

Optometry

What is Optometry?

Optometry is a regulated healthcare profession that deals with the eyes and visual system. "Optometrists provide comprehensive eye and vision care, which includes refraction and dispensing, detection/diagnosis and management of disease in the eye, and the rehabilitation of conditions of the visual system." (World Council of Optometry)

Optometrists typically work in private practice. Fresh graduates work for 2 years in established practices, like apprentices, before moving on to opening new practices or buying into an existing one.

What are the common academic requirements?

- At least 3 years of undergraduate Bachelor of Science studies with a minimum overall average of 75% (B).
- Students must complete pre-requisite courses including:
 - 0.5 credits each in English, Ethics, Psychology, Microbiology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, Organic Chemistry, Calculus, and Statistics
 - 1.0 credits each in Biology and Physics (with labs) and Physiology

What are the non-academic admission considerations?

- Optometry Admission Test (OAT) scores and the CASPer
- Two Confidential Assessment forms (References)
- English Language Requirements
- Canadian Citizenship and Police Records Check
- Experience: information about work, volunteer and job shadowing
- Awards both academic and non-academic
- Interviews (MMI style at University of Waterloo)

Optometry Admissions Test

The OAT is administered by Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO): www.ada.org/en/oat

It is a multiple-choice test that covers four areas:

- Survey of the Natural Sciences
- Reading Comprehension
- Physics
- Quantitative Reasoning

Start Early!

Optometry programs require a minimum mid-B average. Many look for demonstrated interest and relevant experience.

Improve your GPA:

Visit the AA&CC and the Centre for Teaching & Learning to improve your academic skills.

Cultivate References:

Get to know your professors. Their research is interesting! Professors who know you fairly well are able to write strong reference letters for you.

Get Involved:

Join volunteer and co-curricular activities that demonstrate your skills and ongoing interest in a career in Optometry.

Looking for Related Experience?

Review the *Volunteering and Internships tip sheets*, attend a *Work Search Strategies* workshop or book an appointment with a Career Counsellor or Career Strategist.

What other considerations are there?

- The Doctor of Optometry (O.D) degree typically takes 4 years to complete on a full-time basis.
- The program consists of courses and clinical rotations.
- To call oneself an Optometrist, which is a protected title, registration with the Ontario College of Optometrists is required.

Where can I study Optometry?

In Canada:

- University of Waterloo - <https://uwaterloo.ca/optometry-vision-science/>
- Universite de Montreal (French program) - <http://www.opto.umontreal.ca/>

For a comprehensive list of schools in the United States that are recognized in Canada, please visit the Canadian Association of Optometrists website at <http://opto.ca/becoming-a-doctor-of-optometry>

Paying for an Optometry Program

Recent annual tuition at the University of Waterloo was roughly \$8,000. Remember to ask about scholarships and bursaries! Additional financial support information is available at www.esdc.gc.ca/en/student_financial_aid/scholarships.page

If you are invited to an interview you can review our *Interviews* and *Preparing for the Multiple Mini Interview* tip sheets, or attend our *MMI Prep 101* workshop for access to a MMI practice session in the winter term. Visit CLN and look in Events & Workshops in Scarborough for *MMI Prep 101*.

Where can I find more information and resources?

College of Optometrists of Ontario

www.collegeoptom.on.ca

Ontario Association of Optometrists

www.optom.on.ca

Canadian Association of Optometrists

<http://opto.ca>

World Council of Optometry

www.worldoptometry.org

Application & Personal Statement Resources

- Effective Admission Letters (U of T Writing Centre): www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/admission-letters
- Purdue University Online Writing Lab: owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/642/01
- CTL's Graduate School Application and Personal Statement Assignment Calculator: ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/assignmentcal



The AA&CC can help! Attend the Graduate & Professional Schools Fair (October), go to a *Preparing for Professional & Graduate School* workshop, meet professionals in the field through Extern, or speak with a Career team member to learn how to get relevant experience!

Please note: While this tip sheet aims to ensure accuracy, requirements do change. Consider it a starting point for your further research. Visit individual Schools of Optometry for detailed, up-to-date information about admission requirements and application procedures.