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Optometry School Fact Sheet

What degree can I earn?

O.D.= Doctor of Optometry

For the 2023 entering optometry class, there were 2,773 applicants nationally who submitted 11,834 verified applications for 2,028 seats in the 24 O.D. programs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

What is the nature of this profession?

Optometrists diagnose vision problems and eye diseases, and they test patients' acuity, depth and color perception, and ability to focus and coordinate the eye. They also manage and treat conditions and diseases of the human eye and visual system. Most optometrists work in private practice. They typically work 40 hours a week; though some evenings and weekends may be required to accommodate the needs of patients, they generally have a good work-life balance. Anticipated job growth is 9% by 2032.

Where can I find additional information about optometry?

- The Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry <https://optometriceducation.org>. Follow on social media to get regular updates.
- ASCO Eye Opener Sessions, www.eyeopenersession.org/. Connects students with practicing eye doctors to learn more about the profession.

YOU CAN CHOOSE ANY MAJOR YOU WOULD LIKE AS LONG AS YOU FULFILL THE PREREQUISITES FOR OPTOMETRY SCHOOL.

The following courses are strongly recommended as preparation for the OAT and Optometry School:

BIO 120: General Biology I	CHM 115: Principles of Chemistry I
BIO 121: General Biology II	CHM 116: Principles of Chemistry II
BMS 208: Human Anatomy	CHM 241: Organic Chem for Life Sciences I
BMS 309: Laboratory in Human Anatomy (Cadaver)	CHM 242: Organic Chem for Life Sciences II
BMS 212/213: Introductory Microbiology w/lab	CHM 461: Biochemistry I
BMS 290/391: Human Physiology w/lab	PSY 101: Introductory Psychology
BIO 355 or 375: Genetics	MTH 201: Calculus I
PHY 220: General Physics I	STA 215: Introductory Applied Statistics
PHY 221: General Physics II	

Other suggested courses: AHS 100, BIO 376, BIO 422, BMS 410, 450, or 426, CMB 405 + 406, COM 201, PSY 364 or SOC 386, CIS 150, Business, Economics, Ethics, Sociology, Psychology, English and Writing.

Some optometry schools may not accept AP credit or online courses for prerequisite courses. If they do, your AP credit may be applied differently than it was at GVSU. Due to variations in admission requirements and procedures, it is advised to research different optometry programs. Visit the optometry school websites for requirements. School specific information is also available on the ASCO site. See your faculty advisor or an advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center for assistance in choosing elective courses.

Prerequisite courses typically require a C or better grade.

OAT

You will need to take The Optometry Admissions Test (OAT). The OAT consists of four sections: Survey of the Natural Sciences (Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry), Reading Comprehension, Physics, and Quantitative Reasoning. Traditionally, applicants plan to take the exam the year before starting optometry school. The OAT is scored between 200-400.

The national OAT averages for applicants accepted to optometry school fluctuate minimally from year to year. Recently reported are:
Academic Average: **326.6** Total Science: **317.6**

GPA

Some optometry schools have no minimum GPA whereas others may require a 3.0 or higher. Students should research schools of interest and note the GPA profile for students admitted to that program.

All grades for repeated courses are factored into your OptimCAS GPA.

The national GPA average for applicants accepted to optometry school fluctuates minimally from year to year. Recently reported was a **3.54 cumulative GPA** and a **3.43 Science GPA**.

Besides a strong GPA and OAT score, optometry schools look for the following:

- **Optometry-related Clinical Volunteer Experience and/or Shadowing an Optometrist**
 - See www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/preprofessional for a list of optometrists in the area and the Healthcare Volunteering & Experience Guide
- **Extracurricular and Leadership Activities:** visit www.gvsu.edu/studentorg to begin searching for organizations to join at GVSU!
 - Be sure to check out the Pre-Optometry Club.
- **Community service** www.gvsu.edu/service
- **Research experience** www.gvsu.edu/ours; Department websites: Listing of research by faculty member and discipline
- **Strong letters of recommendation** typically from faculty and an optometrist
- Your ability to pass a **criminal background check** (CBC). Optometry schools will conduct a CBC before allowing admitted students to begin optometry school

The Medical and Health Humanities Certificate, Intercultural Communications Certificate, and the Research Scholar Designation are great ways to attain competencies professional schools are looking for in applicants.

Track your experiences. Create a copy of our Preprofessional Action Plan document (www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/actionplan) to log information you will need for your application process. This document has tabs for many items including your academic plan, experiences and hours, GPA calculators, potential letter writers, important contact info and more!

Want more information?

- Discuss other options and interests with your faculty advisor and/or CLAS Academic Advisor
- Attend events sponsored by the CLAS Academic Advising Center to assist you through this process while at GVSU.
- Check out summer programs like the Summer Health Professions Education Program: www.shpep.org
- Sign up for the ASCO Eye Opener Sessions, www.eyeopenersession.org/
- Visit our preoptometry website, www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/optometry, for more resources!

Sample Optometry School Curriculum (can vary by school)	
Years 1 & 2	Courses in clinical sciences and vision science; basic science. Year 2 introduces direct clinical exposure.
Year 3	Specialty courses with patient care. In spring of Year 3, take a Part 1 Exam (NBEO)
Year 4	Rotations (4-12 weeks each). In December, take Part 2 Exam (NBEO), then Part 3.

To schedule an appointment with a Preoptometry Advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center, visit www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising and click on “Schedule Appointment”

Also follow us on social media!  **YouTube** [GVSU Preprofessional Programs](#)

 | **Instagram** [@gvsupreprofessionaladvising](#)