

# Path to Optometry

Optometrists are highly trained medical professionals who provide primary vision care and are responsible for conducting eye exams, providing corrective lenses, and treating common eye issues.

Though many students interested in optometry pursue a major in COSAM, a student can earn a degree in any major and attend optometry school if the correct prerequisites are taken. Standardized test scores are required for admission to optometry school. Most schools require for prospective students to take the Optometry Admission Test (OAT) while others may accept the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) or the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). Prerequisites and application requirements vary by school, so students should identify the guidelines established by the schools that interest them.

Optometry school admissions committees do not focus only on metrics but are comprehensive in their review of applicants. It is important that students communicate effectively, participate in community service activities, shadow practicing optometrists, interact with people from diverse backgrounds, and develop skills in teamwork and leadership. Research and optometry-related experiences are also highly valued by admissions committees.

After obtaining a Doctor of Optometry (OD) degree, graduates must obtain licensure in the state in which they intend to practice. While practicing, optometrists must maintain their licensure by taking continuing education courses.

## Preparation Checklist

- Research programs that interest you.
- Shadow optometrists.
- Volunteer with an organization that you like.
- Gain clinical experience.
- Develop core competencies.
- Get involved on campus.
- Take prerequisite courses.
- Maintain a strong overall and science GPA.
- Conduct undergraduate research.
- Take the OAT.



## Common Prerequisites

- General Biology I & II with Labs
- General Chemistry I & II and Labs
- Organic Chemistry I & II with Labs
- Biochemistry
- Microbiology
- Physics I & II with Labs
- Psychology
- Calculus & Statistics
- General Psychology
- Social Science (2 semesters)



## Metrics

- Minimum GPA: 3.0
- Average GPA: 3.55
- Average OAT: 300



## Standardized Test

- Optometry Admission Test (OAT)



## Helpful Organizations

- Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO)
- American Optometric Student Association (AOSA)
- American Optometric Association (AOA)
- National Optometric Association (NOA)