

Pre-Optometry

Optometrists are independent, primary health care providers who examine, diagnose, and treat diseases and disorders of the eye and visual system. They measure for and prescribe glasses and contacts; diagnose and treat eye coordination and focusing issues; treat eye diseases, such as glaucoma; and detect systemic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Optometrists also perform non-invasive surgical procedures. Most optometrists are in private practice, but there is a growing trend towards working in partnerships and groups.

There are 19 accredited schools and colleges of optometry in the United States and Canada that award the degree of Doctor of Optometry (OD). Generally, colleges of optometry admit students with strong academic commitment and demonstrated potential to excel in deductive reasoning, interpersonal communication, and empathy. Optometry schools are looking for "well-rounded" candidates who have achieved not only in the classroom but also in other areas.

Admission Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution (any major)
- Completion of all prerequisite courses
- Competitive cumulative and prerequisite GPAs (3.4 average for those accepted)
- Competitive Optometry Admissions Test (OAT) score
- Optometrist shadowing hours (required by most programs)
- Letters of recommendation (most programs require at least one from an optometrist)
- Completed application with Optometry Centralized Application Service (OptomCAS)
- Face-to-face interview

Required Pre-Optometry Courses: (Admission requirements and prerequisites may differ from school to school so it is important to check with schools for specific requirements.)

Courses	Required Credits	Suggested UWEC Courses
English	2 semesters	WRIT 116 (5cr) & addl ENGL course (ENGL 213 3cr)
Mathematics	Statistics	MATH 246 (4cr); MATH 114 (4cr) for some programs
Psychology	1-2 semesters	PSYC 100 (3cr) & addl PSYC course (PSYC 230 or 251 3cr)
Inorganic chemistry	2 semesters w/lab	CHEM 103 & 104 (8cr) or CHEM 115* & CHEM 213 (10cr)
Organic chemistry	1 semester w/lab	CHEM 325 (4cr)
Physics	2 semesters w/lab	PHYS 211 & 212 (9cr) or PHYS 231 & 232 (10cr)
Biology	2 semesters w/lab	BIOL 221 & 222, 223 (9cr)
Microbiology	1 semester w/lab	BIOL 361 (5cr)

*CHEM 115 requires a strong background in high school math and chemistry

Optometry Admission Test (OAT): This standardized exam is required for admission to all optometry schools. The exam consists of 4 parts: Survey of the Natural Sciences (Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry), Reading Comprehension, Physics, and Quantitative Reasoning. It is often taken in the spring semester or summer following the junior year. Go to: www.opted.org for more information on the OAT.

Non-Academic Considerations: Applicants must obtain experience with a practicing optometrist. Seek out health-related experiences, job shadowing and volunteering opportunities early!

Suggested Pre-Optometry Curriculum: The following program is suggested for a student in any major and is designed to take the Optometry Admission Test (OAT) in the junior year. It is important that students work with a pre-optometry advisor each semester.

Freshman year – Fall MATH* CHEM 103 BIOL 221 WRIT 116	Freshman year – Spring MATH BIOL 222 BIOL 223 CHEM 104 PSYC 100
Sophomore year – Fall CHEM 325 Upper level BIOL MATH 246 GE & Major courses	Sophomore year – Spring PSYC 230 (or other PSYC course) Upper level BIOL GE & Major courses
Junior year – Fall PHYS 211 or 231 BIOL 361 ENGL 213 (or other ENGL course) GE & Major courses (Prepare for OAT)	Junior year – Spring PHYS 212 or 232 GE & Major courses (Take OAT and complete applications)
Senior year – Fall Complete Major/Minor/GE Additional recommended courses	Senior year – Spring Complete Major/Minor/GE Additional recommended courses

* Beginning course in mathematics depends on UWEC Mathematics Placement Exam score

UWEC Pre-Optometry Advisors:

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More information:

- Illinois College of Optometry www.ico.edu
- Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University www.ferris.edu/mco
- Indiana University www.opt.indiana.edu
- For a list of all programs: www.opted.org

Visit the **Health Careers Center** in Schofield Hall 30 or at www.uwec.edu/health-careers-center/index.htm and join the **Pre-Professional Health Club** to learn more about healthcare, professional school applications, and medical schools.