



NATURE OF WORK

Optometrists (OD) are licensed healthcare professionals with a Doctor of Optometry degree. They examine eyes, diagnose and treat vision problems, manage eye diseases and injuries, and prescribe eyeglasses or contact lenses.

LENGTH OF PROGRAM

- **School:** 4-year Doctor of Optometry (OD) program
- **Residency:** Optional 1-year residency for specialization
- **Licensure:** National board exams + state requirements



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Most optometry (OD) programs have similar prerequisite courses, which are listed below. However, requirements vary by school. Check each program's website and refer to the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) Directory at <https://optometriceducation.org/> for the most current information.

***It is the applicant's responsibility to verify all prerequisite courses, requirements, and application deadlines for each school they plan to apply to**

One year of general biology*	BIOL 101/BIOL 102 or BIOL 107/108
One year of general chemistry	CHEM 201/CHEM 202
Organic chemistry	CHEM 311/312
One year of physics	PHYS 101/102 or PHYS 105
One semester of biochemistry	BIOL/CHEM 317
One semester of microbiology	BIOL 314
Introductory psychology	PSYC 100
Introductory sociology	SOC 101

Schools may require English, cell biology, genetics, math and/or other courses such as Medical Terminology

**ALL first year Biology students are required to complete Biol 101/102 instead of Biol 107/108*

KEY COMPONENTS OF A COMPETITIVE OT SCHOOL APPLICATION

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall and science GPA• Extracurricular activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OAT scores• Health-related experiences |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research experiences• Leadership experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community service• Letters of evaluation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal statement |

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Your timeline for applying to optometry school should reflect your readiness: academically, personally, and professionally. While some students apply in the summer before senior year to start medical school right after graduation, others benefit from a more flexible timeline.

For students who need additional time to build a strong foundation in the sciences or adjust to college-level coursework, starting General Chemistry in the sophomore year and applying after senior year is an alternative timeline.

This approach may lead to stronger academic performance and a more confident OAT preparation. Taking a gap year and applying in senior year does not put students at a disadvantage. Applicants may use that time to gain clinical exposure, develop professional skills, clarify their goals, and shore up weaker areas on their application.

For more information, visit [Make the Most of Your Gap Year](#).

APPLICATION SERVICE

The **Optometry Centralized Application Service (OptomCAS)** is the centralized application platform for most U.S. Doctor of Optometry (OD) programs. Applicants submit one primary application through OptomCAS, which is then distributed to participating schools.

Please note that some optometry programs may have additional or alternate requirements. Visit www.optomcas.org for critical dates and verify deadlines with each program's admissions office.

STANDARDIZED TEST

The Optometry Admission Test (OAT) is typically required for admission to optometry schools. Students usually take the OAT after completing key prerequisite courses in biology, chemistry, physics, and math. The exam is computer-based, takes approximately 4 hours, and is offered nearly every day of the year at Prometric test centers.

Each section is scored on a scale of 200 to 400, with 300 representing an average score.

For test dates, registration, and preparation resources, visit www.ada.org/oat.

The OAT consists of the following four sections:

- **SURVEY OF THE NATURAL SCIENCES (BIOLOGY, GENERAL CHEMISTRY, ORGANIC CHEMISTRY) (200-400)**
- **READING COMPREHENSION (200-400)**
- **PHYSICS (200-400)**
- **QUANTITATIVE REASONING (200-400)**

The following resources can provide you with more information regarding the OAT

- **American Dental Association (ADA):** Although the OAT is used for optometry school admissions, it is administered by the ADA. The ADA provides official test information, registration, and preparation materials - www.ada.org/oat
- **OAT Bootcamp:** Free and paid resources including video lessons, practice exams, and study schedules - www.bootcamp.com/oat
- **Khan Academy (non-OAT-specific):** Useful for reviewing biology, chemistry, physics, and math concepts - www.khanacademy.org
- **Kaplan & Princeton Review:** Full-length practice exams, prep books, and paid courses tailored to the OAT
- **ADA OAT Practice Test:** Official fee-based practice exam that closely simulates the real test environment

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (<https://optometriceducation.org/>)
- American Academy of Optometry (www.aaopt.org)
- American Optometric Association (www.aoa.org)
- Explore Health Careers (<https://explorehealthcareers.org/>)



AMERICAN ACADEMY
of OPTOMETRY



Don't forget to check out **Handshake!**

Handshake is your one-stop source for internship and job postings, campus recruiting, career fairs, and career center resources. Once you're on the login page, enter your iwu.edu email address and click next. If you are already in the system, then you can just select "IWU Single Sign-on" and enter your IWU net-ID and password.

Please visit www.iwu.edu/career-center/handshake for more information on Handshake.