Doctors of Optometry are primarily health care providers who diagnose, manage, and treat conditions and diseases of the human eye and visual system as regulated by state law. They may practice as independent practitioners, in a group practice, or in a health clinic or hospital.

Most students earn a Bachelor’s degree before enrolling in optometry school, but a degree is not required for admissions at all optometry schools. The schools that accept students after three years of undergraduate study usually offer a Bachelor of Science degree upon completion of some portion of the optometry curriculum coursework.

## Lower Division Subjects Required by Most U.S. Optometry Schools

| **Required Subjects** | **Required Coursework** |
| --- | --- |
| One year of English | English 101 & English 102, 103 or Philosophy 5 |
| One year of Biology | Biology 6 & 7 |
| One year of Inorganic (General) Chemistry | Chemistry 101 & 102 |
| One year of Organic Chemistry | Chemistry 211 & 212 |
| One semester of Biochemistry | Chemistry 221 |
| One semester of Anatomy | Anatomy 1 |
| One semester of Physiology | Physiology 1 |
| One semester of Microbiology | Microbiology 1 or 20 |
| One year of Physics | Physics 6 & 7 or 66 & 67 |
| One semester of Calculus and one semester of Statistics | Math 261; Math 227 or Statistics 1. Your undergraduate major may also determine your choice of Math requirements. |
| Psychology | Psychology 1 |

Note: All courses should be taken for a letter grade, not Credit/No Credit. Major requirements vary, check with the individual campus for their specific requirements.

## Choosing an Undergraduate Major

“Pre-optometry” is not a major at universities. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. A discipline in natural science is often a popular major selected. However, students should select an appropriate major that could lead to an alternative career, if necessary.

Students applying to optometry school need to plan carefully and complete not only the optometry schools’ requirements, but also the requirements for their undergraduate major and the general education required by the undergraduate transfer institution.

## Optometry School Selection Criteria

* GPA in terms of overall college grades or pre-optometry coursework grades depending on the school.
* Bachelor’s Degree or three or more years of undergraduate coursework. A bachelor’s degree is not required but it makes a candidate more competitive.
* Your score on admissions tests such as the Optometry Admissions Test (OAT).
* To determine oral and written communication skills, optometry applicants are required to participate in optometry interviews.
* Admissions committees expect that you have knowledge of the optometry profession and that you know some of the issues optometrists currently face. Additionally, the admissions committee will want to know specifically why you are pursuing a career in the optometry profession.

## Salary Information

In 2021, the California average annual wage was $139,372 annually ([labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/](https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/oes-employment-and-wages.html#OES)). The median is the point at which half of the workers earn more and half earn less.

## Recommended Websites

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry | [optometriceducation.org/](https://optometriceducation.org/) |
| American Academy of Optometry | [aaopt.org/](https://www.aaopt.org/) |
| American Optometric Association | [aoa.org/](https://www.aoa.org/) |
| California Optometric Association | [coavision.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1](https://www.coavision.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1) |

## Select Optometry School Websites

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| Southern California College of Optometry | [ketchum.edu/](http://www.ketchum.edu/) |
| UC Berkeley - Optometry | [optometry.berkeley.edu/](https://optometry.berkeley.edu/) |
| Western University of Health Sciences | [westernu.edu/optometry/](https://www.westernu.edu/optometry/) |

## Clinical Experience

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| International Service Learning | <https://islonline.org/programs/program_optometry/> |

Note: Information is subject to change without notice. Check with the individual campus for the most up-to-date information. *Web site links are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and/or Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. The Los Angeles Community College District and/or Los Angeles Pierce College bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.*