statistics course	MATH 125g or MATH 126g and/or MATH 208x or BISC 305 or HP 340 or PSYC 274g
Biochemistry	1 course. Please refer to individual school for lab requirements.	Science Majors: BISC 330L Non-Science Majors: CHEM 350g (Fall only) or BISC 312 (Spring only)
Anatomy	1 course	HBIO 301L
Physiology	1 course	BISC 307L
Microbiology	1 course	BISC 300L
English	2 courses	WRIT 150 and WRIT 340
Psychology	1 course	PSYC 100Lg