

A Doctor of Optometry is a primary health care professional who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of vision problems and other abnormalities. Optometrists can prescribe optometric treatment such as corrective lenses, contact lenses or vision therapy that may be required to provide the patient with clear and efficient vision. Optometrists are different from (1) ophthalmologists, who are physicians specializing in eye surgery and the treatment of eye diseases, and (2) opticians, who fill lens prescriptions written by optometrists or ophthalmologists.

### Education

Optometrists need a Doctor of Optometry degree, which requires the completion of a 4-year program at an accredited school of optometry. Requirements for admission to optometry schools include college courses in English, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. Because a strong background in science is important, many applicants to optometry school major in a science, such as biology or chemistry, as undergraduates. Other applicants major in another subject and take many science courses offering laboratory experience.

### Basic Requirements

One Year of English	WRI 10 – College Reading and Composition <b>and</b> WRI 100 – Advanced Writing <b>or</b> WRI 116 – Science Writing in Natural Sciences
One Year of General Chemistry	CHEM 2 – General Chemistry I (includes lab) <b>and</b> CHEM 10 – General Chemistry II (includes lab)
One Year of Organic Chemistry	CHEM 8/L – Principles of Organic Chemistry with lab <b>and</b> CHEM 100 – Organic Synthesis and Mechanism with CHEM 100L – Organic Chemistry Lab
One Year of Biological Science	BIO 1/L – Contemporary Biology <b>and</b> BIO 2/L – Introduction to Molecular Biology
One Semester of Microbiology	BIO 120 & 120L – General Microbiology
One Year of Physics	PHYS 8 – Principles of Physics I <b>or</b> ICP 1B – Integrated Calculus and Physics: Physics <b>or</b> PHYS 18 – Principles of Physics I for Biological Sciences <b>and</b> PHYS 9 – Introductory Physics II <b>or</b> PHYS 19 – Introductory Physics II for Biological Sciences
One Semester of Psychology	PSY 1 - Introduction to Psychology

One Year of Calculus	MATH 21 – Calculus I for Physical Sciences and Engineering <b>and</b> MATH 22 – Calculus II for Physical Sciences and Engineering <b>or</b> MATH 11 – Calculus I for Biological Sciences <b>and</b> MATH 12 - Calculus II for Biological Sciences
One Semester of Statistics	MATH 18 – Statistical Analysis of Scientific Data <b>or</b> MATH 32 – Statistics <b>or</b> PSY 10 – Analysis of Psychological Data

### Additional Required Courses

Human Anatomy	BIO 164 – Human Anatomy
Human Physiology	BIO 161 – Human Physiology
Biochemistry	BIO 101 or CHEM 111 – Biochemistry I
Humanities and Social Sciences	Additional courses in the humanities and social sciences are highly recommended.

\*Course requirements vary from school to school. You should refer to the individual school catalogs and/or websites for specific information.

### Optometry Admissions Test (OAT)

The OAT, now computer based) is currently required by all 21 colleges of optometry in the United States and is offered throughout the year. It is recommended that you take the OAT prior to applying to optometry school. The test covers the following 6 areas:

- Organic Chemistry
- Quantitative Ability
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Reading Comprehension

### Internships and Work Experience

It is highly recommended that you obtain experience in the field of optometry before applying. Practically speaking, you can mention your experiences to strengthen your application, and, more importantly, you can get a realistic idea of what an optometrist does on a day-to-day basis from this experience. One way to gain experience is through an internship with an optometrist. The quality of the clinical experience you get will be much more important than the quantity of your experiences. Internship information can be obtained in the Center for Career & Professional Advancement located in SSB 230. Other people- and health-oriented experiences are also helpful.

### Letters of Recommendation

Supporting letters of recommendation should be from teaching faculty (preferably science), research and an optometrist--but there are other possibilities as well.

### Applications

OptomCAS is a service of the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) and is administered by Liaison International (LI), an education information technology company located in Watertown, MA.

OptomCAS allows optometry applicants to use a single web-based application and one set of materials to apply to multiple schools and colleges of optometry. Applicants who apply through OptomCAS submit a completed web-based application comprised of biographical data, colleges and universities attended, academic course history, letters of recommendation, work experience, extracurricular activities, honors, and a personal essay. It is the applicant's responsibility to read and follow specific instructions for OptomCAS and the schools and colleges of optometry. **APPLICANTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO APPLY EARLY.**

Applicants may start and submit the OptomCAS application as soon as it is available. Application deadlines will vary for each school or college of optometry. Information on application deadlines can be found in the Directory of Schools and Colleges.

### **Interviews**

All schools require an interview as part of the admission process. Some schools do give regional interviews, but it is a good idea to see each school for yourself. Interview invitations are extended to selected applicants after their application materials have been thoroughly reviewed.

### **Schools in California**

[UC Berkeley Optometry](#)

[Southern California College of Optometry](#)

[Western University of Health Sciences – College of Optometry](#)