



NATURE OF WORK

Optometrists examine the eyes and other parts of the visual system. They also diagnose and treat visual problems and manage diseases, injuries, and other disorders of the eyes. They prescribe eyeglasses or contact lenses as needed.



LENGTH OF PROGRAM

Four years of optometry school with optional one-year residency.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The *most common prerequisites* for students applying to optometry schools are listed below. However, depending on the program, additional coursework may be required. Check individual program websites or the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry's (ASCO) Optometry Programs Admissions Directory (<https://optometriceducation.org/>) for program- specific requirements.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the applicant to know the exact requirements and deadlines for each school to which they apply.

- **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 (recommend through Math 176; Calculus I) and/or other courses**

*Only Biology majors interested in pursuing a career in optometry should take BIOL 101/102; all other majors should take BIOL 107/108.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

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|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Overall and science GPA | • OAT scores |
| • Extracurricular activities | • Health-related experiences |
| • Research experiences | • Community service |
| • Leadership experiences | • Letters of evaluation |
| • Interview | • Personal statement |

APPLICATION TIMELINE

The application timeline is unique depending on when you are prepared and ready to pursue optometry school. If you plan to apply directly after graduating from IWU, you'll want to complete the prerequisite courses by the end of your junior year and apply during the summer before senior year. If you choose to take a gap year, you should complete your prerequisites by the end of your senior year and can then apply the summer after graduation OR whenever you are ready.

Students today are often waiting a year or more after graduation before applying to a health professions school. This does not put the applicant at a disadvantage; many programs look favorably upon applicants who have taken an extra year or two to mature and gain work experience, and who can thus make a better decision regarding a career in health professions; see "**Make the Most of Your Gap Year**" (<https://students-residents.aamc.org/applying-medical-school/article/making-most-your-gap-year/>).

APPLICATION SERVICE

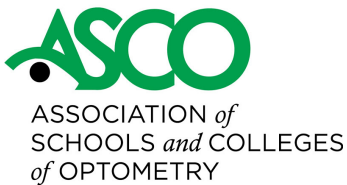
OptomCAS (www.optomcas.org) is the centralized application service for applicants for optometry schools. Check the application service and specific optometry school websites for deadlines.

STANDARDIZED TEST

Typically, the OAT (Optometry Admission Test) is required of applicants for optometry school. The OAT consists of four sections: Survey of the Natural Sciences, Reading Comprehension, Physics, and Quantitative Reasoning. The test takes about 4 hours and is offered nearly every day of the year; see www.ada.org/oat for additional information.

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/>)
- Reference books at the **Hart Career Center**



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.