

OPTOMETRY (O.D.)

ACADEMIC AND CAREER INFORMATION

NATURE OF THE WORK, EARNINGS, AND OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

Optometrists, or Doctors of Optometry, are independent primary health care providers who examine, diagnose, treat and manage diseases and disorders of the visual system, as well as diagnose related systemic conditions. In 2017, 58% of optometrists worked in private practice, with 23% working in corporate practices (American Optometric Association, 2017).

Earnings and Job Outlook: In 2018, the median salary for optometrists was \$111,790. The job growth for optometrists is expected to grow by 10% between 2018-2028 (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2018).

TRAINING

There are 23 schools and colleges of optometry in the United States. The Doctor of Optometry degree is a 4-year program. Optometry programs include classroom and laboratory study of health and visual sciences, as well as clinical training in the diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders. Included are courses in pharmacology, optics, vision science, biochemistry, and systemic disease. Residencies may be required depending on the program, but they are not mandatory for all programs. Since the four-year optometry curriculum prepares graduates in all areas, a residency does not introduce but rather enhances experiences in a selected area.

All states and the District of Columbia require that optometrists be licensed, which requires a Doctor of Optometry (O.D.) degree from an accredited optometry school and a passing score on both a written and a clinical state board examination. Licenses are renewed every 1 to 3 years and continuing education credits are needed for renewal. In California, optometrists must be licensed by the California Board of Optometry.

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Many aspiring optometry school students major in the sciences (biology, chemistry, etc.) because the prerequisites for optometry schools are science intensive with a lot of overlap between major requirements and those required for optometry school. However, a science major is **not required**.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisite admission requirements vary from school to school. Please refer to the [Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry \(ASCO\)](#) for more details.

Listed below are the prerequisite admission requirements for 1 of the 3 Optometry programs in California. For non-science majors, keep in mind that the courses listed may have additional prerequisites. For all pre-reqs, check out [Optometry Programs Admissions Directory](#).

CSULB courses that fulfill admission requirements for [Marshall B. Ketchum University](#):

Students maintain responsibility for verifying course selection with individual optometry programs.

Coursework	CSULB Courses
Calculus	Math 115 OR 119A OR 122
General Biology or Zoology	Biology 211 & 212
Microbiology or Bacteriology with lab	Biology 311
General Physics with Lab	Physics 100A & 100B OR 151 & 152
General Chemistry with Lab	Chemistry 111A & 111B
Organic Chemistry	Chemistry 220A
Biochemistry	Chemistry 441A OR 448 OR 302
Human Anatomy with Lab	Biology 208
Human Physiology with Lab	Biology 207 OR 342 w/ 342L
Psychology	Psychology 100
English Composition & Literature	English 100, 102, OR equivalent
Statistics	Statistics 108 OR Psychology 210 OR Biology 260

IMPORTANT FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

STANDARDIZED TEST: The Optometry Admission Test (OAT) must be taken by all applicants seeking admission to schools and colleges of optometry.

CLINICAL EXPOSURE: Not every school or college of optometry mandates a certain number of shadowing experiences or hours, but it is recommended to shadow several optometrists who are practicing in different settings.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION: Suggested sources include an optometrist who can state through documented experience that the applicant knows what the profession of optometry entails; a professor with whom the applicant has done personal work (such as assisted on a specific project or served as a TA or reader), or with whom the applicant took a course; and an employer or extracurricular activity advisor who can comment about the applicant's maturity, diligence, and conscientiousness.

ADMISSIONS: [OptomCAS](#) is the central application service for schools and colleges of optometry.

ADMISSIONS STATISTICS: The average GPA for the Fall 2018 entering class was 3.44.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Applicants Resource Page](#)
- [Be a Doctor of Optometry: Put Your Future in Focus \(video\)](#)
- [Optometry: A Career Guide \(pdf\)](#)
- [Optometry Programs Admissions Directory](#)

For more information about Optometry, visit www.opted.org and see the HPAO advisor for further information on the application process, application assistance, and a list of upcoming workshops and events.